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**Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge
Strategic Plan: 2013-2017
December, 2012**



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The following strategic plan describes the Friends' strategy to manage its growth over the next five years, in order to align its program growth with its capacity to support such initiatives.

The plan will be reviewed on a regular basis at least every two years to ensure that goals are being accomplished.

1. History and Purpose

MISSION:

Founded in 1993, the Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge (the Friends) is a community-based nonprofit organization whose mission is:

To support the development and management of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge (TRNWR). We are dedicated to restoring and protecting Refuge habitats as well as providing wildlife dependent education and recreation.

BACKGROUND:

The Acquisition Boundary of the Refuge was established in 1992. Sherwood residents Tom Stibolt and Lisa Brenner donated 12 acres to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to establish the Refuge. Some months following this donation, FWS officials accompanied by Jim Rapp, Sherwood City Manager, visited Tom & Lisa to present them with an award recognizing their donation. According to Jim Rapp, it was at their home following the presentation that the subject of forming some sort of Friends group first came up.

Jim spearheaded the effort and spent several months writing bylaws and registering the new organization with the Oregon Secretary of State.

Jim also organized a “founding board” which included the following individuals:

- Drs. Geoffrey E. Beasley & James H. Samson, Sherwood citizens.
- Lavern M. & Kathy Cary, Sherwood citizens
- Walter Hitchcock, Sherwood Mayor
- Rick A. Hohnbaum, former Sherwood Mayor
- Spencer M. Krueger & Mary C. Lefevre, Sherwood citizens
- Clyde List, Former Sherwood Mayor
- John McGinity, science teacher
- Norma J. Oyler, former Sherwood Mayor
- Mike Leichner, owner, Pride Disposal Company
- James H. Rapp, Sherwood City Manager
- Marjorie J. Stewart, former Sherwood Mayor

Each Founder was required to make a minimum upfront donation of \$200.00 in order to have a seat on the board. The City of Sherwood and the Sherwood Chamber of Commerce also contributed to this start-up fund.

During the following year or so, the founders met periodically and established membership categories and dues, created a logo, promoted the organization and recruited members. On December 6, 1993, the founding members held their first Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. In attendance were Norma Oyler, Jim Rapp, Rick A. Hohmbaum, Spencer Krueger, John McGinity and Clyde List.

In January of 1994, the board met and selected a slate of officers. Lavern Cary was elected President, John McGinity, Vice President, Jim Rapp, Secretary/Treasurer, and Steve Moore Ex-Officio (representing USF&WS). Geoffrey Beasley, Mark Cottle, Rick Hohnbaum, and Norma Oyler were board members.

In a State of the Friends report made a year later by Lavern Cary, the first Friends President, (Dec. 31, 1994) he cited this Dec. 6, 1993, meeting as the “official beginning of the Friends”.

The Friends ended 1994 with a membership of 40. Of this original 40, the following individuals are still Friends members:

- Spencer Krueger
- Mary Lefevre
- Steve Moore
- Lisa Brenner
- Tom Stibolt
- Virginia Maffitt
- John Maffitt
- Marilyn Stinnett

[This History was researched and submitted by: Norman Penner]

ACTIVITIES:

The Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge (the Refuge) is located in an urban area, which gives it an uncommon charter in support of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Friends' support includes the following:

- Encouraging conservation of water, land and wildlife;
- Promoting public awareness of the Refuge and its wildlife and habitat to preserve its natural and cultural heritage for future generations;
- Participating as volunteers in the activities of the Refuge (e.g. inventory and monitoring, environmental education and outreach);
- Assisting with land acquisition within the approved Refuge acquisition boundary;
- Raising funds for education, restoration and conservation projects and programs associated with the Refuge;
- Advocating on behalf of the Refuge and Refuge-related issues;
- Creating partnerships with community-based environmental and civic organizations;
- Enhancing the quality of life in the local community.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The Friends partners with the Refuge, a field station of the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to accomplish these Objectives.

Since its inception in 1993, highlights of the Friends' accomplishments include:

- Successfully advocated for and supported land conservation planning resulting in an approved Refuge boundary of 7,370 acres of the Refuge's two units, Sherwood and Wapato Lake.
- Successfully advocated for federal funding for land acquisition within the Refuge acquisition boundary.
- Successfully advocated for federal funding for construction of a Wildlife Center and other public use facilities now totaling a \$10 million investment.
- Developed robust educational and restoration programs run by a small staff of Friends-funded educators and highly-committed volunteers.
- Developed Nature's Overlook, a store in the Wildlife Center that brings in significant earned income which is invested toward the Friends' mission in support of the Refuge.
- Has become a highly respected and recognized nonprofit organization led by "professional" volunteers. As a result, community leaders are proud to have the Friends working within their community and are committed to work together to help the Friends achieve mutual goals.
- Built an active, committed and growing membership.
- Recruit, train, and manage a dedicated corps of more than 50 volunteers who staff the Wildlife Center information desk and manage store sales, enabling the Wildlife Center to open to the public six days a week.
- Provide funds to hire key public use staff for the Refuge as well as contribute funds from store sales to conduct numerous restoration, maintenance, and education projects on the Refuge.
- Successfully advocated on behalf of the Refuge and the habitat of Washington County by our participation as the plaintiff in the Grabhorn Landfill lawsuit and as a supporter of the Poole Quarry lawsuit.
- Naturalist training to provide volunteers to lead Environmental Education programs.
- Years of work on habitat restoration.

2. Vision

Friends of the Refuge (FOR) is capitalizing on the uncommon opportunity presented by the presence of a national wildlife refuge in an urban area. Having a highly functioning natural area in the midst of an urban setting improves the quality of life for all the region's residents. The Friends see this as an incredible opportunity for local residents, students and visitors to observe wildlife without driving very far, if at all, since the Refuge is serviced by a Tri Met Public Transportation stop at its gate. The Friends aspire to make the Refuge an iconic urban refuge of the National Wildlife Refuge System, as well as an icon of the Metropolitan Portland area greenspaces.

