

**FRIENDS OF TUALATIN RIVER
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
ANNUAL REPORT
2020
A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER**

A Special Donor Thank You from the Friends of the Refuge

As a 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profit Organization we can only accomplish the things that you will read about in this report through the continued generous support of our Friends members, Volunteers, Community partners, Foundations, Donors and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). We deeply appreciate the support we receive. Your support directly allows us to achieve our Mission of supporting the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWRC). This has been a year like no other. The Friends have secured over a million dollars in funding for restoration projects, special events and staff. Highlights include:

- \$440,000 two-year Willamette Water Supply grant for the Chicken Creek Restoration project and staff funding.
- \$300,000 Intel Grant for Chicken Creek Restoration and staff funding
- \$100,000 TREE grant from Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District for Chicken Creek Restoration (Bridge to be installed in 2021 due to Covid-19)
- \$100,000 One Tree Planted Award for 70,000 trees and shrubs on the main unit
- \$30,000 Washington County Visitors Association Grant for Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge ADA/ ABA trail (approximately 2 miles)
- \$15,000 from the City of Sherwood for Visitor Services Programs for the community including the 2021 Tualatin River Bird Festival
- \$119,000 in U.S. Fish & Wildlife Award Agreements for Visitor Services and Restoration staff.

The Friends continue to support the Refuge in a variety of ways too. This includes helping with the Refuge's Volunteer Appreciations, Staff Development, and providing outreach opportunities in and for the community. We also participated in the first-ever restoration planting at Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Gaston. We are also proud of our restoration work in the two permanent wetlands in front of the Visitor Center. This planting project was kicked off after our 2019 Annual Meeting. The value of the \$30,000 the Friends contributed--which covered the planting material, plan development and contract work--can be seen by any visitor to the Refuge. We look forward to having a front row view from our Nature's Overlook Store window to watch as the dramatic transformation takes place. Every Friends member and donor made this restoration work possible.

Your financial support of the Friends allows us to do what we do best!

-Joyfully Connecting Our Community with the Wonder of the Refuge.

Please turn to page 17 for the list of Special Donors



2020 Annual Report

Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

President's Message - Alan Christensen

It goes without saying that 2020 is and will prove to be an historic year. In early March our world changed and we were forced to adapt. Being a part of Friends means meeting, celebrating, planting, educating, sharing and growing and suddenly all those community things had to be set aside. We turned to Zoom as a partial solution and continued on.

With this prelude one could assume 2020 was a bust for Friends, but quite the opposite happened. This past year is among the most successful for Friends in several ways. Consider:

Friends started the year strong with three plantings with volunteers; two at the Tualatin River Refuge and one at the Wapato Lake NWR. In early January we planted wapato, an important native wetlands species, and several other wetland species around the ponds closest to the visitor center. In February Friends volunteers planted native checker mallow, a listed species, and in March Friends made the first restoration plantings at Wapato NWR near Gaston.

During this same time frame, Friends Board and staff were busy at work accepting and soliciting grants to fund the Chicken Creek Restoration work, help with the annual Tualatin River Bird Festival, assist with infrastructure and restoration projects at the Wapato Lake NWR, and continue to support Friends staff to assist the USFWS with restoration and visitor services. In total over \$1 million dollars were received from eight sources. The bulk of the funding will go directly into work on the refuge in restoration.

It became clear in April that Friends would not be able to have the kind of Bird Festival that has attracted over 1,000 people in years past and, instead, we developed a very successful "virtual" Bird Festival. The virtual event featured great video clips especially for children, a series of "ask the expert" questions, and educational information on wildlife and the refuge. A measure of the success of the virtual Bird Festival was a spike in social media that represented a big jump in the number of those that visited and followed the presentations.



Friends have historically hired and supported staff that assist the USFWS with environmental education, visitor services and restoration. In late 2019 two Friends field staff moved on to jobs with conservation organizations and Friends reevaluated hiring replacements or looking to the USFWS for help. Friends were elated when the USFWS announced they would hire two Park Ranger positions in 2020. These will be full-time professional positions and Friends looks forward to the filling of these positions and future growth in EE and visitor services programs.

For well over a year the Friends Board, staff and the USFWS staff at the refuge have been involved in new awareness and learning programs in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). While reaching out to all citizens of the Portland area, Friends have always wanted to be more inclusive and effective in reaching the minority members of the population. By understanding and

recognizing the embedded prejudice that exists in our society, Friends hopes to be more open and effective in communicating with and welcoming people of all color, ethnicity, and gender to the refuge.

Two new members were added to the Board of Directors in 2020 and due to a modification in our bylaws, they could become full voting members at once but would be endorsed at the next annual meeting. This change has been positive as it allows the Board to identify and accept willing members at any time of the year rather than on a single occasion each year. The changes that have occurred by losing face to face meetings and programs have been hard but the Board has taken advantage of this and focused inwardly on revisions to the strategic plan, committee structure and duties, identification of specific one to three goals, and identification of new funding activities.

As the current President of the Board of Directors I am proud of the work that Friends has accomplished this year and especially so in the face of the covid pandemic which changed so many activities that define what Friends are all about. It would have been easy to retreat and look ahead to when things get back to "normal," but the Board drew together and worked diligently on elements that strengthen the Friends organization and its effectiveness in the coming years. Good work, Board members!

FINANCIAL REPORT

Submitted by Willem Stoeller, FOR Board Treasurer
as of August 31, 2020

With one month remaining in the current fiscal year, the financial condition of the Friends organization is better than forecasted in the FY2018-2019 budget. Total cash balances as of August 31 are \$125,755 unrestricted and \$360,908 restricted funds. The \$125,755 of unrestricted funds consist of \$81,524 disposable funds, \$18,232 designated funds and \$26,000 operational and cash flow reserves.

