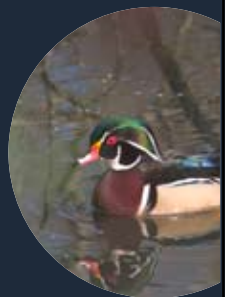
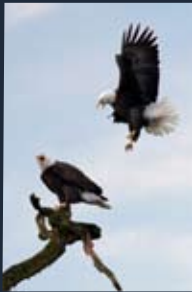
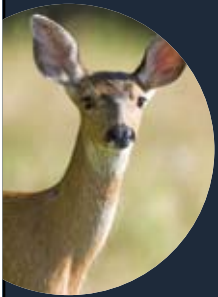




ANNUAL REPORT 2008



**Friends of Tualatin River
National Wildlife Refuge**



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We want to take this opportunity to recognize and thank all the Past Presidents of the Friends of the Refuge whose dedication, elbow grease, and extraordinary powers of persuasion were instrumental in helping the Refuge evolve to the stage it has reached today!

1994-95:	Lavern Cary
1996:	Bob Bryant
1997-99:	Joan Patterson
2000:	Jane Foreman
2001:	Jane Foreman and Joan Patterson
2002:	Scott Schroeder
2003:	Scott Schroeder and Joan Patterson
2004:	Joan Patterson
2005-08:	Norm Penner

2008 Annual Report

Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Management consultants have long recognized that organizations—like other living things—experience phases of growth and/or decline. The exact number of stages attributed to typical organizational life cycle varies depending upon which consultant one asks. However, most seem to agree that organizations go through stages of life similar to the following:

- **Infancy (start-up)-** In the infancy stage a board, usually composed of the organization's founders, thinks about and performs the work of the organization. Usually there is little planning, since needs are held to the obvious. Boards make policies and do fund raising on an as-needed basis.
- **Juvenile (growth period)-** In this stage the board may begin thinking of acquiring staff as work increases but it still focuses on operations. During this stage the board may begin to see a need for more formal systems and oversight, but often is reluctant to make large changes.
- **Adolescence (growth continues)-** The board begins to struggle with the variety of rapidly changing roles, increased demands on their time and increased attention to governance. They begin to think of hiring staff to carry out the day-to-day operations. Committees are established to carry out operational/administrative functions so board can focus on governance.
- **Maturity (established)-** At this stage, the organization has staff to carry out day-to-day operations and has established committees, allowing board to focus on policy. Even in the mature stage of board development change is constant, or should be. A mature organization can become an unhealthy organization when there is no change within it.

A review of the life cycle of the Friends of the Refuge (FOR) shows that it has evolved through the same stages. Initial efforts (infancy) began in 1991 when a group of Sherwood residents (Founders) contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and requested it establish a refuge along the Tualatin River. The Friends' infancy period was an extended one as it lasted some 11 years. During that period the FWS began acquiring land and FOR focused on advocating for funds to make those purchases, to construct a wildlife center and open part of the Refuge to the public. Member participation consisted mostly of restoration work – removing fences and farm structures and implements, clearing land of non-native vegetation and planting native species. FOR also took steps to become a qualified non-profit organization. The board prepared bylaws and filed Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State on Nov. 3, 1993. On August 22, 1996, FOR received IRS recognition as 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, exempting it from federal income tax.

During this period the composition of the board stayed fairly consistent. The same individuals were re-elected year after year. When a board member resigned or chose to not run for re-election, it was often difficult to find interested replacement candidates. (I became a member of Friends and was elected to the board simultaneously when I attended an Annual Membership Meeting in 2001 and the board had not found a member willing to come on the board. I was first elected president in 2005). Membership grew very slowly, as there was little benefit in membership. Access to the refuge was restricted to special events such as the monthly restoration projects and the annual Migratory Songbird Festival. This event was the primary venue to recruit members.

The Friends organization finally entered its juvenile stage at the Grand Opening of the Atfalati (Steinborn) Unit to the public in June of 2006. Trails had been constructed, informational signage installed and observation decks constructed so visitors could finally experience the Refuge's natural benefits on a regular basis. This event attracted a great deal of attention throughout the Portland metropolitan area. The Friends offered one-year's membership free to anyone attending the Grand Opening and agreeing to provide volunteer service if asked. Several hundred took up the offer. Unfortunately, the Friends board was not able to provide appropriate incentives to convert these new members to dues paying members at the end of their free year. However, through its public relations and advocacy efforts the Friends had been able to gather strong support for the construction of a facility to serve as an orientation point for visitors and ground was broken the same month as the Grand Opening. The board found itself dealing with new issues and a need to plan ahead. The wildlife center would include space for a gift/book store that would be operated by the Friends so business plans needed to be drawn up. A store committee was appointed.

