

Turnbull Wildlife Refuge



Fall 2015 3rd Quarter

Friends of Turnbull N.W.R. Quarterly Report

Volume 18 Issue 3

Message from the President

Molly Zammit

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

I had the privilege of attending Friends Academy 8 on behalf of the Friends of Turnbull this past August. Sponsored by the USFWS, the 4 1/2 day course jam-packed sessions covering topics such as the federal budget process, communicating and connecting, land acquisition, and strategic planning. To say the least, the sheer amount of information was overwhelming at times.

One of the most important things I personally took away from the Academy were the resources available to the Friends of Turnbull. To begin with, US Fish and Wildlife has a National Friends Coordinator and regional mentors and coordinators available to help strengthen our organization and the Friends of Turnbull Board is going to take advantage of using this resource.

The friends I made at the Academy are also a part of our resources now. We were a collective group of 20 people from many walks of life. Our Friends groups were grappling with similar issues and it was valuable to learn from everyone how they handled different problems. I was able to get sage advice on financial policies, building membership, and fundraising. I am looking forward to passing on this information in future articles for the newsletter and at FOT board meetings. The meetings are open to all Friends of Turnbull members. We meet on the second Thursday of each month at the Wren Pierson Building in Cheney, WA at 5:00. Feel free to join us.



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Friends of Turnbull Nature Store

Marian Frobe

Our profit through September is a little over \$1600.00. As of the date of this writing I don't yet have the credit card fees for September, but I can see that we are already going to have a better year than the last one. August was the last month that Deanna, the refuge's visitor services volunteer, was able to help us out by selling during the week, so there has been a noticeable slowdown in sales for September. The weather can be blamed for much of the slowdown, too. We are low or out of some items or sizes, but as we only have October to go, I think we can wait on our reordering until next spring.

Our new treasurer, Mike DeCoria, so far has not changed the way we do our reporting to him. We welcome Mike and are sad to bid farewell to our friend, Bob Liepold, who was our treasurer for many years. October will be our last month to be open on weekends, though as the 31st falls on Saturday, we plan to keep it open November 1st, as well. The only day we will be open for sales through the winter will be the Winterfest, usually the first Saturday in December. Come in this month or on Winterfest for your Christmas shopping. We have a good selection of children's books and coloring books and still have a good selection of t-shirts and sweatshirts.

Lizzie, our scheduler, has been doing a wonderful job of keeping the store scheduled. We also have a wonderful core of volunteers that are willing to spend part of their weekend helping us out. However, our volunteer numbers have dwindled and some people are doing double shifts, so we could use a few new people to help out. If you would like to volunteer to help out at

the store, please call me, Marian Frobe, at 328-0621 or at rrfrobe@msn.com or Lizzie Rosenberg at 991-2604 or lizzieries@gmail.com. Or check the "I want to volunteer" box on your membership form and we will contact you.

FOT Activities Fall 2015/Early Winter

Lorna Kropp

WinterFest. December 5. Saturday 9:00 to 3:00.
See details on page 8.

Wild Refuge Dinner and Auction. March 5, 2016.
Saturday. 5:00
Wren Pierson Community Center
615 4th St
Cheney, WA 99004

See details in the next newsletter.

2016 Wild Refuge Dinner & Auction



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www.fotnwr.org

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Refuge Happenings

by Sandy Rancourt
Visitor Services Manager

Environmental Education & Outreach

Environmental Education

Field Trip Program

The fall is already upon us and our calendars are filled with field trips and other activities. I've been busy coordinating with teachers and scheduling field trips and other events. I have also been training AmeriCorps interns Colton Hodgson and Michael Ploegman on our Field Trip Program with assistance from EE Contractor Kylie Gaard and Pathways intern Paul Reilly.

~EE Facilities~

Taxidermy

I received a call from Steve Slukam from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game who said he heard we were looking for beaver specimens. We received 2 deceased beavers in fantastic shape and worked with a taxidermist to get them mounted. The beavers are a welcome addition to our classroom and supplement discussions with classes participating in field trips and our Winter Outreach Program at local schools.

EE Shed

The YCC crew and maintenance staff refurbished the old EE shed adjacent to the building. The shed was modified to hold the students lunches and coolers when they visit the refuge to participate in our field trips. The crew did a great job on this project turning a dilapidated shed into a usable and presentable storage unit.



EE Shed
(S. Rancourt)

Master Hunter Projects in support of Environmental Education

Master Hunter Jim Gladden and Wayne Ward did a great job constructing and mounting a platform in the rafters for our cougar mount. This freed up much needed space in the environmental education classroom. Our future plans are to create a basalt-like ridge to go under the mount.



