

Turnbull Wildlife Refuge



Fall 2017 3rd Quarter

Friends of Turnbull N.W.R. Quarterly Report

Volume 20 Issue 32

A Message from Molly Zammit

Fall has come upon us once again. The leaves are turn red, yellow, and orange to give us a brief, but spectacular, scene before they drop and the snow flies. The geese gather and prepare to leave on their annual migration south. The Friends of Turnbull also prepare to help the Refuge with the Annual Community Tree Planting. In addition to the volunteer help with the trees, fences and water, we provide food to feed the 100-200 people that come to the Refuge. If you have a some time to spare this Saturday, come and join us!



In this Issue:

Molly's Message	1
FOT Nature Store.....	2
Trumpeter Swan Family.....	3
Close Encounters	3
Activities Report	4
Western Bluebird	4
Community Planting Day	5
Refuge Happenings	6
Wildlife Obsesrvationis	10

Friends of Turnbull Nature Store

Priscilla Bowen

In the last newsletter Marion mentioned that this has been a very challenging time trying to get the Nature store turned over to me. What an understatement!!! I took over as store coordinator the end of June. Since then I have been going through paperwork and learning the ropes. I've met with Marion several times. She has been very patient and helpful. I think I am beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel. At least the store is still up and running. The volunteers are as faithful as ever taking their turns at the store.

Sales have been very good this summer and continue to be good this fall. Summer sales were especially good while the on-site volunteer Deanna who was here as she had the store open a couple of days a week. A special thanks to her.

We have some new items in the store that you really must take a trip out to see. Marion had been trying to find magnets for the store. Together we found a source and she did all the work to get them ordered. They are very nice. We have three selections. The photos are from three of our local photographers. They are selling very well at \$3.99 each. I have also chosen a Christmas ornament of porcelain. There are six selections. A little more expensive at \$15.00, but they are very nice also and selling very well.

There is still a great choice of books for all ages as well as t shirts and sweat shirts. The hats and polo shirts have been replenished.

The store was open all day for Celebrate Lands Day on Sept. 30th and sales were wonderful. We had visitors from around the nation. I will have the store open all day for Community Planting Day on Oct. 14th and also for Winterfest Dec. 9th. Of

course, we still have our regular openings through Oct. Be reminded that it is always gift giving time and you can support environmental education with your purchases from the Nature Store.

Because of the changes we probably won't see a profit in the store this year. However, we should hit the ground running in the spring because we will not need to make many purchases.

Thank you to Marion and Russ Frobe for their dedication to the store the last 20 years. The Friends have definitely benefitted from their hard work. Thank you to Lizzie Riesenbergs for scheduling and also for Joanne for taking over mid-year. A job well done by both. A special thanks to all our volunteers who have kept the store open all year. You know who you are. I applaud you. Without your assistance the store would not exist. Keep up the good work.

I wish you all a wonderful fall and winter. We will see you in the spring--hopefully with some new surprises.



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www.fotnwr.org

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Turnbull Trumpeter Swan Family

by Carlene Hardt

The four cygnets that hatched in late June are all grown up and flying! According to Biologist Mike Rule, there were no other swan nests besides the one on Cheever, so these four are it. The swans on McDowell Lake did not nest and another pair was spotted a couple of times over at Upper Turnbull Slough but no nest was located. It is great to see at least one family thriving!”



Close Encounter of the Prickly Kind!

by Carlene Hardt

My husband and I were out walking with our two dogs Sunday (Oct 1st) when we spotted a dark brown porcupine on the gravel path by Headquarters Pond, waddling along. It was nibbling on low plants and paid little attention to us as we walked by. A little further up the trail our puppy started sniffing around a fallen tree, and my husband noticed just in time that it was another porcupine! He pulled back on the leash before she got a nose full of quills for her curiosity.

This close encounter was a good reminder why keeping our dogs on a leash at Turnbull is so important!



All photos by Carlene Hardt

Activities Report

Lorna Kropp

For activities or other information you would like to let Lorna know about, here is the link: fotnwr.org/activities.html

Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge
WinterFest celebration – December 9

This annual event will feature Closed refuge Wildlife Tours, a speaker presentation on Climate Science and our stewardship by Professor Brian Henning of Gonzaga University, a Chili Contest and potluck lunch, and hands-on activities for children.

1. Closed area Refuge Tours at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm with reservations available on Eventbrite with links from www.fotnwr.org/activities.html
2. Professor Brian Henning, Gonzaga University --“presents a clear and accessible introduction to why global warming is happening, why it is still debated in the popular media and in congress, and what the international community is doing to try to address it. He contends that the mainstream moral frameworks of “sustainability” and “stewardship” are welcome improvements over more destructive attitudes regarding humanity’s place in nature, but that they are ultimately insufficient.”
3. Chili Contest and potluck lunch – make your special Chili and bring a crock pot – or bring along salads, bread or dessert to add to the lunch mix. FOT provides drinks.
4. Hands-on activities for children

Schedule for the day:

9:00 – 11:00 am Tour #1 leaves the area outside the Administration Building Parking/Classroom building. Reservations through Eventbrite/fotnwr.org
10:00-11:00 Hands-on activities for children of all ages in the classroom; entry of the Chili pots
11:00 – 12:00 Speaker presentation on “Climate Change and Our Way forward” in Classroom by Brian Henning, Gonzaga University, Professor of Philosophy and Environmental Studies.