Within this vision, the Friends support the development of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge and its programs in partnership with the USFWS, advocating for the addition of lands under Refuge management within the acquisition boundary and for the expansion of Refuge educational and restoration programs commensurate with growth in organizational capacity. The Friends envision the Refuge as a destination for visitors from across the country and the world and, indeed, as a model for the entire National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Friends will continue to build a large cadre of members, supporters, donors and volunteers who are committed to growing, restoring, protecting and educating the public about the Refuge's multiple units in Sherwood and Wapato Lake. Such supporters and advocates will be organized by a growing number of volunteers as well as a small but growing staff. The Friends envision an organization of 1000 members by 2020.

3. Acquisition of Lands for Refuge Management

GOAL: *Actively support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in acquisition of lands within the approved acquisition boundary of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge.*

BACKGROUND: Acquisition History and Status

There are three ways that the USFWS can acquire lands or property rights for management in the Refuge System. The first approach is to acquire ownership of lands in fee title from willing donors or sellers. The second approach is to purchase a conservation easement from willing donors or sellers. This approach allows the landowner to retain the property, but the USFWS manages the land for conservation purposes. The third approach is for the USFWS to enter into an agreement with another private or governmental organization to manage property for which it has fee title or an easement(s) in property.

This first approach was used to acquire the first parcel of land in 1993 with an initial 12-acre private donation. The currently approved acquisition boundary near Sherwood comprises 3060 acres. Funding for the acquisition program has totaled \$10.4 million and comes from a variety of sources including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, flood relief funds, Bonneville Power Administration through implementation of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, and Migratory Bird Conservation Act. A total of 1700 acres more could be protected through acquisition within the approved boundary near Sherwood. This would complete acquisition of all 3060 acres currently approved within the Refuge boundary near Sherwood.

In 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service expanded the Refuge by establishing a new unit with an approved acquisition boundary of 4310 acres called the Wapato Lake Unit, located west of the Sherwood Unit. This expansion increased the total approved size of the Refuge to 7370 acres. At the end of 2011, the total acres acquired within the Wapato Lake unit were 816 acres. A total of 3494 more acres could be protected through acquisition within the approved boundary. This would complete acquisition of all 4310 acres currently approved within the Refuge boundary for the Wapato Unit. Altogether, the Refuge currently manages 2165 acres through fee title ownership or management agreement.

Objective 3-1: Approaches to and Funding of Land Acquisition

Pursue all appropriate approaches and funding sources for acquisition of Refuge lands consistent with USFWS Comprehensive Conservation Plan and other plans and objectives for the Refuge.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 3-1a.* Acquire land within the Refuge boundaries using all appropriate methods including real property interests, zoning, conservation easements, and wildlife management and mitigation agreements working in partnership with

federal, local and state governments, corporate and nonprofit partners, and local residents.

- *Strategy 3-1b.* Advocate for funding to acquire Refuge lands from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund, direct appropriations from Congress and other appropriate federal sources, and also from regional, state, and local governments, charitable foundations, non-profit conservation organizations, corporations, and all other appropriate sources. Encourage and work with landowners who desire to donate lands or rights in lands to the Refuge.
- *Strategy 3-1c.* A Land Acquisition Subcommittee will be established by the Board of Directors of the Friends of the TRNWR. This subcommittee will develop and maintain a 5-year plan, working with Refuge staff, to support acquisitions. The 5-year plan will address Objectives for acquisition over the next 5-year period, and as appropriate, will identify and map parcels that might be available for acquisition. The conservation purpose for acquisition (e.g. wildlife corridor, key habitat, etc.) of these parcels will be identified in the plan. The plan will also address communication with landowners and local governments about Refuge acquisition goals and Objectives, working with political representatives and others noted above to secure acquisition funds, and partnering with governments and others noted above for acquisitions. The 5-year plan will include outreach and education Objectives for the local community and others so that there is sufficient understanding and support to achieve the acquisition goals and Objectives of the Refuge.

4. Conservation and Restoration

GOAL: *The Friends will support the conservation and restoration goals of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge as outlined in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and the Annual Work Plan.*

BACKGROUND: Restoration History and Status

The Friends have been active in restoration work since shortly after the Refuge was established. Many of the early projects involved removing fences from the newly acquired properties. Once that was accomplished, plantings of native shrubs and trees took place during the winter planting season. Plantings have continued to be our major activity. One of the largest projects involved planting about 15 acres of riparian forest along the Tualatin River. School groups, church groups, members and individuals all participated in weekly Saturday plantings. The plants have thrived and we can look back on an ambitious and successful project. Most recently, our focus is on working with Refuge staff to identify a schedule of activities to establish a fixed, monthly work day.

Objective 4-1: Coordinate with the Refuge on all volunteer restoration and conservation efforts.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 4-1a.* Recruit an average of ten volunteers per monthly work party.
- *Strategy 4-1b.* Support the biological program through wildlife monitoring and other biological projects by contributing 1500 hours of volunteer time annually.
- *Strategy 4-1c.* Increase visitor and volunteer awareness of invasive species on the Refuge by researching the flyers available from agencies in the region and ordering the appropriate one(s) for distribution to the public and by partnering with organizations such as Clean Water Services, Invasive Species Coalition and others.
- *Strategy 4-1d.* Conduct an annual educational session for the public on the importance of and techniques for the control of invasive species on the Refuge.
- *Strategy 4-1e.* Recruit volunteers to conduct routine maintenance of trail and viewing facilities, including a minimum of one work party per year to trim trail vegetation, clean viewing structures, and perform simple repairs of public use facilities.

Objective 4-2: Seek and secure grants and donation funds to support the conservation and restoration programs of the Refuge.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 4-2a.* Submit at least two grant applications annually to support conservation and restoration projects on the Refuge.

Objective 4-3: Support conservation efforts beyond the Refuge boundaries.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 4-3a.* Actively develop and sustain partnerships with other non-profit groups (e.g., Friends of Rock Creek, Tualatin Riverkeepers, Raindrops to Refuge, Friends of Fernhill, and Intertwine) and local governments and agencies
- *Strategy 4-3b.* Support efforts to minimize impacts on the Refuge environment from outside sources.