The new facility would also have a classroom dedicated to environmental education. Developing and operating this educational activity also fell to the Friends, as the Refuge did not have staff allocation for this. Another committee was established. More planning for volunteer staffing and program content was needed as was funding to support these new programs. During

this two-year period the Friends board experienced some serious growing pains as it passed from its juvenile period to adolescence.

The Friends clearly entered adolescence upon the official opening of the Wildlife Center on March 29, 2008. The Nature's Overlook store had opened in January so its volunteer staff had an opportunity to gather experience before the official opening. In previous years, planning for special events had been somewhat last-minute with little advance planning or fund raising. Everyone agreed that the dedication of the Wildlife Center should be a significant event with the participation of local and national officials. It was also decided that a nationally recognized speaker was needed to attract the public's attention to the event. All of this would require significant funds, which the Friends did not have. It became clear to the Friends' leaders that this event would require careful, advance planning if it was going to be a success. As luck would have it, a simple phone call by visitor services manager Kim Strassburg and myself resulted in securing Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, not only to be the keynote speaker at the dedication but also to give an evening lecture at a local school auditorium. The dedication drew more than 600 people and the evening event drew some 500 people and raised enough money to cover its expenses.

Management consultants also say that there will be struggles in an organization's adolescent stage which often lead to loss of dedicated and capable board members due to uncertainties and lack of

established policies. The Friends have experienced some of this during its adolescence but has been able handle this challenge successfully. A new set of bylaws has been developed to more accurately reflect the needs and responsibilities of the Friends. To deal with the lack of established policies, the board engaged a professional consultant to help develop a long-range strategic plan. This plan is now complete and we have already taken steps to carry out a key task in that plan. The day-to-day operational and management requirements of the organization have grown to the point that a volunteer executive/president simply cannot do the job effectively. The plan recommends that a part-time salaried executive be hired to manage operations. This will require that Friends find sustainable funding resources. Toward that end we have engaged a professional grant writer.

Today, FOR continues to be in its adolescent phase but this meeting is an important part of its moving toward maturity. The new bylaws will provide a firm foundation for the development of good policies. They also contain specific requirements for committees, authority and duties of officers, etc.

General members will also have the opportunity to elect several new members to the FOR board who will bring with them new skills and fresh points of view. FOR members can also help in the maturing process by becoming actively involved in the various programs, serving on committees, volunteering to work in the store and recruiting new members. The following committee reports contain strong evidence that this has been a very successful year of which FOR members can be proud. With your continued support, 2009 will be an even greater success.

Norman Penner
President

FINANCIAL REPORT
Submitted by Peter Hainley, Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Submitted by Chris Casebeer, Chair

In March of this year the Friends adopted a new structure of our membership levels. We implemented the 'Circle of Friends' based on the way we care for and are all around the Refuge at different levels of commitment and involvement. What kind of Friend are you?

Along with a small increase in most of the membership dues, we are beginning a feature in our newsletter acknowledging all our returning Friends and Welcoming our new Friends. Watch for your names!

As of this morning (11/22/08) there are 257 current memberships with the Friends.

Our automatic E-mail reminder program continues to be temperamental but is being monitored more closely to resolve the inconsistent performance. To that end it is imperative that the Friends have a VALID e-mail address for each member. Please take a few moments to follow the links through the Friends website to e-mail Membership and let us know what your current e-mail address is. You can also drop a note at the Nature's Overlook store to be passed on to Membership.

Because of the automatic reminder's spotty performance, during the months of September and October just over 400 reminder e-mails and postcards were sent out to ensure ALL members, past and present have been reminded how important it is to keep their membership current.