12:00 – 1:00 Scrumptious Chili and the trimmings lunch; announcement of winner of the Chili Contest; Prize – Packet of new items from the Nature Store. Donations for lunch accepted.

1:00 – 3:00 Tour #2; Reservations through Eventbrite/fotnwr.org. For those without computer access please call Joanne Powell 509-999-2090.

Western Bluebird

TNWR Website/Cornell



Western Bluebird © Robert Griffith

Western bluebirds are members of the Thrush family which also includes mountain bluebirds, American robins and Townsend’s solitaires. As its name indicates, it is found west of the Rocky Mountains from British Columbia to Mexico. A portion of Western bluebirds are considered resident throughout their range while others are considered medium-distance migrants who either move to lower elevations or fly south to the American Southwest and Mexico. Although chiefly insect eaters during the breeding season, they will add fruit to their diet in winter which might explain the variety of migratory habitats.

Western Bluebirds are among the birds that nest in cavities—holes in trees or nest boxes. But look at their bills—they’re not equipped to dig out their own holes. They rely on woodpeckers or other processes to make their nest sites for them. This is one reason why dead trees are a valuable commodity in many habitats.

Occasionally Western Bluebirds have helpers at the nest. Most of the extra birds attending nests are helping their presumed parents, some after their own nests have failed. Interestingly, studies show that many nests include young that were not fathered by the resident male.

WinterFest

Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

(26010 S. Smith Rd., 4 miles south of Cheney)

December 9, 2017

WinterFest Program

Professor Brian Henning, Gonzaga University --“presents a clear and accessible introduction to why global warming is happening, why it is still debated in the popular media and in congress, and what the international community is doing to try to address it

Chili Contest!

You are invited to be a part of the 4th Annual WinterFest Chili Contest. Bring us a slowcooker filled with your favorite chili to share by 10:30 a.m. on December 9. Lunch starts at 12:00 and the judging will be held at 1:00. The three categories are “**Regular,**” **Vegetarian,** and **Wild Game.** 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.

Wildlife Tours to Restricted Refuge areas

9:00 and 1:00

Two tours to restricted Refuge areas will be led by Chief Wildlife Biologist, Mike Rule.

Reservations can be made through eventbrite.com. Go to our website (FOTNWR) to find the link for registering for the Winterfest Tours on the Activities page. If you don't have access to the internet please call Joanne at 509-999-2090.

Friends of Turnbull store open - great Christmas gifts!
Selected items at reduced prices

Refuge Happenings

by **Sandy Rancourt**
Visitor Services Manager

Our fall workload came upon us as abruptly as the season. Several biological surveys are being conducted, the Fall Field Trip Season is upon us and multiple maintenance, visitor services, fire, and volunteer projects are well under way. Here's what's happening on the refuge.

Riparian Restoration

EWU EagleUp!

For another year, Turnbull partnered with EWU's Office of Community Engagement to get students participating in EWU's EagleUp program, out on the refuge this fall. EagleUp! is an orientation program for freshmen and transfer students with a service learning component. Turnbull provides a great opportunity for these students to get outdoors and connect with other new students while helping out the environment. The refuge biologist, Mike Rule, myself, bio tech Dustin Cousins, SCA interns Michael Ploegman and Chance Figueroa, and AmeriCorps members Hans Lohmeyer and Jennifer McGovern worked with the 15 students and Dr. Charles Lopez planting saplings at a new site along the tour route. Reed canary grass, an invasive species, and rain and hail provided a formidable barrier, but students, staff and volunteers were up to the challenge. All told, we planted over 25 native aspen, willow and red-osier dogwood saplings. The students were also educated about Turnbull and the National Wildlife Refuge System, riparian habitat and its management and the importance of conserving such vital habitat.



Breaking ground was the most challenging aspect of the planting project (S. Rancourt)



Charles Lopez and EWU students participating in EagleUp! (S. Rancourt)

Difficult conditions proved no deterrent for planting. (S.Rancourt)





Michael Ploegman assisting EWU students with planting (S. Rancourt)



SCA intern Chance Figueroa (S. Rancourt)



EE AmeriCorps member Jennifer McGovern (S. Rancourt)

Other Riparian Restoration Projects and the Master Hunter Program

A rather nice size bull moose had been throwing his weight around (literally) by testing the protective fence at the far end of the Pine Creek Restoration site. Apparently, his strength was pretty impressive and gained him access to our new plantings. He enjoyed a good portion of the aspen and other treats inside. During that time, a beaver also gained entry and did some pruning above the hardware cloth cages. The AmeriCorps and SCA interns repaired the fence the moose pushed down. Trevor Britton, in the Master Hunter Program, volunteered over 20 hours removing individual hardware cloth cages around the bigger willow and other native trees to allow them to spread. Those trees, however, were also enclosed in large cages to protect them from further beaver damage. Master Hunter Tristan Sanker mounted steel gates in our native plant nursery. Since the gates did not fit exactly, Tristan worked with maintenance worker Darold Hagedorn to make modification to the steel gates. Tristan also modified the nursery fence to install the gates. His efforts have made it easier to access our native plant stock.

