

**MARCH 2018**

# 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 Don Nelson, President of the Board



### The value of volunteerism on our Refuge

Are you volunteering for the Friends? Are you reporting your volunteer hours each month to the appropriate person (Ask a Board member or email the Friends at [info@friendsoftualatinrefuge.org](mailto:info@friendsoftualatinrefuge.org) if you are not sure who)? If not, you are missing an opportunity to help the Friends, as well as getting a nice recognition for your efforts.

An important recognition event occurred this week. I had the honor of presenting Presidential volunteer service recognition pins at the Board meeting to recognize the many volunteers that contributed significant hours to the Friends in many different capacities. We had 25 volunteers that contributed between 100 and 249 hours last year, 10 that contributed between 250 and 499 hours, and six (6!) that contributed over 500 hours. I was astounded to find out that one of our volunteers in the latter group contributed 1,858 hours. In terms of days, that is 233 days of 8 hours each. What a contribution! For terms of in-kind value used on grant applications, the non-profit association values these hours at \$2425 per hour – that person contributed an in-kind value of \$45,000. Yes, this isn't real money, but it's the VALUE of the hours of service.

How is this useful? I recently signed a letter on behalf of the Friends to support a grant the service was writing to restore part of the refuge. This committed the Friends to providing \$2500 in in-kind support by planting trees/shrubs in support of the grant. This in-kind value is honored by the foundations giving the grant (in this case National Association of Clean Water Agencies) in terms of matching funds for a grant. Many grants don't allow 100% funding but want to see other groups providing some level of funding, and that's where this in-kind volunteerism counts in order to gain the actual dollar funding to buy the planting materials, etc. So your volunteerism is incredibly important and your tracking/reporting of your hours not only can gain you a nice recognition pin but its used to gain the grant dollars needed to do the restoration.

After the recognition, I realized that several of you that volunteer weren't on that list for recognition. Yet I know you have put in more

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## MARCH EVENTS

**Amphibian Egg Mass Survey**

Mar. 3, 8am - noon

**Amphibian Egg Mass Survey**

Mar. 9, 8am - noon

**Puddle Stompers**

Mar. 14, 1 - 2:30pm

**Amphibian Egg Mass Survey**

Mar. 17, 8am - noon

**Puddle Stompers**

Mar. 20, 10-11:30am

**Amphibian Egg Mass Survey**

Mar. 23, 8am - noon

than 100 hours so should have been. Maybe it's an oversight that you weren't asked. If so, now you know – start recording your hours and make certain to submit before December 15 (monthly is better).

And if you aren't volunteering but would like to take this opportunity...there are so many things you can do. Talk to the current Board members that lead the various areas for the Friends. Find something you love to do! And record your volunteer hours. It's a neat way to give back to your community without even giving actual dollars (those are nice too, by the way). And it's a way to reach an annual recognition level that would give you a nice pin for your volunteer vest or other place of honor.

### **Significant changes are in the works at the Refuge**

Larry (our Refuge Manager, sometimes referring to himself to as project manager) gave a summary of upcoming changes that will be happening out at Wapato – things are starting to move towards public access, possibly as soon as sometime next year. They are working on the Environmental plan this year, and funds seem available shortly to replace the pumps, replace the pump area bridge, create a new bridge near the town of Gaston, and plans are in place to remove all the vegetation on the dikes. Lots going on. Larry mentioned work with other County resources to put the trail in place along the old railroad grade (right next to the road). I am really jazzed about the plans I have seen for Wapato – some really interesting opportunities for wildlife viewing seem to be coming. Larry talked about the possibility of non-motorized watercraft and several other interesting proposals.

Local to the Visitor Center – you may know the Chicken Creek is being restored to its former glory. Curt Mykut reported that earth would be moving next year with the goal of removing the old lateral ditch and diverting the creek out of the straight channel into the riverine structure that it formerly had (based on LIDAR images and other work). The neat thing I am looking forward to is that the grasslands are going to change into a year-round marshy structure around the new creek location – optimal for wildlife and wildlife watching. The seasonal trail will see some new changes as well. Keep an eye out for new presentations by Curt to see what has changed since it was presented at the 25th Anniversary celebration back in October.

*Disclaimer – The Service is the formal means of finding out what is happening on our refuge. I am merely trying to make you aware of some upcoming changes that we heard about at the recent Board meeting.*

## **NATURE'S OVERLOOK STORE**

### **Books**

This month we'll focus on journals – we have some interesting options for nature journaling/drawing/recording for yourself or for a friend...full of ideas and inspiration, and to suit many aesthetic tastes. Thanks for your book purchases at Nature's Overlook – you are directly supporting the refuge with each item you select!

