

MAY 2017

MAKING TRACKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE TUALATIN RIVER NWR

JOYFULLY CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY WITH THE WONDER OF THE REFUGE



PRESIDENT'S PERCH

By Tom Hartz, President of the Board



The first Earth Day was celebrated in April 1970. I was in my last semester of college. At that time, Rachel Carson, an environmentalist, was getting lots of attention. Her book *Silent Spring* was required reading for my Ecology and Field Biology course. Powerful. The book remains relevant, maybe even more today than in the 60's. Ms. Carson described the impact of human activity on wildlife and man's

responsibility to protect the environment. Her call was echoed by other scientists around the world. Environmental stewardship is now an international initiative. We celebrated Earth Day 2017 at our refuge the weekend of April 21-23.

Dozens of Friends volunteers put together a Native Plant Sale and Work Party. Both events were well attended. On Friday afternoon, Friends members were given first dibs on native plant purchases and an opportunity to participate in a silent auction of donated treasures. Saturday morning rains didn't deter folks from restoration activities. Lots of families came to purchase plants for their yards and gardens, some with wet pant legs and muddy shoes from pulling invasive plants. Our Master Gardeners and volunteers were there to help visitors decide which plants were best for their specific tastes. Our Visitor Services volunteers kept kids and their parents busy with crafts and educational activities. Proceeds from the weekend will go toward the next major Friends event, the Annual Bird Fest on May 20. As a volunteer, it's great to be with friends and colleagues participating in our shared passion for promoting environmental education and stewardship. Witnessing families enjoying nature in their own community is energizing.

The Friends of the TRNWR is having an impact beyond our own boundaries. Our partnership with the Ridgefield NWR and the Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards is gaining traction as part of the Urban Refuge initiative. Our own Environmental Education Specialist Seth Winkelhake's Trail Cam output has gone viral nationally within the FWS with viewings of bobcats, beavers, deer and raccoons on our facilities. Board Member Cheryl Hart and I had lunch last week with the Acting President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

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MAY EVENTS

[Photo Society Meeting](#)
May 4, 7pm

[Early Morning Bird Walk](#)
May 6, 8:00 - 10:00am

[Puddle Stompers](#)
May 10, 1:00 - 2:30pm

He asked that I compile some descriptions of the Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge's Environmental Education programs and volunteer participation practices. The intent is to share these with other Friends groups nationally as a model for what works.

The Seasonal Trails will be open to the public on May 1. Expect to see lots of ducklings and goslings near those trails over the next several weeks, as well as migrating songbirds all over the refuge. The bald eagles nesting across the Tualatin River near the Riparian Forest Study site don't seem shy of human observers. Apparently they realize that we aren't likely to swim across the river to bother them.

Check the website for Spring activities. If I believe the forecasters, we may have a Spring this year!

BIRD FESTIVAL 2017



Celebrate wildlife and wild places at the annual Tualatin River Bird Festival. Spend the day outdoors at this free, family-friendly event with activities for everyone.

Start the day with one of several bird walks beginning at 5:30 A.M. Listen to the "dawn chorus" and learn to identify birds by sight and sound with experienced birders. Family activities start at 10 a.m. and will include hands-on educational arts and crafts to help children learn about nature, building a bird and butterfly house for their backyard, and painting a duck decoy.

Visitors can learn to catch a fish, try their hand at archery, practice shooting a BB gun or play migratory fish putt-putt golf. The always popular and exciting Audubon Education Birds will be featured at noon, and Conestoga wagon rides around the Refuge will run 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Check out the conservation exhibits presented by local environmental groups and browse in the Nature Store.

Festival parking is available at the office building at 12205 S.W. Tualatin Rd., corner of SW 124th and Pacific Highway. Free ADA compatible shuttle buses will provide continuous transportation to the Refuge starting at 5 a.m. until 5 p.m.

May Events Cont'

[2nd Saturday Work Party](#)

May 13, 8:45am - Noon

[Bio-swale Work Party](#)

May 19, 9:00 - 11:00am

[Tualatin River Bird Festival](#)

May 20, All Day

[Friends Board Meeting](#)

May 23, 6:30pm



SOCIAL MEDIA



For more detail on activities, schedule, transportation, food, and more visit the [Bird Festival web page](#).