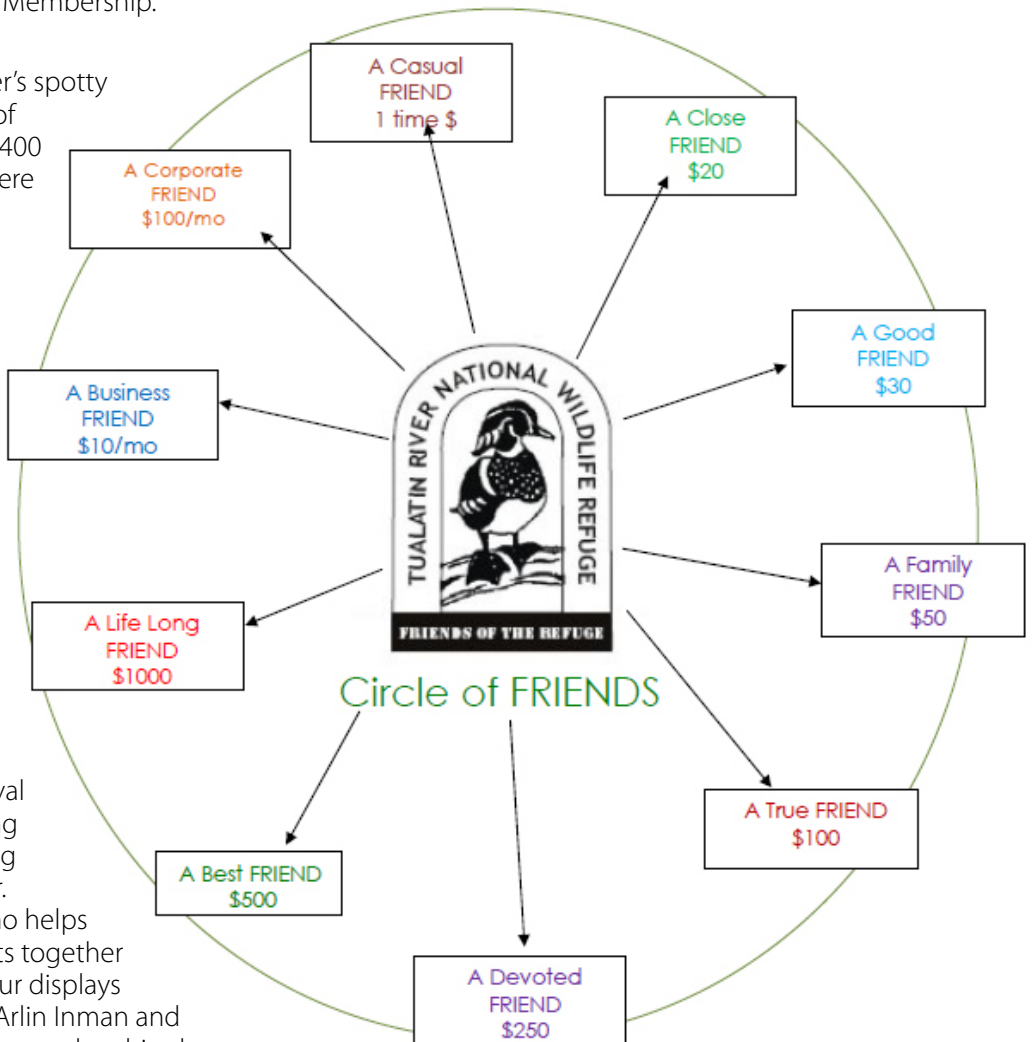
We have also committed to being more vigilant with sending reminder postcards to those members that do not have e-mail.

Thanks go to Marilyn Stinnett, Peggy Schiller, Carolyn Uyemura, Betty Muzzall, Paul Jausi and Noreen O'Connor (the membership team) who always step up to help at functions like the dedication in March, Joes in September, The Great Onion Festival in October and the Annual Meeting in November. Thanks to Becky Long who fills in whenever we need her. Special Thanks to Virginia Parks who helps out when she's asked. She also puts together the most awesome materials for our displays and brochures. And Thank You to Arlin Inman and Judy Anderson for helping process membership dues.

Thanks to the store volunteers for handling membership dues and forms. Thanks also go to the Refuge staff and all the board members for their comments, ideas, suggestions and support of the Membership Team.

The Membership Team cannot grow the Friends by ourselves, we need your help! Each of you can spread the word about the wonderful place we have in our refuge and how very important it is to help support it. Check with your employer to see if they will match your donation or consider joining our circle as Business or Corporate Friends. Encourage your friends, family, neighbors and co-workers to not only come and experience what a great place it is, but to join the growing circle that is the Friends of the Refuge and be active in helping restore and preserve habitat and wildlife for all to enjoy for years and years to come.

Remember - Christmas is coming, please consider gift memberships for friends and family, it's a TAX DEDUCTABLE present!



RESTORATION COMMITTEE

Submitted by Bob Swanson, Chair

One of the primary functions of the Restoration Committee is to assist the Refuge in restoring habitat through tree planting and maintenance. We do this through the Second Saturday (of the month) restoration work parties which occur throughout the year, although we may have work days more frequently in the winter when there is a lot of planting to do. The 2007 – 2008 planting season started with three Saturday events near the Wildlife Center. We planted native shrubs near the new buildings, some trees around the parking area, and Garry Oaks on the slope leading down to the highway and in the low land just North of the Wildlife Center. It was disappointing in late summer to see the leaves turn brown on several of the oaks and I fear that many will not green up in the spring.

