



Making Tracks

Highlights of the Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

December 2007

In This Issue

- **News from the Knoll**
 - Wildlife Center Dedication
- **Volunteer Update**
 - 2nd Saturday Work Party
- **Refuge and the Community**
 - Annual Meeting a Success
 - Store Committee Highlights
- **Executive Committee**
 - Oregon Kicker Fund
 - Refuges Generate Money

Web Pages of Interest
[Friends of the Refuge](#)
[Tualatin River NWR](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Region](#)

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News from the Knoll

The light is shining brightly at the end of the tunnel! The construction contract for the Wildlife Center and Administrative Building is nearly complete. Only minor details remain. Staff have settled comfortably into their new offices for the winter and feel very privileged to look out their windows to watch the thousands of migrating waterfowl along with bald eagles, peregrine falcons, snowy egrets and more. Every day brings exciting wildlife watching opportunities as the seasonal wetlands are flooded and the winter birds arrive.

Exhibits in the Wildlife Center are being installed in phases with anticipated completion in late January - just in time for the center's "soft opening". For those of you that haven't yet peeked in the windows, the Wildlife Center encompasses just over 6,000 square feet and includes an exhibit room, environmental education field laboratory, information desk, a Friends group nature store, indoor viewing area, and a multipurpose room. The interpretive exhibits will focus primarily on the broader concepts of wildlife and their habitats, the interconnectedness of lands and waters, and the role of the

National Wildlife Refuge System.

Staff and Friends members are busily preparing to operate the Wildlife Center. We are looking for more volunteers to help out. Our first volunteer training sessions will occur the week of January 21st. Want to learn more? Call Refuge Americorps member, Rachel Kutschera, at 503-625-5944.

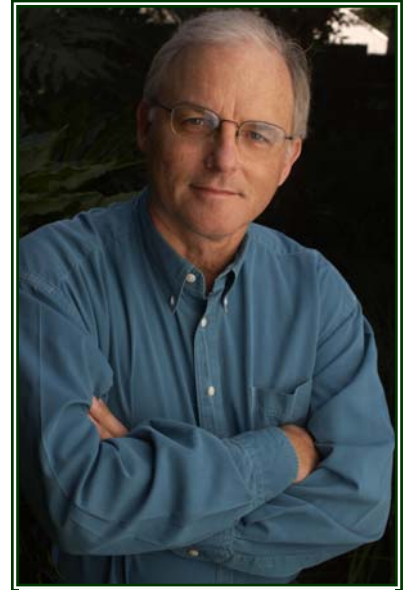
Mark Your Calendars - Wildlife Center Dedication

The date is set and plans are well underway. The Wildlife Center Dedication will be held Saturday March 29th. An opening ceremony with guest speakers will begin at 11:30 a.m. at the Refuge Headquarters. Following a ribbon cutting will be a day of hands-on activities, guided nature walks, and a chance to explore the Wildlife Center.



Interior of Wildlife Center

But that is not all. The Friends and the Refuge are proud and excited to announce that one of our special guests will be Richard Louv, author of the nationally-acclaimed book "*Last Child in the Woods-Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*". Not only will Mr. Louv be speaking at our ceremony, but he has agreed to give a one-hour presentation the evening of the Dedication. Richard Louv is the Chairman of the "Children & Nature Network," an organization that is at the core of an international movement to connect children to nature - both for the health of children's future and for the health of the natural world. Before and after his evening speech (to be held at Tualatin High School) Louv will also host a book-signing, organized and sponsored by the Friends of the Refuge.



Richard Louv, Nationally-acclaimed Author and Lecturer

More details about Richard Louv and the Wildlife Center Dedication will follow in future articles. But for now, look up Richard Louv and Children and Nature Network on the internet or at the library, and learn more about why his message of connecting children to the outdoors is so important to our collective future.

Volunteer Update

Second Saturday Work Party Schedule

December 8th, 9 a.m. – Noon

This is the second part of the November work party planting near the administrative office and Wildlife Center. More than 100 shrubs and trees need to be planted!

Mark your calendar and come if you can; bring your friends, family and neighbors. Children are welcome, just bring along enough adults for supervision. The work will be on the Atfalat'i Unit off Hwy 99W. Meet at the main parking lot. Wear sturdy shoes and bring gloves if you have them. Please arrive by 8:45 a.m.; we'll start at 9:00 a.m. and work to noon, possibly later. Snacks provided.

Go to www.friendsoftualatinrefuge.org/volunteer for more information.

