

JULY 2017

MAKING TRACKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE TUALATIN RIVER NWR

JOYFULLY CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY WITH THE WONDER OF THE REFUGE



PRESIDENT'S PERCH

By Tom Hartz, President of the Board



With an incredible Alternative Outdoor School experience wrapped up, our first full-day summer camp around the corner, and the 25th anniversary of Tualatin River Refuge coming this fall, there's no shortage of reasons to celebrate. For more, check out the [2016 Urban Refuge Program Annual Report](#) just released by the Portland-Vancouver National Wildlife Refuges. The report is a look back at the

last year of staff, Friends, volunteers, and partners connecting to the community in neighborhoods, on refuge, and through coalitions.

The Urban Refuge Program report reminds me what a special place our refuge is. It's one of the Refuge System's original "urban" refuges — so called because it lies within 25 miles of 250,000 people. While this has been understood since Tualatin River Refuge was created 25 years ago, it was in 2015 that the Urban Refuge Program and its additional resources came to our community, in large part thanks to the successful programs that we Friends offer in collaboration with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

What I see in the accomplishments highlighted in the 2016 report, while in some cases new and innovative, are really a continuation of our commitment to joyfully connect our community to the wonders of nature. Rather than bringing big change to our focus, the Urban Refuge Program has helped us enhance our offerings and extend our impact into segments of the community that we traditionally haven't reached.

Our surrounding community has grown since 1992 and its demographics continue to change. The Urban Refuge Program will help us prepare for and meet the future head-on. Kim Strassburg — Urban Refuge Program Coordinator — along with Jenny de la Hoz and Pat Stark — FWS social science, education, and public engagement professionals — are part of the new resources the Program has brought. They join Rachel Dunham, Seth Winkelhake, Sarah Williams and the rest of the refuge staff as a team committed to enhancing the interaction with our community and connecting with all who share, or will hopefully soon discover, a passion for wildlife, conservation, and the environment.

JOIN

DONATE

RENEW

IN THIS ISSUE

[President's Perch](#)

[Camp Scholarship Help](#)

[Nature's Overlook Store](#)

[Program Updates](#)

[Photo Society](#)

[Ridgefield Friends Invitation](#)

[Urban Program Update](#)

JULY EVENTS

[2nd Saturday Work Party](#)

July 8, 8:45am - noon

[Summer Nature Camp](#)

July 10-14, 8:30am - 4:30pm

[Puddle Stompers](#)

July 19, 1:00 - 2:30pm

Speaking of community impact, I served as a Volunteer Naturalist for several school visits this month, including the Friends' Alternative Outdoor School — a weeklong program for kids who are unable to participate in the overnight camp offered by their schools. Seth, our Environmental Education Specialist, put together a program for Laurel Ridge and Sherwood Middle Schools. It was an amazing week. Too many kids in our immediate neighborhood have little or no experience “in the woods” and many are actually fearful of exploring nature beyond a park or a zoo. By the end of the week, these same kids related the memories and experiences with nature that they will carry with them through their lifetimes. Many of the students who participated in Alternative Outdoor School and field trips to TRNWR live within a few miles but had never been to our refuge.

In another community connection milestone, Rachel, our Public Engagement Coordinator, trained 16 Friends volunteers in the inaugural Nature Ambassador Training class. The intent is to have a corps of volunteers ready to share our conservation story off refuge. Participants learned about environmental interpretation and how to connect with diverse audiences. As a start this summer, they will implement their training at the Oregon Zoo and the park-based Free Lunch program in Tigard/Tualatin.

Clearly, there's a lot to celebrate. What we do as Friends has been crucial in achieving the success of TRNWR to date and the greater success to come through the Urban Refuge Program. Take pride in the difference you have made, and will continue to make, for our community and nature.

CAMP SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE

Help Send a Child to Summer Nature Camp

The Friends of the Refuge Summer Nature Camp starts July 10th and we are almost full. There are a number of campers who are unable to afford the cost of camp, and we have offered scholarships to these children. The need this year is substantial, so if you would like to help send a young person to our 2017 Summer Nature Camp at Tualatin River NWR, please go to our website and make a donation: www.friendsoftualatinrefuge.org/donate. Please include a note that it is to support sending a young person to summer camp. The cost of camp is \$175, but we only request scholarship campers to pay \$50. Any contribution you can make to offset this shortage is most appreciated.

NATURE'S OVERLOOK STORE

Eclipse Gear

Everything you'll want for the eclipse...tee shirts, books and eclipse glasses.