5. Visitor Services

GOAL: *Visitor Services by the Friends will reach out to and provide opportunities for and every visitor to the Refuge to connect with nature in a meaningful way that will nurture support for the environment as well as the National Wildlife Refuge System.*

BACKGROUND:

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (an “Organic Act” for the System) included a component recognizing that wildlife-dependent recreational uses involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation, when determined to be compatible, are legitimate and appropriate public uses of the Refuge System. These “Big Six” priority public uses, as they are called, are integral to the mission of the Friends and represent some of the most tangible ways in which the Friends provides support to the Refuge. The Friends provide funding and volunteers, and employs staff on behalf of the Refuge to implement, maintain, and enhance a robust public use program.

This section focuses on five aspects of visitor services where friends facilitate the priority public uses that occur on the Refuge:

- 5a. Wildlife Center and trails: Welcoming and Orienting
- 5b. Environmental Education and Interpretation
- 5c. Wildlife Observation
- 5d. Photographic Society
- 5e. Special Events

5a. Wildlife Center and Trails: Welcoming and Orienting

GOAL: *The Wildlife Center will be staffed with well-trained volunteers who have a commitment to superb customer service and providing visitors with resources for furthering nature education.*

Objective 5a-1: The Store Committee will recruit, screen, train, and nurture sufficient volunteers to ensure that the Center will be staffed a minimum of five days per week.

Strategies

- *Strategy 5a-1a.* Participate in at least three tabling events each year, either at the Refuge or in the community to recruit interested volunteers.
- *Strategy 5a-1b.* All Wildlife Center staff will be trained to discuss opportunities with visitors who show an interest in volunteering in the Center.
- *Strategy 5a-1c.* Refresher training for Wildlife Center volunteers will be conducted at least twice each year.

Objective 5a-2: Store Committee members will select and have approved by FWS a variety of items to be sold in Nature's Overlook that will contribute to environmental awareness and education.

Strategies

- *Strategy 5a-2a.* Members of the Store Committee will attend at least two trade shows each year to seek out vendors who offer appropriate merchandise.
- *Strategy 5a-2b.* Store Committee members will network with other Friends groups and similar organizations to seek sources for high quality appropriate merchandise at price points that allow the store to profit from sales.
- *Strategy 5a-2c.* FOR and the Store Committee will continue to support Crafty Friends, the group of hand crafters who create merchandise to be sold, as a resource for high quality unique items approved to be sold in Nature's Overlook.
- *Strategy 5a-2d.* Continue to publish TRNWR pocket naturalist field guide for sale to the public and to support education programs.
- *Strategy 5a-2e.* Merchandise in the store will be rotated seasonally to display each item to its best advantage.
- *Strategy 5a-2f.* Information about how items pertain to TRNWR will be included in store displays where appropriate and available for store staff to share with visitors.

OBJECTIVE 5a-3: Ensure a cadre of well-trained trail rovers to assist visitors.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 5a-3a.* FOR will assist Refuge staff in conducting a minimum of two trail rover trainings per year.

5b. Environmental Education and Interpretation

GOAL: *The Friends' environmental education program will work to support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's priority of "Connecting People with Nature."*

BACKGROUND: History and Accomplishments

The Refuge hosts over 4,000 formal education visitors each year and over 110,000 visitors who come to observe, photograph and enjoy wildlife and its habitats. The Friends support the work of the volunteer naturalists and trail rovers with training and support staff through grant funds.

Objective 5b-1: Provide strong partnership with schools and teachers so our programs work together with classroom education programs.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 5b-1a.* Within the next year, review the current curriculum document to assure that it remains consistent with Refuge policies and practices.
- *Strategy 5b-1b.* Provide a corps of 25 trained volunteer naturalists.
- *Strategy 5b-1c.* Annually, provide two teacher orientation trainings.
- *Strategy 5b-1d.* Encourage teachers to use a broader portion of the school year for Refuge field trips. (Increase the number of school visits outside the mid-April to mid-June window by 20%.)
- *Strategy 5b-1e.* Provide at least six school site presentations in the 2012/13 school year.

Objective 5b-2: Provide a program of walks, events, and presentations that engage visitors with a wide variety of experience levels and interests.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 5b-2a.* Work with the Friends outreach effort to engage a visitor demographic representative of the area population.
- *Strategy 5b-2b.* Provide activities appealing to inexperienced, experienced and advanced background visitors. (For instance, "Easy Intro to..." talks, specific topic activities, and "Masters Sessions.")
- *Strategy 5b-2c.* Provide activities on a wide variety of topics, such as photography, native uses, horticulture, birding, and local geological history.
- *Strategy 5b-2d.* Provide activities in a wide variety of formats and locations (mid-day, evening, lectures, displays, public gathering tables, near both Sherwood and Gaston).

- *Strategy 5b-2e.* Explore the use of GPS related interpretive formats and other technological supports to interpretation.
- *Strategy 5b-2f.* Continue to work with partners such as Tualatin Riverkeepers, Oregon Natural Resources Education Project, Metro, and local schools to meet our mutual goals.

5c. Wildlife Observation

GOAL: *The Friends wildlife observation program will work to support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' priority of "Connecting People with Nature."*

BACKGROUND: Over 110,000 people come to the Refuge each year to observe, photograph and enjoy wildlife. Well-trained and -equipped volunteer naturalists and trail rovers work with Refuge staff to maximize each visitor's experience. Well-trained and -equipped volunteers work with Refuge staff to inventory and monitor wildlife.

Objective 5c-1: Continue to support wildlife observation by seeking donations for optics (binoculars, spotting scopes) to be used for Refuge education and recreation programs and for Refuge volunteer wildlife inventory and monitoring activities.

Strategies

- *Strategy 5c-1a.* Annually inventory the quality and number of optics. If inadequate, seek donations for new or replacement optics.

Objective 5c-2: By 2014, work with the Refuge to explore potential citizen science programs that could be conducted by Friends members.

Strategies

- *Strategy 5c-2a.* By 2013 check the feasibility of this citizen science program. By 2014 conduct the first program if found to be feasible.