Then we spent a couple work days planting Nelson's Checker Mallow at Oleson and Dennis. This is a native plant that had become almost extinct in the Willamette Valley and our refuge is one of the sites that we hope will foster a healthy population. Almost all the planted plugs were thriving through early summer and then died back in late summer, which is the natural course. We are expecting they will be bright and green again in the spring.

Next we planted trees and shrubs on the Atfalati unit near the old riparian forest between the river and the walking trail. We spent the spring and summer work days on the 5S section of Atfalati marking the naturally-seeded trees in the mowed area near the river. These little trees had been seeded from the old trees lining the river bank and were having a hard time competing with the blackberries and grasses. We identified some trees that were roughly in rows and tubed and staked them so that it will be easy to mow the blackberries and leave the little trees to grow.

Ninety two different folks volunteered for restoration work during the season, many came out on several different days. In addition, the Prescott Bluebird Restoration Project received a grant to purchase bird-friendly shrubs and turned out 159 volunteers to take care of the planting. Friends of Trees held their commemorative planting on the refuge and turned out a huge crowd of nearly 300 people to plant trees on a Sunday morning in memory of their loved ones. There were only about two trees per person for that event so we encouraged our FOR volunteers to stay home on that day!

Big thanks to the following people who contributed 15 or more hours toward restoration work during the last fiscal year: Hugh Black, Ginny Maffitt, Norene O'Connor, Rick Ross, Bernie Smith, Bob Swanson and Gary Vallens. In addition there are three guys that contribute major amounts of time. They are really unpaid, part time workers, Bob and Kevin Fuquay and Mike Skinner. Although it is not really restoration work, Steve Mauvais has been very dedicated in coming out weekly to count shorebirds and logged 65 hours.

Bit by bit we finish projects, plant trees, a few don't survive, the beavers cut down a few, the deer severely browse some, but many survive and thrive. We are making a difference and helping to transform this place more closely to its natural state.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Submitted by Steve Burke, Chair

This year, the Board of Directors contracted with an experienced strategic planner to assist the Board in developing a functional long-range plan for the continued growth and strengthening of the Friends. The plan forecasts critical goals over the next five years in all areas of the organization, including fundraising, development, membership, and education. One of the immediate goals is to develop funding to hire a part-time executive director to facilitate the educational programs and daily administration of the organization. Since the opening of the wildlife center, the refuge has new opportunities to work with the public in bringing wildlife education to a wider audience, including local

schools. However, this creates a significant demand on the existing Board and volunteers, thus necessitating the addition of paid staff to manage the workload and promote further expansion.

The Strategic Plan includes building a new development and fundraising program, which will work in harmony with membership recruitment and development. It also anticipates working with organizations that share common goals, thereby forging new alliances and sharing resources for mutual benefit. It will also build relations with local business and promote the economic benefits of the refuge in the local and regional business community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008

<i>Norman Penner, President</i>	<i>2006-2008</i>
<i>Paul Jaussi, Vice President</i>	<i>2006-2008</i>
<i>Steve Burke, Secretary</i>	<i>2007-2009</i>
<i>Peter Hainley, Treasurer</i>	<i>2006-2008</i>
<i>Chuck Britton</i>	<i>2007-2009</i>
<i>Cheryl Hart</i>	<i>2006-2008</i>
<i>Becky Long</i>	<i>2006-2008</i>
<i>Barbara Shields*</i>	<i>2006-2008</i>
<i>Virginia Parks</i>	<i>2006-2008</i>
<i>Rick Ross*</i>	<i>2006-2008</i>
<i>Dick Winn*</i>	<i>2007-2009</i>

** Member resigned before term completed due to personal reasons.*

NATURE'S OVERLOOK SALES OUTLET

Submitted by Cheryl Hart, Chair

January 29, 2008, was an exciting day for the Friends of the Refuge! That is the day we opened the doors of our nature store, Nature's Overlook, located in the Wildlife Center, to the public.