The Accounts Receivable for Restricted Grants is \$45,000 and Accounts Receivable for unrestricted Grants is \$0.

Long term liability is \$9,400. This is the PPP loan received and the entire loan will be forgiven in the near future.

The Nature's Overlook Store operation generated 53% of the planned budget and has contributed \$7,095 to the Friends organization. The reason behind this is the closure of the Visitor Center due to pandemic restrictions.

Individual donations are 122% of the planned budget, although

for the period April - August they are down to 30% of planned budget, but we had a very good start of the Fiscal year.

Memberships are 100% of the planned budget, although for the period April - August they are down to 60% of planned budget, but we had a very good start of the Fiscal year.

This fiscal year the Friends contributed \$485,245 in direct assistance to the refuge due to a number of grants received. The approved budget for next fiscal year (FY2020-2021) includes 400,000 in direct assistance to the refuge based on grants from Intel and others.

Due to the pandemic there is a strong need to identify new funding resources to sustain the Friends organization' operations and the growth of our programs.

My thanks go out again to Dawn Carovano and Bonnie Anderson. I would not be able to fulfill my role as treasurer during the last five years without their much appreciated help.

Friends of TRNWR Budget vs. Actuals: Budget 19/20 - FY20 P&L Classes October 2019 - August 2020

	Actual	Total Budget	over Budget
Fundraising	(2,052.00)	(6,909.76)	4,857.76
Genl & Admin Cost	28,925.81	7,457.34	21,468.47
Membership			
Development	(4,024.00)	(8,167.50)	4,143.50
Programs			0.00
Advocacy	(1,000.00)	(4,720.76)	3,720.76
Bird Festival	7,250.74	(3,574.89)	10,825.63
Environmental			
Education	15,910.20	1,490.61	14,419.59
Interpretive Program	5,779.75	6,532.02	(752.27)
Photo Society	3,285.39	1,911.69	1,373.70
Refuge Assist	264,647.32	(27,958.37)	292,605.69
Restoration	55,019.14	0.11	55,019.03
Total Programs	350,892.54	(26,319.59)	377,212.13
Store Operations	7,095.12	12,385.67	(5,290.55)
Not Specified	1.77		1.77
TOTAL	380,839.24	(21,553.84)	402,393.08

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Friends of TRNWR

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of August 31, 2020

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	\$486,662.99
Accounts Receivable	\$45,000.00
Other Current Assets	\$37,008.40
Total Current Assets	\$568,671.39
Fixed Assets	\$1,096.28
TOTAL ASSETS	\$569,767.67
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	\$156.91
Long-Term Liabilities	\$9,400.00
Total Liabilities	\$9,556.91
Equity	\$560,210.76
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$569,767.67

FOR Budget Summary FY 20-21

Program	Gross Income	Expenditures	Restricted/Designated Rollover	Net Revenue including Rollover	
Fund Raising	0.00	7,139.00		(7,139.00)	
General & Admin	11,925.00	26,828.00	1,000.00	(13,903.00)	
Membership	0.00	6,336.00		(6,336.00)	
Advocacy	0.00	1,150.00		(1,150.00)	
Bird Festival	17,800.00	21,600.00	13,291.00	9,491.00	Designated
Photo society	0.00	500.00	3,285.00	2,785.00	Restricted
Refuge Assist	0.00	3,500.00		(3,500.00)	
Store	5,793.75	2,717.50		3,076.25	
TOTAL	35,518.75	69,770.50	17,576.00	(16,675.75)	
Restoration & VS	77,500.00	78,082.00	0.00	(582.00)	

Net Revenue non-restricted and non-designated For the FY 20-21

(28,951.75)

INTERPRETATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Submitted by Tom Hartz, Board Member

The 2019/2020 Year has been challenging. A measure of the strength of an organization is how it defines the challenge, reaffirms its mission, and works as a team to move forward. Staffing: Our Environmental Education Specialist moved on to her next opportunity in September 2019. She left a legacy of improvements to our Education offerings and a more structured approach to our curriculum. Our Interpretive Program Coordinator left in November. He also left many upgrades, improvements, and new offerings as his legacy. Todd M, FWS Park Ranger, worked with the seasonal hires, Carly H and Catherine H, to continue to enhance our programs in both Interpretation and Education respectively. Funding for Carly and Catherine's positions expired before the end of 2019 and we had to let them go. Todd held regular meetings of the remaining Visitor Services team to ensure that all bases were covered. With school visit planning and communications in preparation for the 2020 school visit season and springtime event planning, the staff was very busy. Eva K, Deputy Refuge Manager, offered the support of Natalie B, Habitat Restoration Specialist, to field calls from teachers and post requests for Volunteer Naturalists and Nature Ambassadors to sign up for school and group visits. We were able to find funding for Carly H in February through the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2020. Todd has been given another assignment within the FWS and remains at TRNWR. He continues to support the Visitor Services program as needs arise.

Programs: In January and February, our Volunteer Naturalist Support Team formed in 2019 was updating the curriculum for the 2020 Volunteer Naturalist Training, scheduled to begin in late February or early March. We were able to contract Jenna M, who had been with the Friends as Outreach and Education professional in the past, to help with the training and curriculum development. The first of four Saturdays to complete the training was held on March 7th. A class of 12 well-qualified and eager volunteers participated. On March 13th, the COVID-19 pandemic required that we close the Refuge. The training remains on hold until we can safely reopen the Visitor Center. Jenna, Carly, Sharon M, Bonnie A, and Tom H meet regularly with Eva via ZOOM to ensure that we are all aware of priorities and upcoming challenges. Updates to the Education curriculum are being made with input solicited from our local schools and community partners.