Objective 5c-3: By 2015, develop a "Track Pack" designed to loan to families with young children in both English and Spanish. The pack would be designed for use in the Environmental Education (EE) Shelter area and along the trail. It would include activities that build nature observation skills for early childhood learners. Contents may include: photos, pictures, molded tracks, journals, samples of scat and other animal sign, and other learning tools.

Strategies

- *Strategy 5c-3a.* Determine the cost per backpack and identify appropriate number of backpacks for acquisition. Seek corporate sponsor(s) and/or individual donor(s) with an in-person request. Consider use of a "donated by" label on backpack as recognition of sponsorship.

5d. Photographic Society

GOAL: *The Tualatin River Photographic Society was established in 2008 with the goal of promoting wildlife photography on the Refuge.*

BACKGROUND: Wildlife photography is one of the “Big Six” wildlife-dependent priority public uses that are considered appropriate on national wildlife refuges when determined possible and compatible. The Tualatin River Photographic Society was established by a member of the Friends for the purpose of encouraging photographers to visit the Refuge, photograph the wildlife, and share their experiences and images.

Objective 5d-1. Build nature awareness and foster support for conservation by providing high quality nature and wildlife photographic opportunities for the Society membership and Refuge visitors.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 5d-1a.* Assist the Development Committee to produce an annual fund raising event with a photographic theme that includes educational opportunities and promotes nature photography.
- *Strategy 5d-1b.* Adopt North American Nature Photography Association’s *Principles of Ethical Field Practices* and comply with 605 FW5, *Wildlife Photography*, Fish and Wildlife Service Manual, USFWS.
- *Strategy 5d-1c.* Actively reach out to new audiences that are interested in nature photography to become members of the Friends and the Photographic Society.
- *Strategy 5d-1d.* Host an annual photographic contest with the support of local businesses and organizations. The contest will be structured so that awards will be made during the annual photographic themed fund raising event.
- *Strategy 5d-1e.* Assist the Education Committee in developing a youth photography program.
- *Strategy 5d-1f.* Develop an annual work plan and budget aligned with the Friends’ fiscal year.
- *Strategy 5d-1g.* Advise Refuge management on ways to improve photographic opportunities on the Refuge to include the planning and development of new photo blind(s) and/or the improvement of the existing blind to “provide visitors with quality compatible recreational wildlife photography opportunities.” (605 FW 5.3B)
- *Strategy 5d-1h.* Provide support to the Refuge (funds and/or in-kind) for wildlife photography programs.

- *Strategy 5d-1i.* Assist Store Committee in its production of an annual Refuge Calendar and/or DVD.
- *Strategy 5d-1j.* Assist Refuge Visitor Services with appropriate photographs for the photo gallery.

Objective 5d-2: Provide opportunities for nature photographers to develop and improve their technical and artistic skills.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 5d-2a.* Host a monthly meeting for nature photographers to share their work and encourage the use of photography for science, nature appreciation and environmental protection.
- *Strategy 5d-2b.* Invite photography experts to present workshops on a variety of topics, such as: equipment and optics, composition, matting & framing, wildlife behavior, and species identification.
- *Strategy 5d-2c.* Raise funds to purchase photographic quality audiovisual equipment for use at the Society's monthly meetings.
- *Strategy 5d-2d.* Expand the focus of the Society to include video.

Objective 5d-3: Contribute to the operational programs of the Refuge by providing photographic material to aid in education, recreation, field biology and habitat restoration.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 5d-3a.* As needed, work with the Refuge management to photo-document habitat restoration projects.
- *Strategy 5d-3b.* Work with Refuge staff to collect wildlife and habitat photos that can be used in their biological and conservation education programs.
- *Strategy 5d-3c.* Respond to Refuge Management's request to photograph special events, rare species, floods, construction projects, invasive species, or other non-routine subjects.
- *Strategy 5d-3d.* Assist Refuge management and the Friends in collecting visual images for web pages and other outreach.

5e. Special Events

GOAL: *The Refuge and the Friends will host special events and festivals throughout the year to attract visitors to the Refuge and connect people with nature. The location of this urban refuge allows for a greater number of people to attend these events, and reaching a demographic that might not have much exposure to nature.*

BACKGROUND:

What began as a grassroots one-day Songbird Festival event in a barn on the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge in 1996 has blossomed into a multiday well-attended signature event. For many years the only time the public had access to the Refuge was by attending the Songbird Festival. In 2010 the Friends of the Refuge received a \$60,000 grant from Washington County Visitors Association to develop a larger event. The one-day Songbird Festival became the multiday Tualatin River Bird Festival (TRBF). Currently the Friends participate in multiple events throughout the year.

Objective 5e-1: Increase Refuge visitation and visitor diversity, with an outreach emphasis on our underserved audiences.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 5e-1a.* Provide interesting and relevant activities that are new and engaging, will attract a broad spectrum of visitors to our events. Focus on the Refuge Improvement Act that designates six priority public uses of the Refuge system, referred to as the “Big Six”: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and environmental interpretation. Always remember to incorporate the “Wildlife First” motto of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- *Strategy 5e-1b.* Research how to attract a diverse population and develop ways to be inclusive and representative of the community we are serving. Utilize new technologies in outreach, such as Facebook, Twitter and websites.
- *Strategy 5e-1c.* Every event should have a purpose that describes how it will incorporate the missions and priorities of the Refuge, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Friends in its programs.
- *Strategy 5e-1d.* Host a minimum of two events per year, such as the Tualatin River Bird Festival and Focus on Nature Weekend.

Objective 5e-2: Build relationships within the surrounding communities and strengthen the relationship with the Refuge by working together to develop events on and for the Refuge.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 5e-2a.* The Friends will reach out to businesses and organizations in the community with opportunities for involvement in activities for and on the Refuge.
- *Strategy 5e-2b.* The Friends will work closely with the Refuge to ensure that events reflect the mission of the organizations and are appropriate.
- *Strategy 5e-2c.* The Friends will look for ways to incorporate other community events to make them mutually beneficial.