Duck Stamps On Sale

Bio-swale Work Party
July 21, 9:00 - 11:00am

Guided Nature Walk
July 22, 9:00 - 10:30am

Puddle Stompers
July 25, 10:00 -
11:30am

Monthly Board Meeting
July 25, 6:30pm

SOCIAL MEDIA



2017 Federal Migratory Bird Stamps have arrived at Nature's Overlook and are available for purchase! They are a great way to contribute to wetland conservation -- 98% of each \$25 stamp goes directly to that cause. This year we also have Junior Duck Stamps for sale for only \$5 each.

Books

Rite in the Rain Waterproof Notebooks

We have a new shipment of **Rite in the Rain notebooks and pens** – these are perfect for your outdoor activities and would be a great gift for the nature lover in your life! The note pads are a naturalist's best friend – keep notes, make sketches, journal to your heart's content even in the rain. Pens are \$15.95, with refills available. Notebooks start at just \$3.95 – many styles available, including a birding journal. Pencils work just great on these notebooks, but here's the scoop on the special Rite in the Rain pens: they will write on wet paper and UPSIDE DOWN, with pressurized ink that works from -30F to 250F. They say, "... the ink won't leak, evaporate or blow up in your pocket!" We hope you never need to write upside down in -30F weather, but if you do, you'll be prepared with your special pen! And, made in the USA.

Birds of the Pacific Northwest

Please take a look at our very own Tim Blount's new book, "**Birds of the Pacific Northwest**", written with John Shewey. Tim has long been associated with the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, and his harneybirder.com site is very popular and helpful to anyone wanting birding info for that part of Oregon. Birds of the Pacific Northwest shows more than 400 bird species commonly found in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia. This is a full-color guide, with range maps. Beautiful. \$27.95.

If you want your copy to be autographed by Tim, just ask at the Refuge office – that can be arranged!

Wear in the World

Refuge staff and Friends' member John Schweitzer and his mom, Marylu Schweitzer, just returned from a two week tour of the east coast. Marylu shows off her Friends' T-shirt at multiple Refuges and National Park sites.

PROGRAMS

Interpretation and Environmental Education

Building Hope for the Future

**HELP THE
FRIENDS WHILE
YOU SHOP**



About Fred
Meyer
Community
Rewards

amazonsmile

NWRA Alerts

[Sign up to receive alerts](#) from the National Wildlife Refuge Association on legislation that impacts the National Wildlife Refuge System.

This spring, 38 sixth grade students stayed behind from Outdoor School in the Sherwood School District. The reasons for students not participating vary from fear of spending the night away from home in the woods to cultural and medical reasons.

Alternative Outdoor School gives these students the chance to have an equivalent experience, connecting to nature and bonding with fellow students, right in their community. Staff and volunteers from Laurel Ridge Middle School, Sherwood Middle School, and the Refuge provided Environmental Education programming. Locations included the Oregon Zoo, Laurel Ridge MS, Wetzel Woods conservation easement, and of course, the Refuge.

A few memorable quotes from our daily closing circles included: "I got my shoes muddy," "I fell off this big log I was trying to climb, but when my head hit the ground it didn't hurt because the moss and dirt were so soft."

The program was a great success in connecting young people to nature and would not have been possible without the support of our amazing Volunteer Naturalists, the school staff, and Carole Andresen for the use of Wetzel Woods. Thank you to all who participated!

Nature Ambassador Training

This outstanding group of passionate volunteers devoted two Saturdays to learn about interpretation and how to engage with diverse audiences. This summer they will be at the Oregon Zoo on discount Tuesdays and at the free summer lunch program at Atfalati and Tualatin Community Park. Our goal is to connect to our surrounding communities and provide a connection to nature and the Refuge. We hope that this will increase our impact in the community and build meaningful relationships. You could say that we are egg-static!

Restoration

Another month has come and gone and with that another successful work party! A stalwart crew worked through some heavy rain last month to remove a large swath of blackberry along the year-round trail. We will host our next work party on July 8th, same time, same place (8:45am, main office).

This summer will also bring a few new faces to the refuge to work on high priority habitat projects. We will have four Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) members along with their crew leader until the end of August working across all units of the refuge. The YCC is a federal employment program that operates branches in the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US National Forest Service in order to provide "gainful employment to youths age 15 to 18" and with the main goal of accomplishing conservation work on public lands. The crew will participate in many projects, with a focus on invasive plant removal. If you see them working while you're out on the trail say "hi."

PHOTO SOCIETY

Photo Society Meetup for the Aug 21 Eclipse

The Photo Society will be traveling to eastern Oregon for a meetup. The venue will be a board member's property east of John Day. This will be a two night camp out – Saturday August 19 to Monday afternoon, August 21.