It has been a very challenging year, but the staff and volunteers have proven adaptable and cooperative and committed to our mission to support the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. Our visitation numbers and outreach events are lower for this year than last. Those data are provided below. We look forward to the new normal when it's safe to reopen the Refuge and again offer our Interpretive and Environmental programs and services to the public.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Submitted by Phyllis Milan, Membership Committee

Be a Friend, Stay a Friend, Invite more Friends in 2021!

What is a friend? The dictionary describes a friend as "a person attached to another by feelings of affection." I know that many of you would describe your feelings for the Tualatin River NWR in just those terms. But as you know, the Refuge needs more of you than just your feelings of affection. The Refuge needs all of you to be a part of this growth. The Friends need your ideas, and most importantly we need you.

This year, the Board of Directors drafted our first statement on our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. In order to reach these goals, we will need our Friends' help. We need your input, suggestions, and connections. We know there is work to be done if we are truly going to be an inclusive and diversified organization.

The Friends have many roles in supporting the Refuge Complex. This includes direct support from funds raised to writing grants

for specific projects. This year you will read about the significant impact the Friends were able to make towards the Chicken Creek restoration project and the trail system and plantings at Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge. And many of you have probably already volunteered to help plant native vegetation or donated money towards these plantings. With Wapato Lake NWR opening to the public soon, there will be many other projects and volunteer opportunities.

We are looking to grow our Friends membership in 2021. Currently we have 387 members. If there are ideas you have that would enhance your experience as a Friend, let us know. Are there guided walks you'd like to see offered? Are there talks you'd like to attend? Social events, Community outreach? We need to know what will make a difference to you. Your Membership Committee is excited to hear from you.

VISITOR CENTER & NATURE'S OVERLOOK SALES OUTLET

Submitted by Sharon Miller, FOR Board Member

Nearly 10,000 visitors found their way to the Visitor Center and Nature's Overlook retail store this year before we shut our doors on March 13 due to Covid-19. They came for information, to explore the exhibits, to borrow binoculars and to shop. Sales from the retail store are an important source of income for the Friends' group. It allows the Friends to fund projects on the Refuge such as this year's restoration of the two permanent wetlands in front of the Visitor Center. This \$24,000 project by the Friends is on full view from our store window and is a great reminder to all who shop with us, that your support matters.

Income this year was greatly reduced since the store was open less than six months. We had launched an online sales system shortly before the closure, but were not able to really promote it without ready access to all of the merchandise during the early days of the closure. Now, we're hoping to use social media and the Friends' website to show off our merchandise and encourage online shopping. We will be able to ship items and possibly be able to allow curbside, contact-free pickup outside the Visitor Center. Watch for more information coming soon, and check out some of these items we will be featuring.

The store and Visitor Center are staffed by a group of dedicated Friends volunteers who love the Refuge and like sharing it with others. They are standing by to return as soon as the building is allowed to reopen. They're great volunteers, and we can't wait to have them back!

We miss our visitors, too. A quick review of the Visitor Guest Book shows that, in spite of the shortened year, people arrived from over 30 states, plus Australia, China, Thailand, Germany, Switzerland, France and the United Kingdom. As always, their comments were overwhelmingly positive about the Refuge and the Visitor Center. Notably, a number of comments made it clear how important the Refuge is to families and multiple generations:

"My mom loved this place; today would have been her 95th birthday."

"Always come here when we come from NY to visit local family."

"Great place. Can't wait to come back with my grandchildren."



It's comments like these that make us even more anxious for the Visitor Center to once again be open and welcoming to visitors. We hope that won't be too many months away.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Submitted by Carly Hirshmann, Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator

The Community Outreach and Engagement Program is integral to promoting environmental conservation at the refuge. The program strives to instill a sense of wonder and passion for the outdoors and environmental stewardship through hands on displays, presentations, and activities. The goals of the program include welcoming and orienting visitors to the refuge, highlighting the importance of native wildlife and their habitats, and encouraging nature exploration and appreciation. The program works to accomplish these goals through a combination of formal and informal programming, as well as virtual outreach. This year, programs offered to the public included Nature Ambassador programs, Waterfowl Watch, Bats of the Night, Trailhead Tables, senior group visits, and a variety of interactive online activities. Due to the Visitor Services Program ceasing operations on March 14th, 2020, much of our outreach this year was conducted virtually through our website and social media pages. Our combined interpretive programs reached 905 people both on and off the refuge, and significantly more online, promoting environmental conservation and awareness across the region.

Outreach Programming

The Nature Ambassadors are the traveling outreach portion of the program. This year, refuge volunteers visited the Oregon Zoo as well as Newberg, Sherwood, and Tigard libraries. Topics included our ten new Nature Ambassador tables such as: Busy Beavers, Birds of Prey, Nocturnal Neighbors, Wild Waterfowl, Plentiful Plants, and Frogs, Snakes, Salamanders, Oh My! Onsite, the Owl Prowls were exceptionally popular with all of the available



Nature ambassadors interact with visitors at the Sherwood Library.