Objective 5e-3: Ensure that volunteer and financial resources are properly and efficiently utilized.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 5e-3a.* All events that are to use financial and/or volunteer resources of the Friends must submit a proposal to the Friends Executive Board that includes mission, purpose, guidelines, needs and preliminary budget. By understanding the intent of the event, it will be easier to establish its success.
- *Strategy 5e-3b.* Evaluate all events to ensure the best use of time and resources. Establish a matrix to evaluate if an event was impactful enough to continue.
- *Strategy 5e-3c.* Concentrate efforts on a few key ideas. Be careful not to over-extend resources.

6. Beyond the Boundaries

6a. Community Outreach

GOAL: *The Friends will seek opportunities to reach out to our various constituencies to spread information about the Refuge and the Friends.*

BACKGROUND: As supporters of an urban National Wildlife Refuge, the Friends group has a role in reaching out not only to people who come to visit the Refuge, but also to reach out to those who have not yet visited and to those who may never visit. We should work to provide them with conservation information and seek their support for protection of the environment.

Objective 6a-1: A Community Outreach Volunteer Coordinator recruited by the Development Chair will identify Friends volunteers to participate in at least 3 tabling opportunities each year heightening the awareness of the refuge, the Friends, and volunteer opportunities

Strategies:

- *Strategy 6a-1a.* The Development Chair creates a job description for the Community Outreach Volunteer Coordinator position and fills position.
- *Strategy 6a-1b.* The Community Outreach Volunteer Coordinator will recruit, train and support Friends volunteers for “tabling” opportunities.
- *Strategy 6a-1c.* The Development Chair, Board and Refuge Staff identify the best venues in the community to build awareness for the Refuge and FOR.
- *Strategy 6a-1d.* The Community Outreach Volunteer Coordinator will create a volunteer calendar and serve as a main contact for volunteers and community contacts.

Objective 6a-2: A Speaker’s Bureau will be created to provide a source of well-prepared speakers for groups and organizations.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 6a-2a.* The Development Chair, MOD Squad, Community Outreach Coordinator, Refuge Staff and the Board will “Brand” the Refuge by collaborating our story to share with the community.
- *Strategy 6a-2b.* *The “Branding” information will be used as a training tool for interested speakers.*

- *Strategy 6a-2c. The Development Chair will recruit a Speakers Coordinator.*
- *Strategy 6a-3c. The Speakers Coordinator will help recruit, train and coordinate speakers. The Speakers Coordinator will be the contact for interested service clubs and organizations.*
- *Strategy 6a-3d. The Development Chair, Board, MOD Squad and Refuge Staff will help identify potential community contacts with the Speakers Coordinator in order to increase awareness of the FOR Speaker's Bureau.*

6b. Computer-Based, Web, and Social Media Marketing and Member Benefits

GOAL: *The Friends will make use of computer-based, web and social media marketing to market and communicate with our various constituencies.*

BACKGROUND: Research indicates that the fastest growing demographic of social media users is those over 50. This demographic coincides with a large segment of our membership, while most younger members are already accustomed to using social media and the web on a daily basis. As more and more people look to the web and social media as their primary source of information, it will be increasingly important for FOR to make use of these tools to stay in contact with our members and potential members.

Objective 6b-1: The Friends will continue its efforts to upgrade and modernize the FOR website.

Strategies

- *Strategy 6b-1a.* A committee of volunteers headed by Internet knowledgeable leaders will work with our web host to update our web site and to make it more easily managed.
- *Strategy 6b-1b.* Enhancements will include the ability to join or renew membership on line.
- *Strategy 6b-1c.* Enhancements will enable online donations.

Objective 6b-2: Keep the membership informed of FOR-sponsored events, volunteer opportunities, accomplishments, and Refuge news on an ongoing basis through various social media platforms.

Strategies

- *Strategy 6b-2a.* The E-Newsletter, Making Tracks, will be distributed at least ten times per year to all members and interested parties who have provided an accurate email address.
- *Strategy 6b-2b.* Distribute e-news blasts as appropriate for individual announcements that are time sensitive.
- *Strategy 6b-2c.* Update the FOR Facebook page at least two times per week.

7. Staffing and Volunteers

GOAL: *Assure availability of staff to support the Friends organization, to enhance the ability of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to meet its operational needs, to support an active volunteer program and to implement this Strategic Plan and its associated Annual Action Plan.*

BACKGROUND:

The Friends have not had an Executive Director (ED), although a part time Administrative Assistant manages some of the tasks an ED would handle. Other tasks are handled by the President, other officers or members. Ideally, the Friends would like to be able to fund a full-time ED so that the Board could focus more on policy issues and less on programs and day-to-day activities.

For several years, the Friends have partnered with FWS to secure grants and Challenge Cost Share funds to hire employees to enhance Refuge operations. Those positions have included the Wildlife Center Coordinator, the Environmental Education Coordinator and the Invasive Species Technician. Individuals in those positions are employees of the Friends, but are primarily supervised by Refuge staff.

Volunteers are essential to the operation of the Refuge. FOR and FWS have historically partnered to manage a strong volunteer program to assist with many areas of Refuge operations, including naturalists, Wildlife Center greeters, trail rovers, people who help with restoration and maintenance, and many others. All are volunteers of the FWS, but Friends members and staff assist with recruitment, training, supervision and recognition of volunteers to insure that a pool of trained, active volunteers is readily available to enhance all areas of Refuge operations.

Objective 7-1: Establish and fund an Executive Director/Fundraiser position that will support the mission of the organization and will begin the process of enabling the Board to evolve from a programmatic to a policy board.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 7-1a.* The Board will establish a Personnel Committee of two to three people to develop a plan that will include a position description, compensation plan and time frame for establishing the position. The committee will also develop an employee handbook of personnel policies applicable to all FOR staff. The Committee will be in place by 7/1/13, and will have a preliminary plan done by 11/30/13.
- *Strategy 7-1b.* The Personnel Committee will work with the Development Committee to develop resources to fund the position at least half time, with the goal of having an Executive Director position by December 31, 2014.

- *Strategy 7-1c.* As an interim step, no later than October 2013, increase the hours of the current Administrative Assistant position to at least half time.