The new resting place for our cougar mount
(S. Rancourt)

Landscaping the back of the Environmental Education Classroom

We received an email from a Master Hunter inquiring about possible volunteer opportunities for him and some fellow master hunters to complete their volunteer service requirements. Dale Pritzl mentioned he was a landscape contractor with experience and equipment available. As many of you are aware of, the back of the environmental education (EE) building was in need of an overhaul for quite some time. Because of the high usage from all the classes we see during the field trip season, we were pretty much left with a landscape similar to one that has endured drought for several years. I asked Dale if it was a project he was willing to take on, and he jumped right on it. Within 2 weeks of recruitment, Dale Pritzl, Harold Zeuschel, Craig Zeuschel and his son Christopher, Mark Ellis, and Richard Rodriguez turned the backyard of the EE building from a dustbowl to a work of art. The crew brought their own heavy equipment and materials including sod and gravel to get the job done. They leveled and prepped the ground, laid sod and gravel, made a 6 ft. wide trail between the grass area, installed a sprinkler system. This was a very professional job and the end product was exceptional. It also saved the refuge well over \$5,000 in material and labor.



Before...
(S.Rancourt)



Master Hunters laying the gravel.
(S.Rancourt)



After...
(S.Rancourt)

Outreach

Spokane Falls Community College Service Learning Fair

Turnbull participated in the Spokane Falls Community College Service Learning Fair on September 24th. WSC AmeriCorps intern Colton Hodgson and Pathways Intern Paul Reilly staffed an information booth at this event. The interns provided information about the refuge and AmeriCorps Program to many students attending the fair. They also passed out flyers about the fall community planting event and Student Conservation Association internship positions. Several students expressed interest in volunteering at the refuge.

Volunteer Program

EWU EagleUp!

On September 22nd, we had the opportunity to work with 10 Eastern Washington University Students who were participating in Eagle UP! a welcome week event at EWU. Eagle UP! provides incoming freshmen and transfer students the opportunity to engage in community service.

The students assisted staff and volunteers with planting nearly 1,000 milkweed saplings on upper Cheever Lake in support of the monarch initiative. The refuge biologist, Mike Rule, myself, Pathways Intern Paul Reilly, and AmeriCorps intern Colton Hodgson spent a pleasant afternoon working side by side with the freshman students. This event was a great opportunity for students who have never visited the refuge before. The students learned about Turnbull, the National Wild Refuge System, monarchs and milkweed.



EWU students and refuge staff planting milkweed. (S.Rancourt)

Riparian Restoration Projects

Student Conservation Association Veteran Corps

We had the pleasure of working with some very enthusiastic veterans enrolled in the SCA program this year. Among other projects the veterans worked on during their several week period with us this summer was completing our potting project. We still had several hundred black hawthorn bare root stock that needed to be potted. In a year or two we will use these trees for our community planting events or on private lands projects. The majority of the veterans did not have extensive backgrounds in natural resources so this was a great way to connect them to nature. It was nice to have such an engaged audience who asked me many questions after a talk on riparian habitat, restoration efforts and management. The veterans with the help of our visitor service volunteer Joe Veilleux also painted the water tank in the Collin Leach Memorial grove. The tank was large and white and was really quite visible. We had them spray paint the tank in different tones of greens and browns to match the surrounding habitat and it really blends in well now. The crew later came out to participate in MAPS. Not only did they learn a thing or two about songbirds, but they also got to hold a songbird in hand for the first time.



SCA vets potting bare root hawthorn seedlings for future restoration plantings. (S. Rancourt)



A SCA veteran intern extracting a songbird from a mist net. (S. Rancourt)

Visitor Services

Wildlife Photography Blind

Visitor Services Volunteer Joe Veilleux and YCC crew did a really nice job remodeling our photo blind on Middle Pine Lake. The existing blind's door was falling off and many of the boards were warped and broken. Joe and crew replaced the boards, built a new door and painted the blind to blend in with the surrounding cattail and bulrush.

Fond Farewell!

Robert Liepold, Treasurer of FOT resigned his position with the Board in August of this year. It is with great sadness we see him leave. Bob has been a refuge volunteer since 1998! Over the past 17 years, he has done more for the Friends group and the refuge than any of us probably even realize. Being the Treasurer of FOT or for any nonprofit group is no easy task and is a very big responsibility. Bob excelled in this position, and he always kept his positive outlook no matter what was asked of him. He responded quickly to any refuge request including updating SAMS and other government requirements, ensuring SCA and WSC received payment, updating staff on budget, tracking refuge accounts, paying the contractors, submitting forms to IRS, assisting with riparian restoration payments, staffing the Friends bookstore on the weekends, etc., etc., Bob was also very successful at procuring grants throughout his tenure with the Friends.