Skulls & pelts table at Creatures of the Night Event.

slots filling within weeks of advertising them to the public. We held two Bats of the Night Programs this year and three Waterfowl Watches led by USFWS employees. Our annual October family event, Creatures of the Night, was also very successful, with 130 attendees. The event included owl pellet dissections, arts & crafts, story time, a bat scavenger hunt, night hikes, and cookie decorating. This year we added a new “mystery of the missing link” activity which tied nocturnal animals together through the food web, and provided a secret pelts & skulls table for participants to see at the end of the mystery activity. Refuge and Friends staff worked with Mauricio Valarian to coordinate outreach to Latinx communities and co-create program materials to provide a welcoming and inclusive space for Latinx families. The Friends also continued to work with Camp ELSO (Experience Life Science Outdoors). While we were unable to host summer camps, Natalie and Bonnie were able to utilize a grant from the Friends of Ridgefield to provide supplies for their hybrid (at-home, small in-person) summer camps. The supplies included field gear like cameras, nature guide books, and water-testing kits, as well as cameras for their photography camp.



Friends staff ready for visitors at Creatures of the Night.

Virtual Outreach

This year presented unique challenges to the Community Outreach and Engagement Program due to the Visitor Center closure and inability to conduct in-person programming. The focus during the past few months of this year has been virtual outreach through our social media pages, as well as providing interactive online worksheets, activities, and resources which were adapted from our Nature Ambassador Programs. Social media outreach focused on diversifying the types of content used and encouraging interactivity and engagement. Types of posts included a mixture of trivia, polls, fast facts, photo contests, and video clips of trails and wildlife. This year was also the inaugural Black Birders week, which included a Q & A session, livestream discussion, and sharing of photography from black women who bird, all of which was featured on our social media pages. Overall, our social media outreach grew immensely this year, with our Facebook page alone reaching around 8,000 individuals per month.



"Teddy" Roosevelt approves of the wetlands.



"Teddy" Roosevelt with friends during National Public Lands Day activities.



The new seasonal trail opened up for visitors this year.

ADVOCACY CHAMPIONS

Submitted by Cheryl Hart, Board Member

Many people believe that nonprofit organizations are not allowed to advocate or lobby. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nonprofits like Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Complex use advocacy, and on occasion lobbying, to help meet their mission of support for the refuge complex and the system of refuges across the nation. Friends are the Advocacy Champions of the FWS Wildlife Refuge System.

During the past year, Friends has been actively involved in monitoring and speaking out on both local and national concerns that impact our local refuge and the refuge system. At the local level, Friends and FWS Staff at the refuge and regional level have continued to monitor efforts to create a rock quarry on Tonquin Rd in Sherwood, just feet away from one of the few pristine units of our refuge. Following public comment, the State requested further information from the owners. The deadline for that response is September 30, 2020. Friends will continue to work with FWS to document concerns regarding the negative impacts that a quarry in the proposed location can have on our refuge.

At the national level much of the focus of our national nonprofit partner, National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) is often on what is happening in Alaska. This is because birds who spend part of each year in Alaska migrate to or through every state in the lower 48. Because Alaska is blessed with many natural resources, accessing those resources is a constant threat to the environment required to sustain a wide variety of wildlife. During the past year, NWRA has actively lobbied on the following issues in Alaska:

- Drilling in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—NWRA and their partner organizations have taken a somewhat unorthodox approach to attempt to block the effort to drill for oil on Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. They have been and continue to conduct a campaign aimed at companies who might be interested in leasing drilling sites on the refuge and the financial institutions that might support those efforts. This has been quite successful with several large banks agreeing that they will not finance efforts to drill on the refuge.
- A plan to allow hunters in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge to hunt brown bears over bait. The goal is to drastically reduce the brown bear populations on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula to artificially boost moose populations for the benefit of hunters. This change is in complete contrast to what the Refuge System was created for: natural biodiversity and integrity of wildlife populations.
- In a resounding victory, a second judge threw out a land exchange agreement intended to build a road through the sensitive wetlands of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

A little closer to home, Desert National Wildlife Refuge in southern Nevada and its supporters stormed Capitol Hill to ask lawmakers to continue the existing protections of this iconic refuge. The Air Force was proposing to expand their footprint into 1.1 million acres of the Refuge, essentially removing these acres from the Refuge System, which would have totaled 5% of all refuge lands in the lower 48 states. Both Houses ultimately passed the National Defense Authorization Act, which contained a provision to continue the refuge with its current jurisdictional ('status quo') boundaries.

NWRA joined Earth Justice, Defenders of Wildlife and the Sierra Club in a lawsuit against the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in order to prevent wildlife diseases, especially chronic wasting disease, from spreading to National Elk Refuge due to the

outdated and unnecessary practice of supplemental feeding. Building of a border wall is a constant threat to refuges and the wildlife we are committed to protect. Among the issues at play this year was the use of \$3.5 billion in military construction appropriations to build new border walls in national wildlife refuges and elsewhere at the U.S.-Mexico border. A Federal Judge ruled against this effort.

In Alabama, a company applied to the State of Georgia and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for permits to begin strip mining on thousands of acres adjacent to Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Opposition to the proposal was so fierce that the permit application was withdrawn.

NWRA Vice President, Government Affairs Caroline Brouwer, and two members of the Friends Group community: Justin Hall, President of the Friends of Nisqually NWR Complex in Washington, and Bill Durkin, with The Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Maine, were among those to testify before a Congressional Committee in favor of the Keep America's Refuges Operational Act. Then in a huge victory for the refuge system, the Great American Outdoors Act put up to \$95 million each year over the next five years towards the maintenance backlog for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Funds would go towards infrastructure needs such as visitor center repairs, damaged fences, broken boardwalks, trail repairs, and many other projects. While this is less than half of what would be required to completely repair our refuge system's crumbling infrastructure, it is a start to ensure that refuges continue to be accessible for the use and enjoyment of these public lands by visitors. This act also fully and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million. These funds, that are not tax dollars but come from off-shore drilling permits, are used to purchase additional public lands. Hundreds of Senators and Members of Congress supported these proposals prior to passage, showing the wide, bipartisan, and bicameral support that the Great American Outdoors Act has drawn.