Objective 7-2: Continue to partner with FWS to fund positions that will enhance and support Refuge operations, such as the Wildlife Center Coordinator, Environmental Education Coordinator and Invasive Species Technician, as appropriate.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 7-2a.* Work with Refuge staff to cooperatively seek funding via grants and Challenge Cost Share to maintain current positions and add others as operational needs change. By October 1, 2013, secure funding to retain the existing positions.
- *Strategy 7-2b.* Proactively meet with FWS staff annually to prioritize needs at least a year in advance and develop a plan for addressing those needs. The first plan will be in place by December 31, 2013.
- *Strategy 7-2c.* Formalize the relationship between FOR and FWS in terms of supervision and oversight of the shared staff to better define roles and expectations. Include specifics in the FOR and FWS partnership agreement upon renewal.

Objective 7-3: Partner with FWS to support a volunteer program that meets the needs of both FOR and FWS and supports the operational needs of the Refuge.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 7-3a.* With FWS, develop a Volunteer Advisory Committee to complete an annual volunteer needs assessment and to establish goals for all Refuge program areas for recruitment, training, supervision, recognition and retention of volunteers. This should be done by a committee that includes current volunteers, and should be completed by June 30, 2014.
- *Strategy 7-3b.* Develop a formal plan that identifies specific FOR members to act as liaisons with the Refuge to coordinate volunteer activities for Refuge operational functions. These may include liaisons for restoration, Wildlife Center, naturalists, biology, habitat, maintenance, and others as appropriate. Plan to be completed by October 31, 2013.
- *Strategy 7-3c.* Create a pool of volunteers who conduct activities specific to the needs of FOR, and outside the scope of Refuge operations volunteers. These volunteers may conduct such activities as tabling at outreach events, fundraising, advocacy, presentations, mailings, administration, and other tasks specific to Friends' activities on and off the Refuge. To be completed by June 30, 2013.

8. Governance

8a. Board Roles and Responsibilities

GOAL: *As soon as practicable, but at the latest by the beginning of the year 2016, the Friends Board will evolve from its' current role as a Programmatic Board to function in the role as a Policy Board.*

BACKGROUND:

The Friends has existed since 1993 as primarily a volunteer organization with a programmatic board. A programmatic board is commonly referred to a “working” board. It is actively involved in implementation of the work of the organization. This type of board has been appropriate and effective over the formative years of the Friends. That said, as the Friends programs and functions have grown in size and complexity it has evolved to the point now where the organization requires paid professional staff to maintain and build on these programs and functions. This Strategic Plan calls for further growth in programs and functions over the long-term and we expect the need for paid professionals will grow over time. For these reasons, it is time that the Friends board evolves from a programmatic to a policy board. A policy board focuses on setting organizational direction and policies. It depends on employed staff and committees to implement the work of the organization.

Objective 8a-1: FOR will be operated in compliance with the Memorandum Of Understanding between FOR and Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge which will be replaced by the Friends Partnership Agreement when this document is available.

Strategies

- *Strategy 8a-1a.* The Executive Committee will work with Refuge staff to develop the Friends Partnership Agreement once the template for that document is approved, and that agreement will then be submitted to the Board for discussion and adoption.

Objective 8a-2: Funding Committee: Establish a Funding Committee to develop and implement a plan to establish stable funding sources to cover the costs of employees needed to evolve to a policy board. These employees will initially include, at least – Executive Director, Programs Coordinator/Grants Writer and Administrative Assistant. The Funding Committee plan will be approved by the Board and the committee will report progress to the Board on a quarterly basis. Specifics of this strategy are addressed in Section 7 (Staffing and Volunteers), Section 9 (Development), and Section 10 (Financial Management and Projections) of this Strategic Plan.

Strategies

- *Strategy 8a-2a.* A Funding Committee will be appointed by March 2013.
- *Strategy 8a-2b.* A Funding Plan will be approved by the Board by the end of 2013. The plan will identify all potential funding sources legally available for funding the Friends organization, potential levels of funding available from each, an Objective for each potential funding source, a plan for addressing each funding source, and Board and others' responsibilities for pursuing each funding source.
- *Strategy 8-2c.* Funding will be secured for an Executive Director who will be hired by the end of 2014.

Objective 8a-3. Establish a Membership Committee to develop and implement a plan to increase membership that will, among other important Objectives, support the membership funding needs identified in the Funding Committee plan. Specifics of this strategy are addressed in Section 10 (Development).

Strategies

- *Strategy 8a-3a.* A Membership Committee will be appointed by March 2013.
- *Strategy 8a-3b.* A Membership plan will be approved by the Board by the end of 2013. The plan will include an aggressive goal for membership increase and strategies that support meeting this goal.

8b. Board Composition, Recruitment, and Renewal

GOAL: *The board will recruit and retain members with the skills, experience and connections required to perform the roles and responsibilities of a non-profit board, and specifically the evolving needs of the Board of the Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge.*

BACKGROUND: Board Membership

An effective and efficient Friends organization needs a board that has the requisite skills, experience, and background to address the diverse programs and functions inherent in such an organization. This includes these aspects contained in the membership of the existing board and those that will be necessary as the organization evolves over time. The purpose of this section of the Strategic Plan is to address this need.

Objective 8b-1: Board Membership Committee - A slate of appropriate potential board members will be presented for election at each annual meeting as necessary by a Board Membership Committee (BMC) convened for the purpose of recruiting and maintaining Board members. The Board Membership committee will be appointed by the Board Chair, and the committee will report progress to the Board on a quarterly basis. This committee will focus on, among other things, development and succession planning of the Board leadership. The BMC will seek out and provide Board members with opportunities for training and activities related to non-profit board of director's leadership, membership, and success.

Strategies

- *Strategy 8b-1a.* The BMC will be appointed as soon as the Strategic Plan is adopted by the Board of Directors.
- *Strategy 8b-1b.* The BMC will develop position descriptions for each of the Board officers by the June of 2013. These position descriptions will be approved by the Board prior to recruitment of new members.
- *Strategy 8b-1c.* The BMC will develop a succession plan for Board leadership and key committee positions. The succession plan will be approved by the Board by the end of 2013.
- *Strategy 8b-1d.* The BMC will identify and propose at least three trainings/activities related to the Objective 8b for Board members each year.