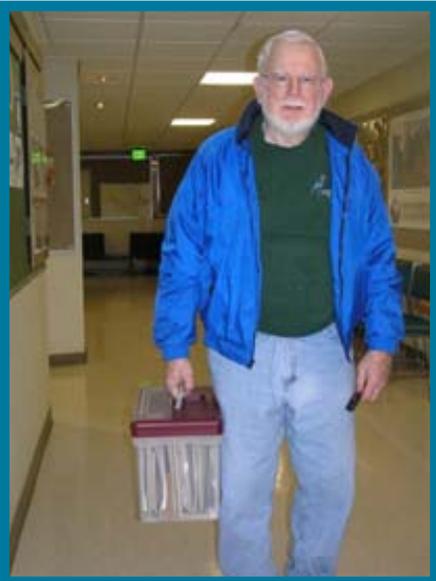


Joe and YCC member (S. Rancourt)



Photo blind in the background. (S. Rancourt)

I will always remember the fantastic cakes he brought to the Friends Winter Festival, diligently tracking proceeds made from the Friends Auction, talking about his skiing adventure, and Bob toting his portable file case (seemed to get heavier as the years went on) to all those monthly board meetings. Most of all he is



one of the nicest human beings you will ever meet. Bob is a gem. His retirement is our loss, but his gain. I hope he and Fonda have many wonderful travel adventures ahead. Thank-you's can never adequately express our gratitude.

FOT Treasurer Bob Liepold (SR)

Welcome Aboard!

AmeriCorps Interns

Two new WSC AmeriCorps interns came on board this fall to help out with our Environmental Education and Biological Programs. This year's recruits are Colton Hodgson whose service will be in the EE program and Mike Ploegman who will assist in the biological program and occasionally help with our EE outreach program as well.

Biological Program

Collin Adkins, this past year's biological AmeriCorps member completed his 10.5 month term of service on July 31st. Our three SCA interns hired for this past summer, Austin Littman, Matt Bollen and Megan Vhay, completed their 12 week internships in August after a very productive field season. Through all their efforts over 2000 acres of the refuge were surveyed for the presence of invasive species including all of the refuges new acquisitions. The also mapped several occurrences of milkweed as part of our Monarch Initiative, completed forest monitoring transects in our most recent thinning unit, banded ducks, completed monitoring of native bees in forest thinning and prescribed burn units, and monitored water levels in refuge managed wetlands.

We finished up our 21st year of songbird banding at our MAPS banding station on August 28th. Marian and Russell Frobe and Rachel Rule helped to extract birds from mist nets, and band and record data on individual birds. We captured 180 birds representing 36 species. Several individuals visited the banding station to observe and experience the capture and handling birds including YCC, AmeriCorps members, and SCA interns. Rachel Rule also collected milkweed seeds. She gathered over 30,000 seeds that will be used next year in our monarch habitat restoration efforts.

Swan Family

Carlene Hardt

"I had a nice surprise a couple of weeks ago (September 30th) when I found the whole swan family on Middle Pine! Since they were last on Cheever Lake and now are on Middle Pine it means they can fly! I watched them for several hours but they did not fly during that time. As it was beginning to get dark they swam over to the narrow west end of Middle Pine and started eating. They let me watch and take pictures until I had to go. I left quietly and slowly so I wouldn't alarm them, and they remained there eating as I went to my car. I thought the coloration on the cygnet's flight feathers was beautiful. They all look big and healthy. I hope I see them back next year!"



Photographs by Carlene Hardt

WinterFest at Turnbull

December 5, 2015

Wildlife Presentation at 11:00

Chili Contest!

You are invited to be a part of the 2nd Annual Winterfest Chili Contest. Bring us a slowcooker filled with your favorite chili to share by 10:00 a.m. on December 5. Lunch starts at 12:00 and the judging will be held at 1:00. The three categories are **Vegetarian**, **Wild Game**, and **"Regular"** chili. List the major ingredients on a 3 x 5 card with your name, address, and phone number. The prize? Bragging rights to the best chili at Turnbull and a pair of tickets to the Turnbull Auction to be held on March 5, 2016.



Two tours to restricted Refuge areas will be led by Chief Wildlife Biologist, Mike Rule. Reservations can be made through eventbrite.com. The links are posted below. If you don't have access to the internet please call Joanne at 509-999-2090.