In a recent development, the President signed a Proclamation to open the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument (NCSMN) to commercial fishing. This monument is the only unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System in the Atlantic Ocean, and protects fragile and pristine deep-sea environments such as the North Atlantic right whale, one of the world's most endangered large whale species, with only about 400 whales remaining. This announcement followed an Executive Order that instructed federal agencies to waive environmental laws that might slow down or stop private and public industries seeking to maximize their profit from our nation's public lands and waters. However, the President does not have the authority to make this change to the monument. NWRA will continue to monitor this action.

In addition to the actions taken on behalf of the refuge system, NWRA joined with the Friends national networking group Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates to provide a series of three webinars on advocacy to train and strengthen the ability of Friends across the country to actively take part in advocacy for their refuges and the system as a whole.

Work is continuing on the FY2021 Appropriations for FWS. You can stay in touch with these issues and learn about how we are actively working every day for the National Wildlife Refuge System at <https://www.refugeassociation.org/news>

TUALATIN RIVER (VIRTUAL) BIRD FESTIVAL

Submitted by Bonnie Anderson, Festival Chair

It was a year like no other. In March, as the Festival Committee was putting the finishing touches on the Native Plant Sale for April and the 24th Annual Tualatin River Bird Festival in May, we were faced with the decision to adjust to a virtual format or cancel our beloved event. In true Festival Committee style, we decided to venture into uncharted waters. With less than a month to execute, a smaller group brainstormed ideas of how we could put together an interesting enough event that still represented the essence of our signature festival. And so with that- The Virtual Bird Festival was created!



We put together content that spanned 5 days- because- why not? We thought about all of the things that people would really miss about the festival and we wanted to represent those experiences in some way. What makes our Tualatin River Bird Festival so special? We all came up with the same conclusion- it's about connecting the Refuge with the community. Each event had that basic premise in mind and just for fun, we went 1980s old school!

Our welcome video included some flashbacks too, featuring former Friends Presidents and Staff. We brought back Festival favorite "Teddy Roosevelt" who provided a virtual show from



Online mammal photo contest during virtual bird festival - Joel Rubenstein.

Medora, South Dakota. We added Trivia Night, Story time, Ask the Experts and so many learning opportunities with our Jr. Rangers Brenlyn and Eloise! All of our posts could be found on the Friends Facebook page and on our Friends website. We have left much of the content up for parents to use as additional resources during Covid-19. You can check them out along with other resources at:

<http://friendsoftualatinrefuge.org/Refuge-Resources>

We are looking forward to returning to our regular format for 2021- our 25th year, but I believe there are elements of the virtual festival that we will carry forward. Our sincere hope is that each of you found all or part of our attempt educational, entertaining and endearing. Thanks to all who participated!



Caption contest candidate

9 Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's virtual event such a success!