Objective 8b-2: All potential board members are knowledgeable about the history, mission and vision of the Friends and Board responsibilities/expectations.

Strategies

- *Strategy 8b-2a.* Develop a fact sheet for potential recruits.

- *Strategy 8b-2b.* Prepare an orientation manual for newly elected board members.
- *Strategy 8b-2c.* Provide remedial board orientation as necessary.

8c. Bylaws

GOAL: *Bylaws will be updated, confirmed and maintained that facilitate and define Board operations, roles, responsibilities, and evaluation.*

BACKGROUND:

Bylaws are important to the integrity and organizational operations of the Friends. The Bylaws need to be maintained as the organization evolves.

Objective 8c-1: Bylaws – Review Bylaws annually and update as needed.

Strategies – Governance Committee

- *Strategy 8c-1a.* A Governance Committee will be appointed by the Board Chair. The Committee will present a proposed set of revised Bylaws to the Board by June 30 of each year in preparation for a full membership vote at the annual meeting.

9. Development

GOAL: *To develop a sustainable revenue stream of restricted and unrestricted funds, which aid in the growth of the FOR administrative, operational and fundraising goals, as well as support the partnering programs and projects of the TRNWR.*

BACKGROUND:

The Development Committee was initiated in late 2011. It has focused on three primary areas: membership, outreach and development. Successful fundraising activities since committee inception have included Fall Friends Gathering, holiday wreath sales, Dimes for a Difference bag donation at Whole Foods, and restaurant/barbeque events. The following objectives and strategies will be defined and pursued.

Objective 9-1: Create a Development Chair position for the FOR Board of Directors with the specific directive of growing the revenue stream and chairing a Development Committee.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 9-1a.* The Board Chair will appoint a Development Chair focus to on membership, outreach and development by March 2013.
- *Strategy 9-1b.* The Development Chair will assemble a Development Committee comprised of FOR board members and FOR members by May 2013 The Development Committee will submit a FOR Development Plan that addresses all aspects of this section of the Strategic Plan to the Board by June of 2013.
- *Strategy 9-1c.* Development Chair will be mentored/ in partnership with the FOR President and/or Executive Director, Treasurer and Refuge Manager. Quarterly review meetings will be held to present the plans for each Objective in this section of the Strategic Plan on an ongoing basis.

Objective 9-2: Membership Development will be a subcommittee of the Development committee. The primary Objectives will be to professionally maintain and manage communications with the current membership base, attracting new individual members and developing corporate memberships, with a target goal of 1000 members by 2020. Current membership in 2012 is 250.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 9-2a.* Work with website designer and computer programmers to create an online membership payment option, for example Pay Pal, to insure ease of payment or donating funds.

- *Strategy 9-2b.* Establish an annual membership drive in accordance with the annual membership meeting. Work with the FOR board and Refuge staff to create an event, on the refuge, which will offer a unique experience for current members, their guests and potential new members to attend.
- *Strategy 9-2c.* Develop and implement a corporate membership strategy which encourages community business partnerships.
- *Strategy 9-2d.* Partner with Speakers Coordinator and work together for a grassroots outreach membership drive.
- *Strategy 9-2e.* Enrich our membership community and engage them in our capacity building efforts.

Objective 9-3: Outreach subcommittee under the Development umbrella has the primary Objective of public engagement. By participating in community events, FOR will have the opportunity to inform the public of Refuge special events, educational, volunteer and membership opportunities the TRNWR has to offer.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 9-3a.* Follow local community calendars to identify opportunities for a FOR information table, i.e. Farmers Markets, community fairs, Chamber events. Organize props and assign board members/volunteers to staff tables at event.
- *Strategy 9-3b.* Seek community businesses that partner with non-profits for fundraising opportunities, i.e. Benefit Barbeques, Change drops, Dining Nights, Sharing Spree, Non-profit catalogs, etc. Committee to contact these businesses, help with advertising, and organize volunteers as needed.
- *Strategy 9-3c.* Participate in community events, such as parades and holiday celebrations, to reinforce community partnerships.
- *Strategy 9-3d.* Participate in city council meetings, state meetings, and other meetings with groups or on topics for which FOR is a stakeholder.
- *Strategy 9-3e.* Increase membership in the outreach subcommittee to at least 6 members.
- *Strategy 9-3f.* Collaborate with the Community Outreach Coordinator and identify overlapping goals / opportunities to work together.

Objective 9-4: Develop donor options and create new fundraising opportunities to increase and diversify FOR's funding base and secure the resources needed to achieve all strategic priorities.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 9-4a.* Research additional fundraising sources, i.e. donor bricks, giving trees, winemakers dinner for unrestricted funds.
- *Strategy 9-4b.* Determine ways to better recognize donors on website, at special events and at the Refuge. Work with the Refuge staff to brainstorm options and federal compliance regulations.
- *Strategy 9-4c.* With appropriate legal counsel, develop a bequests and beneficiary designation for a planned giving program within the Friends donor options by the end of 2013.

Objective 9-5: Establish a Grant Writer position within FOR. To insure a base of restricted funds and continued professional growth of FOR, foundation, educational and government grants are a necessity. A dedicated person is needed to write and then review compliance guidelines, due to the complexity and time needed for the application process and the implementation processes once awarded. Target Date: 06/30/13.S

Strategies:

- *Strategy 9-5a.* The Development Chair will write a job description for the part time Grant Writer position. This description will be submitted for review and approval by the Board by March 2013. Until funding is established, the position will be filled by a volunteer with grant writing experience. In the interim, the Administration Assistant currently employed by FOR should be increased by five hours a week to assist with the grant writing process.
- *Strategy 9-5b.* Actively partner with the Refuge staff, FOR Administrative Assistant and/or Grant writers to assist with finding possible foundation, educational or government grants to secure adequate restricted revenues.