Morning tour 9:00:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winterfest-closed-refuge-tour-am-tickets-19093729860>

Afternoon tour 1:00:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winterfest-closed-refuge-tour-pm-tickets-19094057841>

Please Don't Release Your Balloons - USF&WS

Balloons are great at birthdays, weddings, graduations and more, but once they get loose, balloons can pose a threat to many animals.

Birds, turtles and other animals commonly mistake balloons for food, which can harm or even kill them.

In addition, many animals can become entangled in balloon strings, which can strangle them or hurt their feet and hands.

For example, more than a hundred balloons were recently collected at Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey at a cleanup, and that's just the number that made it to one particular beach.

Some of the pictures are hard to look at, but they make clearer than any words why we all should find alternatives to letting a balloon go: The pictures are too sad for the newsletter but you can see them at <http://balloonsblow.org/alternatives/>

Bats in Your Backyard!

David Mizejewski
National Wildlife Federation

Bats are a great help around the garden—eating pest insects and even pollinating flowers. A single bat can eat hundreds of moths, beetles, or mosquitoes in an hour. In doing so, a healthy bat population can keep insects from becoming pests, both in your backyard and in agricultural areas.

Attract these pest-eating creatures with the following tips:

- **Avoid Insecticides**—Bats eat the insects targeted by insecticides and can be harmed from ingesting these poisons.
- **Save Trees**—Bats roost in branches and in tree cavities. Keep as many mature trees in your yard as you can and plant new ones to provide future bat habitat.
- **Provide a Home**—Set up a bat house to give them a place to sleep during the day in your yard.
- **PRO TIP:** If you place a bat house in your yard, place it at least 12 feet from the ground on the side of your house or a pole. And keep the faith, it may take a few years for bats to find it!

NEWS FROM THE HILL



National Wildlife Refuge Association News from the Hill

While Congress seems to have averted a government shutdown with final passage of a Continuing Resolution, or “CR” expected, the threat is far from over. The short term funding agreement is expected to last until December 11th, but Congressional Republicans and the White House are nowhere near agreement on overall budget caps, the debt ceiling and political issues tacked on in an election year. The drama is playing out right up to the last moment; while most in Washington believe some form of Continuing Resolution will be reached to keep the government's doors open at least temporarily, the real theatricals are just getting started.

Regardless of the political fights, we continue to urge Congress to fully fund the the Refuge System's operations and maintenance (O&M) budget at \$508.2 million in FY16. Severe budget cuts over the past few

years have impacted the Service's ability to meet basic management goals at most of its 563 units nationwide. Without adequate funding, the Refuge System simply cannot meet the most basic wildlife management goals and objectives – including providing quality wildlife dependent recreational opportunity for the public.

Refuges are also economic drivers. For every dollar of federal investment, refuges provide almost \$5 in economic return. Refuges are responsible for creating nearly 35,000 jobs and generating \$2.4 billion in economic output. Consider that the next time you enjoy an afternoon on the more 568 million acres our National Wildlife Refuge System maintains. Please consider contacting your Congressional representatives, and urge them to adequately fund the Refuge System.

Please contact your Members of Congress and tell them that the National Wildlife Refuge System matters to you! If you need any assistance reaching out to your MOC please give us a call, we are happy to assist... 202.290.5594

Late Summer/Fall Wildlife Observations

Mike Rule

As if the Summer of 2014 wasn't hot and dry enough for you, this summer has been a record breaker. Our wetlands were lower than normal going into the summer months as a result of last summer's conditions and the lower than average snowfall and rainfall through winter and spring resulting in water levels not seen since 1994. Outside the spring-fed Pine Creek system below Refuge HQ, most wetlands on the refuge have gone dry with exception of the largest wetlands (Upper and Lower Turnbull and Long Lake) which only have surface water in the very center leaving large expanse of exposed mudflats. Low water conditions and increasing water temperatures have resulted in high nutrient release and algal blooms in many wetlands. Our youth waterfowl hunt was suspended again this year because of low water which made access to hunt areas difficult to impossible.

Conditions were so severe this year that most of our breeding waterfowl had not fledged before brood rearing habitat became extremely limited. Pair numbers were dramatically lower this past spring as a result of low water levels in 2014 and this year. Many seasonal wetlands were dry in May. The full impact of these 2 consecutive years of dry conditions will be apparent next year when we expect to see record low waterfowl breeding pair numbers. Our annual breeding populations are dependent on adult survivorship and recruitment from the previous breeding seasons.

Elk observations have been concentrated around the last remaining watering holes such as Long Lake Cheever Lake, and Pine Creek. In dry years, the elk tend to gravitate to these areas since water is much easier to come by. Elk prefer not to slog through a 100 feet of belly deep mud to get to water if there is an alternative.