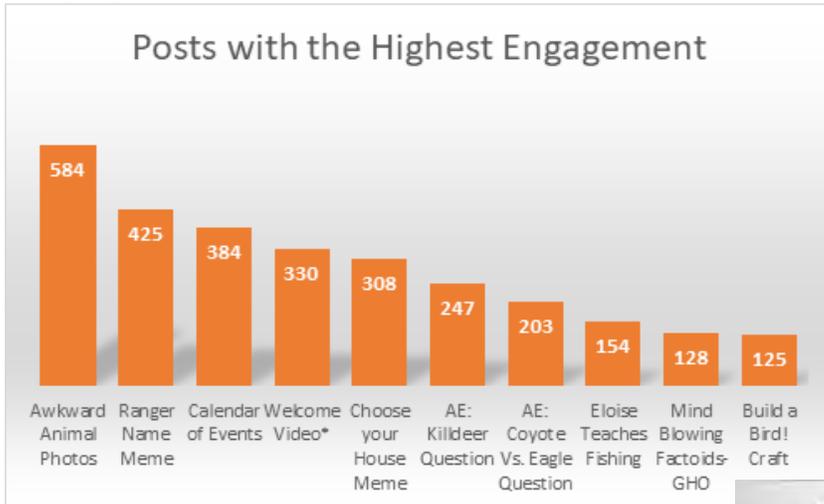
Virtual Bird Festival Calendar

May 12th - 16th

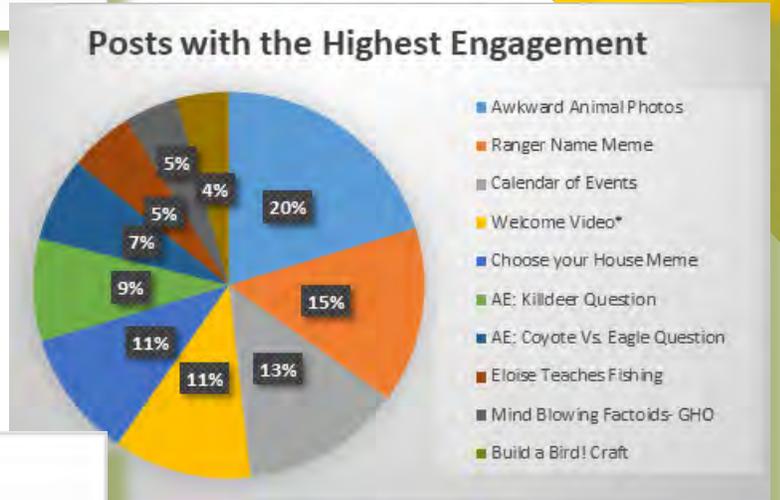
Time Slots	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9:00 am	Welcome Introduction Video!	Story time	Story time	Story time	Story time
10:00am	Story time	Teddy Roosevelt Show!	Which House are you?	Bird Misidentification	All About Birds Playlist!
11:00pm	Ask an Expert: Kids edition	Ask an Expert: Kids edition	Ask an Expert: Kids edition	Ask an Expert: Kids edition	Ask an Expert: Kids edition
12:00pm	Bird Festival Scavenger Hunt!	What's Your Ranger Name?	Raptor ID Bingo	Bird Festival Word Scramble	Which Habitat on the Refuge are you?
1:00pm	Submit your best awkward animal photo to be featured in our highlights video!	Beak Adaptation Challenge!	Tennessee Wildlife Refuge: Birding 101	Virtual Wagon Ride	Mind Blowing Factoid
2:00pm	Crafts: Build a Bird Challenge!	Origami	Crafts: Decorative Bird Houses	Crafts: TP Hummingbird	Origami
3:00pm	Questionable Trivia: Submit your funny answers!	Bird Misidentification	Mind-blowing Factoid	Mind-Blowing Factoid	Eloise Educates!
4:00pm	Ask an Expert! Adults Edition	Eloise Educates!	Ask an Expert! Adults Edition	Ask an Expert! Adults Edition	Ask an Expert! Adults Edition
6:00pm				Live Trivia Event!	Highlights Video

My deepest appreciation to the Virtual Bird Festival committee, who met daily via Zoom to pull this together: Carly Hirschmann, Patrick Stark, Jenna Mendenhall, Mauricio Valadrian, Natalie Balkam and Todd McKinney

Engagement



Engagement Increased: 1600%



Reach



Reach increased: 447%
Overall Reach: 13, 300



RESTORATION PROGRAM

Submitted by Natalie Balkam, Habitat Restoration Specialist

This fiscal year was another great year for restoration at the Tualatin River NWRC. Planting events took center stage; the refuge hosted a total of 6 community planting events, and planted about 10,000 plants. The plantings occurred throughout the Tualatin River NWR, as well as Wapato Lake NWR. Over two weekends in November 2019 and thanks to about 70 volunteers, we planted a variety of emergent wetland species in the two permanent wetlands in front of the visitor center, which was part of the Friends-funded restoration project. The highlights of these events was planting wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), a regional ecological and culturally important wetland plant. In December, we were joined by Institute for Applied Ecology to plant Nelson's checkermallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*), a listed threatened species in Oregon. Over two weekends in February we planted out a portion of Chicken Creek with bare root woody plants. One of the events was co-hosted with Friends of Trees, which generated a lot of new visitation to the refuge. Our last planting was held in March at Wapato Lake NWR, not yet even open to the public. We had some of our regular volunteers, but were also excited to welcome new volunteers from Gaston, OR, where the refuge is located, as well as representatives from the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and Clean Water Services. We planted a variety of woody species, including blue elderberry and ninebark. We look forward to more community planting events at Wapato Lake NWR.



Friends Board Member Michelle Scholz and Friends Member Aida Wijaya planting wetland plants (photo credit: Tom Hartz)

The Friends funded a huge restoration project at the two permanent wetlands in front of the visitor center. This included site preparation, reseeding, and plug planting (including the community planting events). Restoring these two main ponds is essential to conserving wetland-dependent wildlife including waterfowl, marsh birds, amphibians, and reptiles. The Friends also helped to facilitate a restoration project in the upland areas surrounding these permanent wetlands, thanks to a grant from Bonneville Environmental Foundation; this grant allowed us to contract Ash Creek Forest Management to plant 100,000 plants.



Group picture from planting event 2/22/20 at Chicken Creek

These plants were mostly riparian and upland woody species, including Oregon white oak, snowberry, osoberry, oceanspray, elderberry, Oregon ash, and many more. These plants were installed about mid-March; since then some spot spray was applied and hand-weeding has been between rows to eliminate shading by invasive species.

This fiscal year we hosted two second Saturday work parties; all of the other second Saturdays were utilized for community planting days. In January, volunteers came out to remove scotch broom from our Henriksen unit. Additionally, volunteers helped clear dozens of tree tubes for disposal. In March, volunteers braved a rare March snow day to come clean up the bioswale.



Egg mass from Northwestern salamander, Oleson unit

In 2020, the Friends once again played a helpful role in expanding Metro's amphibian egg mass survey program at Tualatin River. Tualatin River partnered with Metro, Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation Department (THPRD), and the Wetlands Conservancy in order to generate more volunteers to aid in surveying for amphibian egg masses throughout the Portland metro area. We had a total of about 30 new

volunteers for this project, for many of whom it was their first time at the refuge. With these volunteers we were able to survey each site at least twice, and saw egg masses from all four target species (Northern red-legged frog, Northwestern salamander, long-toed salamander, and chorus frog).