The Store Committee and other volunteers had put in hundreds of hours preparing for this day. The members of The Store Committee are Arlin Inman, Carolyn Penner, Bob Swanson, Virginia Parks, Mynde Rein, Tom Hebert, and Cheryl Hart. Judy Albertson and Mort Ettlstein were members of the committee prior to and at the beginning of the store operation. We also received great assistance from Kim Strassburg and Rachel Kutschera. The committee developed a business plan. Bob and Judy researched, recommended, and programmed a point-of-sale computer system with assistance from Scott Lukens, owner of Backyard Birds, and his staff, and advised on credit card services. Kim and the Merchandise Subcommittee, made up of Carolyn, Arlin, Tom, and Cheryl, selected and purchased store fixtures and merchandise. Rachel headed up the recruiting, screening, and training of volunteers. Matt Hasti, with the FWS Regional office, designed our store logo as a volunteer donation.

A generous grant from the Dennison Family Foundation had been dedicated to the development of the store. This start-up funding enabled the store to select quality equipment, fixtures and merchandise for our operation.

We currently have 34 trained volunteers, all Friends members, who serve two or more four-hour shifts each month in the store and information area. Additional volunteers were trained on November 1, 2008. These volunteers staff the store and make our operation possible. The Store Committee, Merchandise Subcommittee, and other volunteers have contributed nearly 4,500 hours of time on behalf of Nature's Overlook during 2008.

The store is open from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. (5:00 P.M. on weekends from Memorial Day until Labor Day) Tuesdays through Sundays. Since our January opening, the Wildlife Center has hosted some 18,000 visitors. Those visitors who signed our guest book have come from 38 different states and 10 foreign countries.

During our first 9 months of operation, we have had sales of \$33,856 (through October 23). FOR memberships accounted for \$750 of that income. There are over 700 items in our inventory with a cost of inventory on hand of approximately \$15,380. Our best sales day was March 29, the Wildlife Center Dedication. On that day we brought in \$1993.08. Richard Louv's publisher allowed us to sell the new edition of his book, Last Child in the Woods, prior to its national release date and store volunteers provided their usual level of efficient enthusiastic customer service to our many visitors.

In spite of the tightening economy, Nature's Overlook continues

to do business far above our original projections. Because of our relationship to the Refuge, we operate with very low overhead. Space, utilities, and most of our store furniture is provided by FWS. We have no paid staff. So, factoring in the limited costs of fixtures and supplies, the store has shown a profit of approximately \$15,000 in its first 9 months of operation.

Carolyn Penner has headed up the Merchandise Subcommittee. With the subcommittee's guidance, she has purchased merchandise from some 50 different vendors. While only our logo merchandise and our "Mount Hood" message boards are exclusive to Nature's Overlook, we do seek out appropriate merchandise from local artisans. Some of these local items include prints and note cards by 7 different artists and photographers, brass wind chimes, rusty garden art, garden stakes, and fancy bookmarks. Several of the books we carry are written by local authors, and we will soon be carrying a line of children's books written by a woman from Oregon City and illustrated by another woman from Beaverton. All products sold at the store relate directly to the mission of the refuge.

Arlin Inman has acted as Volunteer Store Manager. As such, he has designed displays, shifted merchandise to feature new items, monitored inventory to determine re-order dates, reconciled daily sales reports and made regular bank deposits. He has also filled in last minute when no one has signed up for a shift.

Looking for a pair of earrings made from recycled cereal boxes (you won't believe how cute they are!), lovely nature motif gift items by Gwen Frostic, or a hand carved walking stick? Nature's Overlook is the place to go!

One unique line of merchandise carried by our store comes from PamPeana. Pablo Merlo Flores, the owner of PamPeana, is also the owner of two art galleries in the Portland area. These galleries showcase fine artists from the Northwest and Latin America. Nature's Overlook carries items created by crafts people from Argentina and other parts of the world. Sustainability and Fair Trade are hallmarks of Pablo's business. The items carried in Nature's Overlook such as beautiful hand-carved wood and glass art objects, are made from sustainable materials. For example, the wood carvings are from construction debris and deadfall trees with no paint or stains used. The artisans also receive fair payment for their work.

As a result of the store having purchased many of

Pablo's art objects, he has approached the Friends with some exciting new partnership ideas. Among his suggestions are developing unique art items using logos from the Friends, Nature's Overlook, and the Refuge. He will have his artisans create medallions, coasters, magnets, and other items using our logos as well as other icons of the refuge such as the Great Blue Heron, American Gold Finch, the Bald Eagle, and Wood Ducks.

As a part of this partnership, we encourage you to visit Pablo's Galleries and, when making a purchase, show

your Friends of the Refuge card. Pablo will donate 10% of each purchase by a Friends member back to the Friends.