Refuge and the Community

2007 Annual Member Meeting a Success

With over 100 people attending, the Friends of the Refuge Annual Member meeting was a huge success. A special thanks to everyone that planned, attended, and participated in the meeting. Members started showing up very early to get the first glimpses of the Wildlife Center and Nature's Overlook, the new store managed and operated by the Friends. Prior to the start of the member meeting everyone enjoyed a delicious brunch and relaxed while being entertained by the Portland Community College jazz singers and the Sherwood Historical Society provided an historical musical selection courtesy of June Reynolds and Clyde List.

The member meeting kicked off with a beautiful video presentation of Refuge scenes from the past year with photos contributed by Bjorn Fredrickson, Bill Griffiths, Bill Stahlin, and the Refuge staff. After introducing the current Board members, reports by the treasurer and each committee chair highlighted the successes of the past year and the goals of the coming year. Chris Lapp and Kim Strassburg, from the Refuge staff, gave a "State of the Refuge" report which included more information on land acquisition and restoration projects.

Norman Penner, the president of the Friend's Board of Directors, gave a brief report on the "State of the Friends". He also announced that nationally renowned author, lecturer, and nature advocate, Richard Louv, will be attending the Wildlife Center Dedication in March! This will be a tremendous opportunity to promote the Refuge and all members will be asked to help make the Grand Opening a success (see information above).

The member meeting concluded with the election of Richard Winn (incumbent), Steve Burke, and Chuck Britton to the Board of Directors for the Friends. After the meeting adjourned a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for Nature's Outlook and members were able to get some early Christmas shopping in prior to the soft opening of the store in late January. A special thanks to the Planning and Store Committees for helping make the 2007 annual meeting so successful and enjoyable.



A Busy Opening for Nature's Outlook

Store Committee Highlights - The Little Committee That Could

What happens when you take a small group of dedicated volunteers, hundreds of hours of volunteer time, and add lots of learning to their existing expertise? At Friends of the Refuge, you get a beautiful new nature store called Nature's Outlook.

With a generous grant from the Denison Family Foundation through the efforts of Carol Santesson and Norm Penner and a perfect name suggested by Linda Clark, winner of the Name the Store Contest, the committee set off on a mountain of tasks faced by those who start a new business from scratch. A business plan and marketing plan was developed, a volunteer manual was drafted, point of sale and credit card processing equipment was researched and purchased, and merchandise was selected, ordered, marked and displayed.

At the end of the Annual Meeting, Carol Santesson cut the ribbon to officially open the store for a one-day, members only shopping opportunity. When the dust settled and the crowd dwindled, committee members heaved a sigh of relief and counted up over \$1,700 in income.



Carol Santesson Opens Nature's Outlook

All of the merchandise has been repacked and put away until the store opens for regular hours the end of January 2008. Remember that you will always receive a 10% discount on items purchased at the store when you show your valid membership card.

A huge thank you to our dedicated store committee members:

Bob Swanson, Tom Hebert, Arlin Inman, Judy Albertson, Mynde Rein, Carolyn Penner, Mort Etlestein, Kim Strassburg, Virginia Parks, and Rachel Kutschera.

We also want to thank all of the members who purchased items during the store opening. Thank you for supporting the Friends of the Refuge.



Nature's Overlook Store Committee

Executive Committee

Oregon Kicker Refund Donations

In the next few weeks, Oregonians will be receiving checks in the mail from the largest kicker refund in State history. This refund is part of a state law requiring, in short, the legislature to return tax money collected in excess of their budget. While the State was able to meet its budget this year, it is well known that the budget for the National Wildlife Services is severely under-funded. In fact, this reduction in budget will cause the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to implement a 20% reduction in staff by 2009, leaving more than 200 refuges unstaffed if budget needs are not met.

Please consider donating part, or all, of your kicker refund to the Friends of the Refuge. This money will stay locally to help meet the needs of our own Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. As a reminder and additional incentive, taxes paid to the State are tax-deductible at the Federal level. All money returned by kicker refunds becomes taxable again at the Federal level on this year's taxes. Donating to the Friends will return that money to tax-deductible status.

National Wildlife Refuges Provide Economic Boost

Recreational use on national wildlife refuges generated almost \$1.7 billion in total economic activities during fiscal year 2006. According to a study, nearly 35 million people visited national wildlife refuges in 2006, supporting almost 27,000 private sector jobs and producing about \$543 million in employment income.

To read the entire report titled *Banking on Nature 2006*, go to <http://www.fws.gov/> and click on the link – Banking on Nature Report