REFUGE UPDATE

Wapato Lake Environmental Survey

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to announce the completion of the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the restoration of Wapato Lake in early May. The draft EA will then be available for public comment on the Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge website https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Wapato_Lake.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wapato Lake
National Wildlife Refuge

What: Environmental Assessment Open House
When: Monday, May 15th, 2017, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Where: Gaston Junior/Senior High School Gymnasium
300 Park Street, Gaston, OR 97119

The Service invites the public to learn more about the habitat restoration options being considered and to provide formal comments. The evening will kick off promptly at 6:30 p.m. with a 15 minute presentation from Refuge staff, followed by an open house where the public will have an opportunity to visit with Refuge staff for questions and comments. Your participation is important to our planning process.

If you are unable to attend, comments can be sent to tualatinriver@fws.gov, as well as in writing to Tualatin River NWR Complex headquarters, 19255 SW Pacific Highway, Sherwood, Oregon, 97140. Comments will be accepted until May 28th.

Note, this EA document pertains specifically to habitat restoration options, and does not address wildlife dependent recreation. The Service will commence planning for public use at Wapato Lake NWR at a later date.

HELP THE
FRIENDS WHILE
YOU SHOP



NATURE'S OVERLOOK STORE

Wear in the World

Pat and Bobbie Allaire sharing their Friends logowear at [Poás Volcano National Park](#) in Costa Rica.



PROGRAMS

Interpretation

A huge thank you to the volunteers who made the Earth Day activities a smashing success. Kids were given a Nature Passport that they got stamped at each interpretive station. They learned about compost, pollinators, recycling, and bioswales. We also had

crafts using magazines to make beads! With over 250 visitors, Earth Day was a wonderful day!



NWRA Alerts

[Sign up to receive alerts](#) from the National Wildlife Refuge Association on legislation that impacts the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Environmental Education

The last week of May we will again be providing an Alternative Outdoor School program for middle school students from both Sherwood Middle School and Laurel Ridge Middle School. Some students each year choose not to participate in the overnight outdoor school and this will give them an opportunity to have an equivalent experience connecting with nature.

Restoration

In April, the biological team held a special work party in honor of Earth Day, along with our regular Second Saturday Work party. With the help of about 30 volunteers, including boy scouts and employees from Rockwell Automation we removed a large number of tree tubes, blackberry, and downed debris from some of our recent wind storms. These volunteers were in good company, with around 6,000 volunteers doing work around Oregon for SOLVE's annual Earth Day cleanup. We are hosting another work party on Saturday, April 29th for a group from Tualatin High school, as well as, our normal Second

Saturday work party on May 13th. Thanks to all of our volunteers for helping to improve habitat!



VOICES FROM THE URBAN SUPPORT TEAM

Who's Ready for a Daycation?

Exploring the impressive collection of nearby parks, trails and waterways got a lot smarter in 2016 with the beta launch of the Daycation Mobile App. Daycation is a concept that the Urban Refuge Program helped fund and develop with our partners in the Intertwine Alliance. It asks the community, including our Friends groups, to take their favorite things to do outside and turn them into adventures that are shared in the app. It's equal parts activity finder and social engagement for people to express their love of nature with each other. The Daycation mobile app is now available for your exploring pleasure on the [Apple iOS](#) platform. An Android version and companion website are in the works.

The work is far from over (in fact, it's just beginning), so we ask Friends members to participate in two simple ways: 1) Try out the Daycation app and provide feedback, and 2) Make a Daycation. It's your chance to highlight what you love about our refuges and communities, and be part of creating a springboard that's getting people outside in new and exciting ways. Download the app to see some samples like: a virtual guide to biking along the Columbia River and the downtown waterfront; one-stop shopping to test your nature detective skills at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge; a search for hidden fossils embedded in Portland skyscrapers; and even Tualatin River NWR's first (but not only with your help) Daycation...connecting ducks and donuts.

To get you started, here's a little "[Daycation 101](#)" video that demonstrates the main features of the app. Curious? Want to learn more or brainstorm some ideas? Want to provide feedback? Contact Pat Stark at: patrick_stark@fws.gov.



Youth in Conservation

The future of conservation is in the hands of young adults ready to take on that challenge. Along with the help from Center for Diversity in the Environment (CDE), the USFWS is tasking young adults, ages 18-25, to gain the necessary skills to address environmental issues in their communities. CDE's Emerging Leaders 2042 program brings in community leaders and environmental experts to walk these youth through learning about their place in the environmental field through an equity lens. They learn about racial and social justice, assess their leadership styles, and create a plan for their next steps in bringing change to their respective communities, just to name a few of the skills they gain. This program finishes in June.



FEEDBACK WELCOME

Please help us make this newsletter something you look forward to receiving by sharing ideas and suggestions to improve the content. This is a work in progress, and we look forward to hearing from you! [Click here](#) to email us.

CONTACT US

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