Songbird banding

We completed our last day of landbird banding on August 28th. We captured 180 birds, 35 more than the long-term average. Sixteen were recaptures which is quite a bit lower than the long-term average of 30 recaptures per banding season. We captured the regular common species; house wrens, willow flycatchers, western pewees, black-capped chickadee, red-shafted flickers, red-naped sapsuckers, downy woodpeckers, black-headed grosbeaks, common yellowthroats and yellow warblers to name a few. The spring and fall migration periods brought us numerous Wilson's warblers, warbling vireos, MacGillivray's warblers, a brown creeper, northern waterthrush, male

lazuli bunting, western tanager and several hermit thrushes. Most of our migrants were young of the year so the dry conditions didn't appear to be affecting songbird production.



Red-Naped Sapsucker.
©Brian E. Small.



Lazuli Bunting
©Mike Ware



Western Tanager Courtesy USF&WS

Swan update

The 4 cygnets hatched this year have fledged. They are now spending their time on Middle Pine Lake making them highly visible to the visiting public. A group of six adults have also been observed on McDowell Lake opposite the refuge entrance and recently flying over HQ. Outside the wetlands below HQ, swan habitat is becoming pretty scarce. When the tundra swans return later this month many will move through or stop on the larger lakes in the area. Look for big numbers on Philleo Lake, southern Rock Lake and Sprague Lake.

This year we have been putting a lot of effort into restoring and enhancing habitat for our native pollinators and the Monarch butterfly in particular. Following years of declines in their numbers at traditional wintering areas this wide spread and once abundant butterfly is starting to get some serious attention. In order to preclude listing this species as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, other government agencies and numerous private groups are working to reverse the trend through efforts to improve breeding habitat throughout its range. For monarchs this comes down to planting milkweed. There are 27 species of the genus *Asclepias* in North America. This group of milkweeds are critical to the survival of the monarch. Although the monarch butterflies will feed on the nectar of many flowering plants including milkweed, the monarch life cycle from egg to caterpillar and its eventual metamorphosis to an adult can only happen on one of the species of milkweed. In our neck of the woods, it is the showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*).



Called the 100 Million Monarchs Initiative, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has set as a goal to increase monarch habitat by 100,000 acres and our region has a 10,000 acre chunk of that goal. To achieve that goal National Wildlife Refuges and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program are looking for opportunities to protect, restore and enhance pollinator and milkweed habitat. Turnbull is doing its part by mapping existing milkweed stands, noting the presence of monarchs and collecting seed in late summer and fall for planting and propagation of seedlings. Staff and volunteers have mapped over 200 locations with milkweed on the refuge, collected over 50,000 seeds and contracted for the propagation of 20,000 seedlings by Benson Farms, Inc. of Moses Lake. We received half these seedlings in early June but conditions were already too hot and dry to plant actively growing seedlings. We were able to plant around 2,000 seedlings in areas where irrigation was possible or very near to streams and wetlands, but the majority were held over for fall planting when seedlings are dormant. We have also received the remainder of our seedlings from Benson Farms, Inc. We have been working hard to get these planted with the help of school groups from elementary to college age and a scout troop. So far we have planted, over 5,000 seedlings this fall on the refuge on nearly 5 acres. We plan to plant another 2,000 seedlings on the refuge and 5,000 on private land for a total of 15 acres. We are also looking for school and local clubs interested in creating school yard habitats and pollinator gardens that include milkweed. We have provided seedlings to 4 of these groups so far. This will leave around 5,000 seedlings that EWU has graciously offered to keep overwinter for us in one of their greenhouses for planting in the spring. If anyone knows of a landowner, school or group that has an area they want to plant for pollinators, we can provide milkweed seedlings and seed, technical assistance and financial assistance. Contact Mike Rule at mike_rule@fws.gov or 509-235-4723 ext 226.



Friends of Turnbull NWR
P.O. Box 294
Cheney, WA 99004



The Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, a nonprofit organization, supports the mandate of the refuge to protect and enhance wildlife and their habitats through education, research, habitat preservation and restoration.

Got email? Add it to your membership form for quick activity updates!

Membership Application

YES! I want to support the Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge and its programs with my membership.

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, and Zip _____
Daytime Phone _____
E-mail _____

Annual Membership: (Circle one)

Individual \$15
Family \$25
Business/Group \$35
Patron \$100
Benefactor \$500
Donation \$ _____
Endowment Fund Donation \$ _____
Amount Enclosed _____

New _____ Renewal _____

I would like to volunteer _____
Nature Store _____
Committee _____
Environmental Education _____
Where needed _____

My check is enclosed payable to
Friends of Turnbull N.W.R.
P.O. Box 294
Cheney WA 99004