Friends members also receive a 10% discount on all purchases at Nature's Overlook. So when you shop at our store, you are showing your support for the Refuge and being a true Friend of the Refuge. All profits from sales at the store return directly to the Friends of the Refuge. This means that these funds stay right here at our Refuge and can be used to help to accomplish our broad mission including restoring and protecting Refuge habitats and providing wildlife-related education and recreation.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Submitted by Becky Long, Chair

This year featured several program highlights:

26 members attended our first event of the year, a Birding class hosted by Doug Robberson on Jan 16th followed by a birdwalk on Jan 19th.

On Feb 15th Paul Sullivan led a walk and talk through the fog, focusing on sounds birds make since we couldn't see them. We learned there are many ways to identify birds!

March 29th was the dedication of the new Education-Interpretive Center, and a presentation from our guest lecturer, Richard Louv. This was a major undertaking and a very successful event for the Friends as well as the Fish and Wildlife Service.

April 19th Doug Robberson presented a program about Amphibians on the refuge.

We had no programs in May or June due to reorganization of committees and vacation schedules.

July 17th Jim Johnson presented an informative program on dragonflies and damselflies.

Jim is the President of the Odonata Society of Oregon and very knowledgeable in his field.

August 16th Debra Hazelett, Executive Director of Butterflies Forever, taught us about butterflies, moths and what to plant in our gardens to attract them.

In September the Program and Membership Committees were officially incorporated into the Development Committee according to our new Strategic Plan.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Submitted by Berk Moss, Chair

The Environmental Education program is carried out in close coordination with the Refuge. The success of the program can be credited to a combination of a Friends grant-supported staff member, a group of nearly 20 Volunteer Naturalists, a long-standing 5-member teacher advisory committee, the Americorps program, and Refuge staff. The support of the Refuge staff in creating a seamless partnership to deliver the environmental education program is remarkable. With this high degree of cooperation, the program has been able to launch and grow and shows all signs of continued and dramatic success.

Environmental Education program highlights from the last fiscal year are detailed below.

Funding: The Education program has been financially supported by Friends of the Refuge through direct funding of our current Americorps position and through grant support. The Governor's Fund for the Environment grant administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation supports our Environmental Education Specialist position that was hired in December 2007 and will continue until May 2009. The focus of this grant project is to establish curriculum for use in the new classroom. A grant from General Electric has supported the acquisition of equipment and materials for the program. These include such items as teacher workshop supplies, water testing kits, field trip materials and visual aids, and training costs for volunteer naturalists. A grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust supported the previous Americorps position, as well as library and support materials for volunteers.

Curriculum: We've been busy selecting equipment and instructional aids to support the new classroom and we've been developing and revising our field trip activity guide for teachers. This guide now is over 300 pages and is available to teachers either in a CD given out at our teacher orientation workshops or online. Included are 14 new curriculum activities designed specifically for the environmental education laboratory.

Teacher Training: Four teacher orientation trainings held this year reached 77 teachers. One of these occurred in partnership with Oregon State University's "Oregon Natural Resources Education Program," and was targeted for teachers with students who are learning English. In addition, we conducted outreach to 39 pre-service teachers and 45 non-formal educators, such as parent and scout groups.

Volunteers: Volunteers are the backbone of the program. Our Volunteer Naturalists have accompanied over 2,200 individuals in on-site field trip programs this year. Most of our field trips are for students in Kindergarten through 8th grade, but others range in age from very young Head Start children to graduate

students from local universities. Increased participation in our teacher orientation sessions and developing contacts with local schools lead us to anticipate dramatic growth in environmental education visitors over the next few years.

Community volunteers contributed 513 hours in conducting environmental education activities. In the last few months we have conducted a series of training sessions for new and returning Volunteer Naturalists. This 20-hour course has honed the skills of our volunteers as they prepare to host another school year of refuge field trips. Professional education consultant/teachers contributed 193 hours of in-kind assistance. Last summer, our teacher advisory group spent a whole-day retreat discussing the experience we've gained since our public opening and outlining changes in our field trip guide and planning future efforts in environmental education. Our Americorps individual placement member contributed 573 hours of service in education program in assisting with program development and management. The Americorps "education award" member contributed 75 hours of service in education program by initiating "Youth Education Program" and weekend family education activities.

Volunteer Spotlight: All of our volunteers are key to our program success and we would like to spotlight two such dedicated people. Larry Harrington has been a Volunteer Naturalist since the inception of the program in 2006. He accompanies almost every field trip, serves as a rover most Sundays, and can be counted on to help at Refuge special events. Michele Shapiro designed a Raptor Adaptation Activity for middle school students. This well-researched program is about raptors found on the Refuge and their habitat, and includes a power point presentation with many dramatic photos illustrating various adaptations and explains how various physical and behavioral traits help with the raptor's success. The lesson is accompanied by several hands-on activities. Thanks to Larry and Michele and our entire crew of education volunteers!