This meetup is strictly limited to 15, with 7 current openings as this is published. To get on the list, please contact the Photo Society Board member at photosociety@friendsofualatinrefuge.org. This is first come-first served.

Plan on chipping in for the porta-potties provided for your comfort, and for a portion of the group food. Meals will be community style for Saturday evening, Sunday breakfast, Sunday dinner, and Monday morning. You will be responsible for your snacks and for bringing drinking water for yourself as well as your lunches. There will be NO fires or charcoal BBQ due to extreme fire hazard after the wet spring, so don't plan on any individual cooking. You will be responsible for getting yourself to the meetup site at 4 pm on Sunday afternoon.

We will have two evenings of dark sky photography on Saturday and Sunday nights (note that with the eclipse, there is no moon during the nights!), a Sunday filled with excellent wildlife photography, and of course, the eclipse opportunity on Monday morning.

So if you are interested, send an email now – there are currently only 7 slots for individuals available.

Note: you must request two slots if you are bringing your spouse or significant other. This is an adult-only event, so please no children under 18.

RIDGEFIELD FRIENDS FUNDRAISER INVITE

Save the date for the Friends of the Ridgefield NWR Fundraiser scheduled for Wednesday, July 19, 2017 from 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm, at the new Windy Hills Winery in Ridgefield (1346 S. 38th Court, Ridgefield, WA)! Please join us!

Contact the Ridgefield Friends to RSVP as soon as you are able.

RSVP Info

Victoria Haugen, Board Secretary
Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge
victoriahaugen@yahoo.com
503-927-2254

URBAN PROGRAM

2016 Urban Refuge Annual Report

Discover all the amazing efforts of the USFWS and Friends to share our beloved Portland-Vancouver National Wildlife Refuges with their surrounding communities in the [2016 Urban Refuge Program Annual Report](#). By working in neighborhoods, on our refuges, and with coalitions of partners we continue to make great progress in ensuring a strong future for these special places and their conservation mission.

A week in the life of Steigerwald Lake NWR

Steigerwald Lake NWR is making a name for itself these days. With the support of the Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards (CGRS), the Refuge has been able to host new visitors and welcome new groups of people interested in volunteering. With the support of the Urban Refuge Program, Stewards Volunteer Coordinator, Jared Strawderman, is ensuring that all are welcomed to the Refuge. Several events in one busy June week highlight a variety of partnerships and ways of connecting with our community. The Timbers Soccer Club, Thorns Soccer Club, and Hands On Portland helped to host a “Stand Together” volunteer event at the Refuge where Timber Joey happily put on rubber boots and helped maintain oak plantings.

The following day, the Friends of the Columbia River Gorge and National Wildlife Federation endured a brief downpour on their visit to participate in invasive Himalayan blackberry removal and to learn about the importance of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Lastly, the CGRS hosted an Eco-Blitz on June 17th, offering guided walks and trailhead tabling provided by CGRS, National Fish Hatchery and Wildlife Refuge staff, and the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership. Throw in the middle of that, the biggest event in Clark County, National Get Outdoors Day at Fort Vancouver, at which we which collectively reached over 500 people through volunteers, refuge and CGRS staff. One can clearly see that, working together, the CGRS have been able to serve more people in more ways, by joining together to make these events more achievable and successful. Want to get involved? Contact Jared at jared_strawderman@fws.gov.

Celebrating Emerging Environmental Leaders

The Service is working with community partners to cultivate young leaders and to provide clear pathways for the next generation of diverse leaders in environmental education and conservation.

On Saturday, June 17, we celebrated 20 young adults (ages 18-25) as they graduated from the Environmental Emerging Leaders Program led by Center for Diversity and the Environment and sponsored in part by the Urban Refuge Program. These young leaders come from all walks of life in the Portland metro area and brought their rich life experiences to bear to this training. Many already work in the environmental field and used this training to solidify their leadership skills and make stronger connections within the field. They all return to their schools and jobs having made a commitment to strengthen each other and the environmental community by speaking up around issues that intersect with the environment such as health, access to nature, and equity. Some of them have already started engaging with our refuges such as serving as translators for Tualatin River Bird Festival in May. Be

prepared to see much more of these young people in our midst and among the Portland-Vancouver area's environmental leaders of today and in the future.

FEEDBACK WELCOME

Please help us make this newsletter something you look forward to receiving by sharing ideas and suggestions to improve the content. This is a work in progress, and we look forward to hearing from you! [Click here](#) to email us.

CONTACT US

Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge
19255 SW Pacific Highway
Sherwood, OR 97140
503-625-5944 503-625-5944 x227

www.friendsoftualatinrefuge.org