***The Naturalist's Notebook:***

**Winter Twigs**  
Mar. 24, 10am - noon

**Spring Break**  
**Exploration Days**  
March 26 - March 30  
10:00am - 1:00pm daily

**Friends Board Meeting**  
Mar 27, 6:30 pm

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**




**HELP THE  
FRIENDS WHILE  
YOU SHOP**



**Keeping A Nature Journal:**

**Nature Observer:**

***And the ever faithful “Rite in the Rain” Birder’s Journal  
(because it rains and rains and rains!):***

 Learn about Fred Meyer Community Rewards



## PROGRAMS

### Interpretation and Environmental Education

Puddle Stompers have been running all year long, twice a month (except for December). This past month these little Puddle Stompers donned their ladybug wings while on a hike with Volunteer Naturalist David. Each month there is a new age-appropriate curriculum for these preschoolers. Bringing the parents along and helping them connect with nature is part of the program.

Keep up on all the latest news, photos, and happenings on the Refuge by following our [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#) accounts and feel free to share with your friends who might not know about the Refuge yet.

### Restoration

Amphibian love is in the air!

The biological team started up amphibian egg mass surveys this month to measure wetland use for some of our more common amphibian species. Staff and volunteers have been conducting weekly surveys across all units of the refuge and have seen some promising signs of amphibian use including lots of Red-legged frog egg masses and even some Northwestern Salamander egg masses in historic Chicken Creek. Amphibian breeding is a great way to help measure habitat quality because they are so sensitive to changes and require rather specific conditions for success. An ideal setting for breeding is still or very slow moving water with vegetation to attach egg masses to and high quality riparian or mixed forest habitat nearby for adults to retreat to once they have laid their eggs. Surveys will continue through March. See if you can hear the familiar croak of the Pacific Chorus frog looking for a mate in the early mornings or late at night.

### NWRA Alerts

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

## PHOTO SOCIETY

**Upcoming March meeting** – Thursday, 3/1, at 7 pm in the Riparian Room

Our Speaker will be Ken Hawkins:

Ken Hawkins is a photojournalist who has covered politics, disasters, and conflict zones—including in Vietnam, Nicaragua, and El Salvador—since 1970, working globally for publications and agencies such as TIME, Sports Illustrated, Fortune, Forbes, Paris Match, Stern, the New York Times, Newsweek, Wired, and the British Broadcasting Corporation. For over two decades, his work was represented by the premier photo agency SYGMA Paris/New York.

Ken has served on the boards of several nonprofit agencies relating to the arts, social action, and photojournalism. He was a founder of the Atlanta Photojournalism Seminar in 1973 and worked with the organization for thirty years. Ken also served as the Atlanta/Southeast chapter president of the American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP), sitting on its national board and executive committee, and serving as ASMP's national secretary. Hawkins lives in Lake Oswego, Oregon, with his wife, Dana, and Zeke, their black Lab. He has two sons, Will and Ben (Ken, that is, not Zeke).

**April Meeting** – will be the first Thursday, April 5, at 7pm in the Riparian Room

The topic will be Microadjusting the focus of telephoto lenses for optimal results.

You've acquired a current camera model and have an autofocus lens greater than 300mm. You focus on a bird's eye, but when you edit your resulting image...you find that the focus is either shifted in front or in back of the eye and the eye is no longer in focus. So what's wrong with the gear? The gear is fine but manufacturing tolerances of the lens, and of the camera, have resulted in a focus shift from where the camera "thinks" the focus should be. This can be adjusted on many of the newer cameras \*\*.

We will demonstrate one of the software driven focus adjustment methods, and will also look at one manual method.

Bring no more than one camera and one telephoto lens. We'll see if we can microalign it (we will have limited capacity – we must be out of the building by 9 pm that evening). First come-first served (see Don to get a numbered ticket when you arrive).

NOTE: \*\* we know that you can adjust Canon 1d series and 5 series cameras, Nikon 85x and D5 series cameras, Pentax 645z, and some of the newer Sony A7r series cameras. If you have a 35mm digital camera other than these, bring your user manual so we can see whether it is possible.

NOTE: This adjustment technique is only needed for autofocus lenses on modern digital camera bodies that are either full frame or APS-C.

### **May Meeting**

The topic will be popular night sky photography with emphasis on the milky way.

Now that we are approaching the best time to see the galactic core of the milky way (May-September), we are going to talk about this again.

We will be preparing to (weather dependent) have a meetup in mid-May to photograph the night sky east of the Cascades.

**No meetings June-August.**

## **GIVE US A SHOUT**

We want to hear from you! Send us your ideas and comments: [info@friendsoftualatinrefuge.org](mailto:info@friendsoftualatinrefuge.org).

## **CONTACT US**

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