The Future: We look forward to continued growth and development in the Environmental Education program. On the horizon are several initiatives such as helping the Refuge develop a formal partnership with the Sherwood School District, continuing to foster the Americorps program, increased outreach to educators and schools, and new partnerships in providing nature education training and resources to teachers.

SPECIAL REPORT:

West Bull Mountain Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) Submitted by Dick Winn, FOR Member

The Washington County Planning Department has initiated the planning for future development for a portion of Bull Mountain.

The Refuge does, however, encourage wildlife pathways to the Refuge from the developed area---both here, in West Bull Mountain, and in other parts of Washington County.

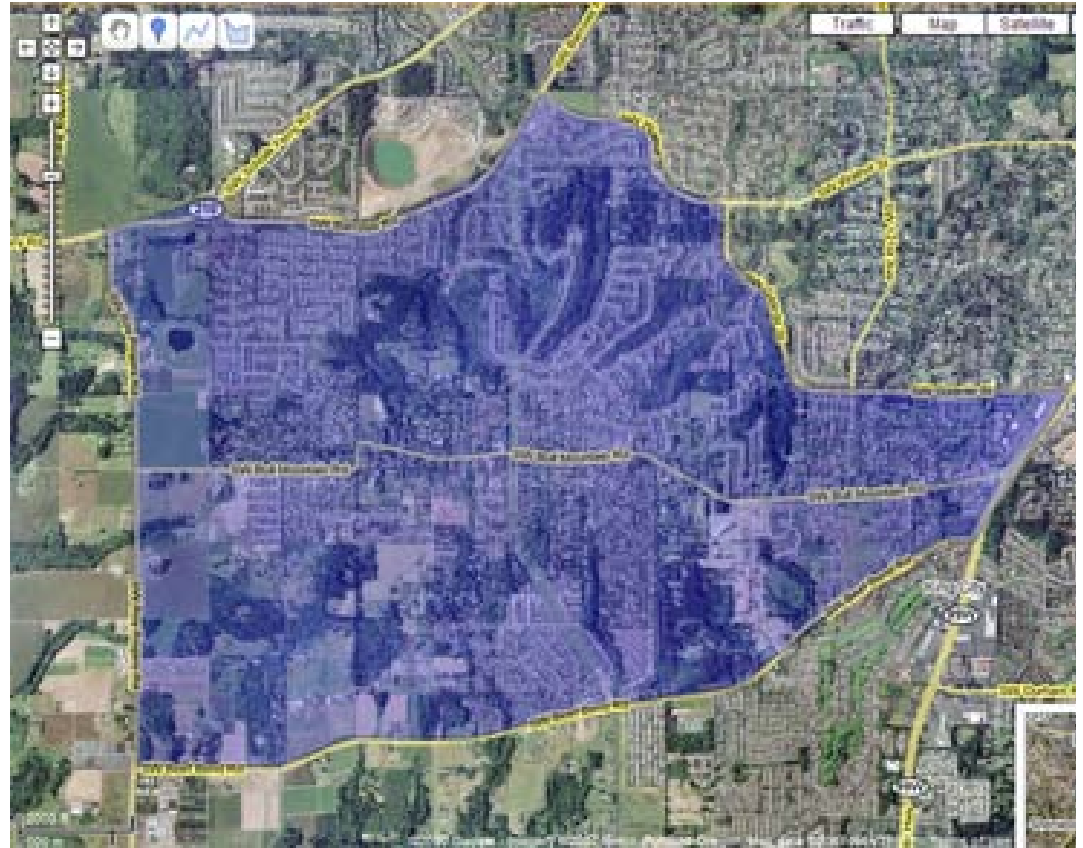
The scope of this work consists of planning for three areas--- Areas 63 & 64, which are within the recently expanded Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) on the western edge of Bull Mountain---and an additional area south to Beef Bend Road that is outside the present UGB but important to the overall West Bull Mountain area.

These three areas are between Scholls Ferry Road to the North, Beef Bend Road to the South, Roy Rogers Road to the West---with some straddling across Roy Rogers Road at the northern portion---and roughly along 150th street to the East.

The Friends of the Refuge (FOR) have a seat at the table of this Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) to represent the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. This SWG consists of approximately twenty members representing a variety of affected and interested groups. The Refuge is an attractive and fascinating draw to birders, children, parents and all of us. As a result, it is regarded with interest by developing areas such as these three in close proximity to the Refuge.