Volunteers at Dennis unit survey for amphibian egg masses

Natalie continued the work of the Habitat Restoration Specialist to aid in the weekly waterfowl surveys; she helped count and identify waterfowl throughout Tualatin River and at Wapato Lake NWR, and saw many species including northern shoveler, hooded merganser, bufflehead, cinnamon teal, dusky Canada goose, ring-necked duck, and many more. In addition to helping with waterfowl surveys, Natalie conducted the vegetation surveys that contribute to this data, and help inform waterfowl food and habitat availability at each site. These surveys took place in August 2020, and record how much emergent vegetation is at each wetland site, and determines plant species composition and habitat type.

In August, Natalie began collecting seed throughout the refuge to use for restoration purposes; she has collected wapato seed, and will continue to collect other wetland plants including bur-reed and slough sedge. She plans to collect more wapato at Jackson Bottom Wetlands in coordination with Hillsboro Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, she has collected some upland prairie species as well, such as golden paintbrush



Planting at Wapato Lake NWR, 3/7/2020

(from Institute for Applied Ecology's recovery project), field checkermallow, penstemon, Oregon sunshine, and yarrow. These species will be hand seeded at various locations throughout the refuge.

In December, Natalie helped to seed Nelson's checkermallow at various locations at Chicken Creek (in tandem with the checkermallow plug planting), and seeded several spots surrounding the two permanent wetlands in front of the Visitor Center with a forb mix.



Hand seeding checkermallow seeds at Chicken Creek



Wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia*) seen at Oleson unit during vegetation survey

Partners this year included:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Clean Water Services, Metro, THPRD, Wetlands Conservancy, Ash Creek Forest Management, Friends of Trees, TSWCD, Willamette Water Supply, Hillsboro PRD

Thanks to the organizations that supported planting events with donations:

Sesame Donuts, REI, New Seasons, Starbucks

And the Partners that helped with tools, etc:

Portland Metro, Friends of Trees

SPECIAL REPORT: A Message from the Refuge Manager

“A Year Like No Other”

I started with the title as I began to write this update for the Friends Annual Report. The obvious direction was to then talk about, dwell upon, and contemplate the effects that COVID-19 had on the Complex this past year. While it has impacted and forced us to change how we do business, especially in how we interact with the public, this year was a year about what we accomplished or started together in spite of it:

- Two large-scale transformative habitat restoration projects were started, one at each Refuge, totaling over 1,100 acres.
- Five significant construction projects were ongoing during the year at Wapato Lake NWR including two bridges, a new pump station, a public use trail and a parking lot with a restroom. These projects will support habitat management and/or visitor facilities/access.
- Two permanent Park Ranger positions have been approved for the Complex. This is the first time that two full-time permanent Refuge staff will be dedicated to the Visitor Services/Public Use program.
- Wapato Lake NWR will be opening for the first time to waterfowl hunting and other public uses later this year.

For a staff this size, any 2 or 3 of these accomplishments would be considered a successful year. The Friends Group has contributed support to all of these projects through funding, staff time and/or volunteers. One contribution that may not seem so obvious is the critical input provided by the Friends Group for getting the two Park Ranger positions. The Friends Group has carried the load for the

Visitor Services program at Tualatin River NWR for many years, so when it came time to consider a change, you were able to provide critical input that helped frame the discussion. The Friends Group was able to articulate the need and provide additional ways that you will continue to support the refuge programs.

Covid-19 has created a year like no other for the Friends Group also. The changing of the Bird Festival to a virtual event, the elimination of on-site EE and Interpretive programs and the closing of the Visitor Center have all been significant. However, this situation will end and it is the dedication, knowledge, and passion of the Friends Group that will contribute greatly to getting these activities back up and running when it is appropriate. We will get through this as a team.

The accomplishments and the activities started this past year will have a profound effect on the future identity of Tualatin River NWR and establishing an identity for Wapato Lake NWR. The Friends Group has and will continue to be an important part of what those identities will look like. Thank you for all you do.

Larry Klimek, Project Leader
Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Complex



SPECIAL REPORT: Board Members

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Alan Christensen (2)	Dawn Carovano (2)	Bonnie Anderson (2)
Tom Hartz (2)	Michelle Miller (2)	Cheryl Hart (2)
Sharon Miller (2)	Willem Stoeller (2)	Keith Mays (2)
Phyllis Milan (1)	Michelle Scholz (1)	
Louie Olivares (1)	Irene Vlach (1)	
Keith Palevsky (1)		* () number of 3 year terms elected to served since bylaw change 2016
Tom Stibolt (1)		

SPECIAL REPORT:

Friends President's Volunteer Service Awards in Recognition of Exceptional Service

Since 2008, the President of the Friends of the Refuge has selected four names to be engraved on the plaques that hang in the Visitor Center at the Refuge. This year we will be adding a third plaque to that space with four new names. The selection of these names is made by the current President, with some input and suggestions from the Board. Every volunteer is Exceptional. This is just an opportunity to highlight a few stand outs over the year. These names are generally not revealed before the Annual Meeting. Since this year is one like no other, we will take this opportunity to list the 2020 recipients of the President's Volunteer Service Award. We are also posting the names from 2008-2019.

