



Making Tracks

Highlights of the Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

February 2008

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Service, Pacific Region](#)

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News from the President

Memo from Norman Penner to Friends of the Refuge

February 1, 2008

Recent newspaper articles have reported that Friends of the Refuge and the Northwest Environmental Defense Center (NEDC) are or may be suing Howard Grabhorn, owner of the Lakeside Reclamation Landfill in Beaverton (see 1/31/08 Oregonian article "Permitting and Protecting the Polluters", by Steve Duin).

As President of the Friends of the Refuge, I believe I owe you all an explanation of exactly what is happening. I and several board members have participated in meetings with DEQ and given testimony in their Public Hearing along with other citizen groups trying to impress upon them the danger this unlined landfill poses for the Tualatin River and the Refuge wildlife. As Steve Duin points out in his article, DEQ seems to want to protect the landfill owner more than the environment. Our past efforts have not been as effective as we had hoped.

Some months ago NEDC became interested in this matter and its legal members began a review of DEQ records on this landfill and the environmental laws that may apply. When it was recently discovered that there was a direct connection between holding ponds on the landfill and the Tualatin River and that Mr. Grabhorn has never obtained the required pollution control permit that is required by the Clean Water Act of 1977, NEDC decided it was time to act and the Friends were asked to join them.

Violations of the Clean Water Act can be enforced through civil enforcement, criminal prosecution, or initiation of citizen suits. Before a citizen(s) can file a citizen suit against any alleged violator, the Clean Water Act requires citizen-plaintiffs to send a 60-day Notice of (their) intent to File Suit to the entity for its alleged violation, and copy the state regulatory agency and the U.S. EPA Administrator. NEDC sent Mr. Grabhorn a Notice of Intent on January 24, 2008. The receipt of this notice initiates a 60-day period in which the alleged violator must come into compliance with its permit or Administrative Order in order to avoid a court case.

This 60-day period will also be used by the Friends Board to evaluate Mr. Grabhorn's reactions and decide if it will actually "sign on" to a lawsuit. At the moment no lawsuit has been filed. I would encourage Friends members to become informed on the Clean Water Act and its process. I have found one website that gives an easily understood explanation of the Act. It is the home page of the Ohio Environmental Council at www.theOEC.org. Look for the "Guide to Clean Water Act Citizen Suits" page.

The existence of this "point source" pollution of the Tualatin by the landfill

was first identified in the findings of the Reclamation Landfill Remedial Investigation requested by DEQ. DEQ has now scheduled an information meeting about the findings of this investigation Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the Washington County Offices Cafeteria, 155 N. First Avenue, Hillsboro, OR.

According to the Notice of this meeting issued by DEQ its purpose is to "share information about the recent and ongoing environmental investigation at Lakeside Reclamation Landfill". Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss findings with DEQ staff. Maximum participation by Friends of the Refuge is very important so I would like everyone that possibly can to attend and ask them appropriate questions. Over 150 individuals attended the previous hearing and the majority was in favor of closing the landfill. This large attendance impressed DEQ and another large turnout the 12th would help significantly.

For more information on NEDC and the Friends please go to the following WebPages:

NEDC, www.nedc.org

Friends of the Refuge, www.friendsoftualatinrefuge.org

If you have comments or questions you can send me an email at: President@friendsoftualatinrefuge.org

Volunteer Update

Volunteer Positions in the Wildlife Center

A second training is scheduled for those who are interested in volunteering in the Wildlife Center but weren't able to join us the first time. The Center opened January 29 with a team of 27 volunteers; however, this is not enough to fill all the shifts. We need more volunteers for the weekends and to relieve the current volunteers. The training will be held at the Wildlife Center Saturday, March 1, from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Please visit the FOR website at: www.friendsoftualatinrefuge.org

Download an application and return it to Rachel or Kim (contact information listed on form) by Wednesday, February 27.

Our first few days of being open at the Center were a success! Join us during this exciting time at the Refuge!

Refuge and the Community

Housing Needed for Summer Refuge Intern

Can you provide housing for an intern for the summer? Refuge staff will recruit for a Biological Resource Assistant through the Student Conservation Agency (SCA) for the 2008 field season. SCA does cover for basic expenses through a travel grant and a food allowance, but housing is responsible for the host agency. If the Friends membership can offer housing, then the staff will proceed with screening and interviewing candidates. The position is important as it provides needed assistance in habitat restoration maintenance such as watering, mowing, and weeding of new plantings and helps out the biological monitoring program that includes mapping invasive plants. The Friends have done a pretty good job of turning out volunteers to help with winter plantings, but the summer work needs out weigh what we can provide the Refuge. The long term goal is to have refuge housing available for seasonal positions such as this, but

funding for a bunkhouse is still out a few years. If you are interested in assisting the Refuge in this endeavor please contact Deputy Refuge Manager, Chris Lapp (503) 625-5944.

Grand Opening Update

The Grand Opening of the Wildlife Center on March 29, 2008 is quickly approaching. You won't want to miss this event or any of the activities planned. The dedication will take place at 11:30am at the Refuge headquarters on SW Pacific Hwy and include an 11:30am ribbon cutting along with comments from local and national dignitaries.

To cap the events of the day, the Friends of the Refuge and the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge are presenting a lecture by nationally renowned author, Richard Louv. Tickets are required for this event which will be held at the Tualatin High School auditorium. For more information on the Grand Opening events and how to purchase tickets, visit our website:

www.FriendsoftheRefuge.org

or visit www.fws.gov/tualatinriver/specialevents