Our job, as representatives of the Refuge, is to inform the SWG and Washington County Planners of the restrictions and management philosophy regarding the preservation of wildlife and the restoration of habitat on the Refuge.

In their eagerness to incorporate some access to the Refuge into their planning, the members of the SWG and even Washington County itself, separately in other areas in the County, occasionally ask to encroach upon the Refuge. In close consultation with the Manager of the Refuge, Ralph Webber, we, the Friends, negotiate in an understanding and diplomatic manner to restrict this planning to stay outside the borders of the Refuge's Acquisition Boundary.



Also, through the Friends, the Refuge does offer advice on wildlife considerations that might occur during planning of other areas next to the Refuge by Washington County.

In summary, the Friends of the Refuge are pleased to represent the Refuge in these planning efforts.

SPECIAL REPORT:

I-5 to 99W Connector Stakeholders Group Submitted by Steve Moore, FOR Member

A few decades ago, efforts were made to build a new highway (called the Westside Bypass) from the southern terminus of Interstate 205 to the north and west around Portland. When the official boundary was established for Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in the early 1990s, an intentional gap was left between two of the management units to allow for the potential development of such a north-south highway. For a variety of reasons, the Westside Bypass was not constructed.

Over the past two decades, the Tualatin, Wilsonville, and Sherwood areas have experienced significant population and industrial growth, with an associated increase in traffic congestion. Problems are especially severe during rush hours and for commercial trucks. In 2002, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) identified a road connector project between the Interstate 5 Freeway and Highway 99W in the Tualatin-Sherwood area as one of six "Projects of Statewide Significance." Such a connector is also identified as a need in Metro's 2004 Regional Transportation Plan. A variety of potential alignments and funding strategies to address this need have been proposed over the years.

In 2004, a consortium of public agencies (led by Washington County, ODOT, and Metro) initiated more focused work to specify the type(s) and location(s) of transportation improvements which would best address the identified needs. The agencies have established a number of committees and provided several opportunities for involvement by the general public to assist them with their planning and evaluation. The Friends of Tualatin River NWR was asked to participate in the Stakeholders Working Group. This group includes members from a broad range of civic organizations and serves as a public sounding board providing advice to the technical and policy committees. To date, this group has met 26 times. Friends' members who have represented you by serving on this committee include Bill Shake, Rick Ross, and Barbara Shields. Following Barbara's resignation this summer, I began representing the Friends on this committee.

Over the past few years, agency engineers, planners, resource specialists, and consultants have gathered and evaluated a substantial amount of information for this project. Purpose, needs, goals, and objectives have been established. A range of alternatives to address those needs have been developed and were analyzed in the June 2008 "Alternatives Analysis" report. The Friends submitted a strong letter of comment on that report. Among other things, we expressed concerns regarding four of the alternatives which would directly or indirectly affect the Refuge. We pointed out that any connector alignment which proposed to cross the Refuge would require Refuge approval. We believe it highly unlikely that the Refuge would

provide such approval. In our letter, we also expressed concerns about connector alignments in the watershed which would have indirect impacts on the water which feeds the Refuge and on the wild creatures the Refuge supports. Finally, we stated that connector alignments which lie within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) should be fully developed and evaluated prior to serious consideration of alignments which would cross healthy, undeveloped fish and wildlife habitats outside the UGB.

The Alternatives Analysis report estimated that development of a new highway connecting I-5 and 99W would cost approximately \$1 billion. In light of the current economic situation locally and nationally, it appears unlikely that Federal and/or State funding to construct such a new highway would be forthcoming anytime soon.



Therefore, the decision-makers guiding this project have chosen to pursue a package of less-expensive, short-term projects which could help alleviate current problems. These smaller projects primarily include extensions, expansions, and other improvements to existing roads such as Tualatin-Sherwood Road, 124th Avenue, and Herman Road, and new auxiliary lanes between Tualatin and Wilsonville, adjacent to I-5. Also included are new and improved bike and pedestrian paths, park-and-ride lots, and bus and rail service. This new set of projects is being referred to as the hybrid alternative because it draws elements from several of the alternatives evaluated in the Alternatives Analysis report. Development of the previously envisioned new connector (limited-access highway) has been tabled for the present, but has not been abandoned as a potential long-term solution. The hybrid alternative includes potential acquisition of the right-of-way (outside the UGB, south of Sherwood) for such a connector.

I recently enjoyed a field tour of the new Boeckman Road Project in Wilsonville. This new road crosses Coffee Creek