2008: Robert Swanson	Carolyn Uyemura	Virginia Parks	Paul Jaussi
2009: Berk Moss	Carolyn Penner	Arlin Inman	Bob Fuquay
2010: Norman Penner	Cheryl Turoczy Hart	Bonnie Anderson	Larry Harrington
2011: Dawn Carovano	George Burnett	Ginny Maffitt	Mike Smith & Judy Doyle
2012: Bernie Smith	Gary Fawver	Jay Medley	Blair Anderson
2013: Sharon Miller	Crafty Friends	Bjorn Fredrickson	Charlie Graham
2014: Marty Clancy	Donald Nelson	Marilyn Ellis	Mary French & Doug Niwa
2015: Bob & Joan Try	Mike Skinner	Linda Kilgore	Tom Hartz
2016: Willem Stoeller	Pam Farris	Kristine Al-Rashidi	John Gendron & Tobyn Bower
2017: Pat & Bobbie Allaire	Jim Burrows	Ruthann Panck	Rick & Jennifer Bennett
2018: Scott Owen	Judy Silverforb	Wendy Cattanach	Jim Nicolson
2019: Michelle Miller	Barbara Allen	The Olivares Family	Frank Nusser

2020 Honorees

Alan Fitzpatrick

Alan Fitzpatrick has put in countless hours assisting with restoration work at the Complex. John Schweitzer says, "Alan has been a critical member of the maintenance volunteer team for four years. As such, he has been instrumental in helping the Refuge with habitat maintenance and restoration projects, and both building and equipment maintenance. This year, Alan played a pivotal role in the installation of the soon-to-be-completed Wapato Lake NWR hiking trail, as well as continuing his service efforts in all of the other habitat and maintenance projects." Alan's volunteering also includes the Tualatin River Bird Festival and other special events. He and his wife Heather have been generous supporters of the Refuge and Friends' outreach to Veterans and we are looking forward to expanding those opportunities in the future.

Mike Jolley

Mike has been volunteering at the Refuge for many years as a dedicated Second Saturday work party crew member. Mike has also been the Friends IT "go to" person for the past several years. When anything "technical" needs to be done, Mike is the person the Friends can call on to get things taken care of. Mike is always there at a moment's notice to make sure the business of the Friends is running smoothly. Thank you Mike, for making sure that the Friends are up to date.

Joseph Edgerton

Joe's dedication to the Refuge is widely known among Friends and Refuge staff. Sarah Williams Brown says of Joe, "He is probably one of the most eager volunteers I have met in my time here and has really been willing to help out with literally anything." This assessment is also echoed by Natalie Balkam. Natalie says, "his love for the Refuge really shows through his work and his eagerness to volunteer at almost every opportunity. He is such a dependable volunteer and I really felt like we could count on him." Joe's volunteer projects include amphibian egg mass surveys where he was actually able to lead other volunteers, restoration work, and providing insightful content for the Friends' newsletter.

Irene Vlach

Irene has been a dedicated Visitor Center, Nature's Overlook volunteer since she retired in 2014. She consistently provides outstanding service to our visitors, and is also generous with sharing her experience and knowledge about birding and hiking in the Pacific Northwest. Sharon Miller, Nature's Overlook Store Manager says of Irene, "The visitors to the Refuge really enjoy their interactions with Irene, she is knowledgeable and always willing to chat with everyone." Irene joined the Board of Directors and immediately volunteered to take on the important role of Secretary. She is an active member of the Executive Board and has recently joined the Store Committee.

SPECIAL REPORT:

Tualatin River Photographic Society

Willem Stoeller, FOR Board Member



This year we managed to have five very successful presentations, but we had to cancel many due to the pandemic. The goal is to have several more virtual presentations using Zoom this next year until the Visitor Center on the Refuge reopens.

In October, our guest speakers and presenters were *Pat and Matt Blair*. The Blairs presented their 2016 Galapagos trip hosted by the Cornell Ornithology Lab. The presentation included a brief introduction to the Galapagos, a few notes on travel, and then focused on the wildlife and landscapes of the Islands they visited. Pat and Matt have been amateur photographers for nearly 40 years, semi-serious birders for more than 20 years, members of the Photo Society, and recently joined the Friends of Tualatin NWR.

Our November guest speaker and presenter was *Patricia Davidson*, a professional nature and landscape photographer based in Oregon. She spent over twenty years on the southern Oregon Coast developing her landscape photography skills on the beaches and in the forests of the Pacific Northwest. In 2015, she set off in an RV on an epic four-year journey to photograph the American West. She entertained us with photos from her travels as a nomadic photographer visiting national and state parks.

Our December guest speaker and presenter was *Andrew Studer*. Andrew is a professional commercial photographer and timelapse cinematographer based in Portland. With a huge passion for the outdoors, Andrew is constantly seeking out adventure and unique and engaging ways to capture what he

sees. His work has been featured in National Geographic, CBS news, BBC and many others.

In February, our guest speaker and presenter was *Rebecca Benoit*. Rebecca is an award-winning photographer and Adobe Certified Expert in Lightroom. She has been teaching photography since 2002 for private groups and clients as well as for Newspace Center for Photography in Portland, Sherwood Foundation for the Arts, and several other camera clubs and Meetup groups. She is an Assistant Organizer for the Portland Vancouver Photography and Women Learning Photography Together Meetup groups in Portland. Her photography has been shown in

galleries throughout the Pacific Northwest. Rebecca did a presentation on photo editing using Lightroom.

Our June guest speaker and presenter was *Susan Dimock*, a retired clinical social worker and psychotherapist who quickly channeled her energy into a second career as a fine art nature and travel photographer. Based in Bandon, Oregon, she specializes in wildlife and seascape images of the coast where she and her husband have lived for 16 years. Her travel images of Oregon are seen throughout the world in print and in online publications due to her tourism contract work and her affiliation with Circles in the Sand of Bandon. Susan did a virtual presentation using Zoom.



Thank You, Donors!

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Kerry Griffin





Please be sure to "like" the Friends' Facebook page in 2020! The page provides news about events and tidbits of interest about the Refuge. Share FOR posts with your friends to let them know about all the great things happening at the Refuge and in the National Wildlife Refuge System as a whole.