10. Financial Management & Projections

GOAL: *Continue to develop and maintain financial reporting mechanisms that fully meet the needs and requirements of FOR and that support other strategic plan areas, in particular those that impact financial considerations of the organization (e.g. Development, Staffing and Volunteers).*

BACKGROUND: As the budget of FOR has grown over recent years, the need for more sophisticated financial accounting and reporting systems continues to increase in importance. This is important in relation to fulfilling the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board, but also in regard to meeting legal requirements and attracting new grantors and donors.

Objective 10-1: Continue to provide timely and accurate financial information that facilitates:

- Informed decision making by the Executive committee, Board and membership.
- Compliance with required reporting related to maintenance of non-profit status and any other legal requirements of FOR (e.g. IRS Form 990).
- Fundraising activities.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 10-1a.* Refine budget development and Board budget adoption process.
- *Strategy 10-1b.* Continue to refine cash flow projection report for monthly review of Executive Committee.
- *Strategy 10-1c.* Continue timely production and issuance (week prior to Board meeting) of monthly financial reports.
- *Strategy 10-1d.* Develop generic financial report that can be used for grant applications.

Objective 10-2: Provide assistance (in particular to Development program) that supports growing the organization's revenue base to address:

- The building of membership and stability of funding.
- Funding for hiring staff to transition the Board from a programmatic board to a policy board.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 10-2a.* Assist with procurement of website redesign contractor and provide guidance on improvements to visitor interface related to membership, donations, product purchase, and other financial transactions.
- *Strategy 10-2b.* Develop a policy or program related to acceptance and acknowledgment of memorial gifts.

- *Strategy 10-2c.* Explore policy/programmatic ramifications of accepting endowment gifts.

Objective 10-3: Maintain Financial Policy and Procedures Manual that documents business practices related to the organization's financial management in order to foster standardization of procedures, facilitate training of new Executive Committee or Board members, and to demonstrate adequacy of internal control of cash resources and other FOR assets.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 10-3a.* Continue development of Business Procedures Manual for FOR. The Executive Committee will assist with the development and review and approval of the Manual. The Manual will document within separate sections, topics such as reporting, management of financial software such as Quickbooks accounting system, authorization of contracts, authorization of vendor/employee payments, banking practices, store financial practices, and other functions required by the goals, Objectives, and strategies of this Strategic Plan. Produce a fully completed draft version of the Business Procedures Manual by June 30 2013.

Objective 10-4: Perform grant oversight and management tasks to ensure all grant funds received are appropriately expended and tracked.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 10-4a.* Prepare programmatic reporting to grantors according to their specifications.
- *Strategy 10-4b.* Conduct routine audits of grant expenditures and prepare reports for the Board outlining grant progress as requested.

11. Partnerships

GOAL: *Continue and enhance the strong working relationship between the Refuge and the Friends and other community organizations with complementary missions.*

BACKGROUND: The Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge is the original and strongest partner of the Friends. With this foundation we have developed partners with the City of Sherwood, the National Wildlife Refuge Association and local community organizations with similar missions such as Tualatin Riverkeepers. The Friends have also developed partnerships with local businesses such as Backyard Birdshop and REI to help strengthen the organization and create ties to the community. The Refuge has a unique urban location and because of this it has greater visitation and a stronger demand for services. The cost of these programs exceed the Refuge's federal budget. A strong working relationship with the Refuge is important to understanding how the Friends can best meet these needs.

Objective 11-1: The Refuge and the Friends already cooperate under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The existing MOU will need to be updated after the strategic planning process is complete. The Board will review the current MOU and submit suggestions by a date determined by the Friends President. The Friends Executive Committee will meet with the Refuge Manager to revisit the MOU and include addendums that should be set to coincide with our fiscal year.

Strategies: Areas of focus on the MOU include:

- *Strategy 11-1a.* Identify what portion of supporting effort should go into each Friends program area.
- *Strategy 11-1b.* Determine how to divide and utilize proceeds from the store, and roles, responsibilities and rights of volunteers.
- *Strategy 11-1c.* Recognize the restrictions on how federal funds are used, building procedures and processes around grant writing and what resources are available.
- *Strategy 11-1d.* Policies and procedures for communication and requests for help.
- *Strategy 11-1e.* Review responsibilities and rights of each party.

Objective 11-2: The relationship between the Friends and the Refuge will ideally continue to grow and reflect the growth of the Friends' capacity and the complex needs of programs of both organizations.

Strategies:

- *Strategy 11-2a.* The Friends will develop an Annual Work Plan, which will be coordinated with the Refuge Manager and staff to streamline expectations of the two parties.
- *Strategy 11-2b.* The Friends Annual Work Plan will be developed in support of the Refuge's Annual Work Plan. This ensures that the highest priority projects of both the Refuge and the Friends coincide.
- *Strategy 11-2c.* The Refuge is completing their 15-year Comprehensive Conservation Plan. It is important that the Friends understand the role they play and how best to support this plan.
- *Strategy 11-2d.* Conduct a facilitated annual review of the relationship to ensure continued growth and mutual benefit.

Objective 11-3: Focus attention on developing and growing partnerships within the surrounding communities.

Strategies: Set timeline and expectations at the beginning of each fiscal year:

- *Strategy 11-3a.* Continue to provide environmental education outreach to surrounding school districts, such as Sherwood, Tigard, Tualatin, Newberg, Gaston and Beaverton, while also attracting teachers and field trips from the Metro area and beyond.
- *Strategy 11-3b.* Develop stronger relationships with business leaders and tap into the opportunity of growing membership and financial support by actively involving the Friends in organizations such the local Chambers of Commerce (Sherwood, Tualatin, Tigard and Gaston) Metro, and Washington County Visitors Association and increasing awareness of our organization in local city government meetings and events.

Strategy 11-3c. Create and strengthen relations between the Friends and other local organizations that support the Friends and the Refuge mission. Specific attention needs to be paid to the Tualatin River Watershed Council, the Wapato Lake area, local Native American tribes, Tualatin Riverkeepers, Jackson Bottom, Fernhill, Ducks Unlimited and other Friends groups.