Environmental Education & Outreach

Usually, our spring field trips have been the busiest time of year for environmental education. This has not been the case for the past couple of years. Our Fall Field Trip Program has been just as popular. As soon as I returned from a trip out east, I started scheduling fall field trips and night hikes. We are booked solid with a wide diversity of classes that plan on participating. We started off our field trips with North West Parent Coop Preschool followed by a mixed age group of students from North Wall Elementary in September. Several public and private schools, high schools and homeschools will also visit this fall. We are also scheduled to participate in Camp Wooten, an outdoor education program hosted by St. Thomas More Middle School. It is not even October, and we already have numerous requests for winter outreach programs and next year's spring field trips. My deepest appreciation and thanks goes out to all our long term volunteers who are coming to our rescue once again to help

facilitate all these classes. Jennifer McGovern, our new environmental education AmeriCorps member just came on board in late September. I have been busy training her on the Fall Field Trip Program with EE Contractor's Kylie Gaard's assistance.



Former AmeriCorps member Colton Hodgson volunteered to help with a group of youngsters from the Northwest Parent Coop Preschool out on a fall field trip. (S. Rancourt)

Welcome Aboard and Fond Farewells!

Environmental Education AmeriCorps member Colton Hodgson completed his 2nd term of service this year. Colton is a very pleasant young man, and he did a great job presenting programs for a diversity of school children. Biological AmeriCorps member Hans Lohmeyer completed his 1st term of service and decided to stay on board for another year. We are very fortunate to have him for a 2nd term of service. Jennifer McGovern was selected for this year's EE AmeriCorps position. She is very likeable young lady, and is a welcome addition to our program. Former biological AmeriCorps member Dustin Cousins was hired as a bio-tech again this year and former biological AmeriCorps Michael Ploegman returned in a long term SCA position involved in a diversity of projects including aspen habitat condition monitoring and endangered plant restoration. SCA intern Chance Figueroa was brought on board for 10 weeks to help out with invasive species monitoring and other projects.



Hans at MAPS (S. Rancourt)

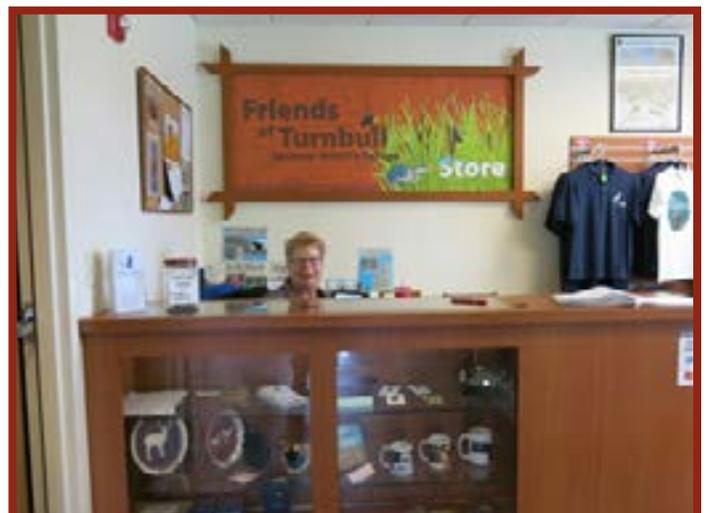
RV Visitor Service Volunteers

Turnbull's staff was very fortunate to have all our RV volunteers back for another season, and it was a very productive one. Bob Michaels performed his usual duties and took on even more. He meticulously kept all our public rest room facilities so spotless that we received many compliments from the public. He was a huge help keeping our EE sites looking great by mowing weekly or when needed. He also raked the entrance and auto tour roads on a regular basis. No wash boards this year! Our newly potted seedlings thrived because of Bob's tender care making sure that they never dried out. Deanna Veilleux provided great assistance with a variety of projects including staffing the Friends of Turnbull Nature Store Monday through Wednesday. Deanna made many great sales for our Friends group this year. Besides all her interaction with the public, she handled an influx of lifetime senior pass sales before they increased this year. This was a huge help to our administrative staff. She also assisted with refuge entrance fees and data entry. Joe Veilleux put in his usual long hours of hard work with the maintenance staff. He can pretty much handle anything, and he is always willing to lend a hand on any project. Always a 😊 ... Not that we don't have enough work to do at Turnbull, but Joe also provided great assistance on a project at Little Pend Oreille NWR this year. We are hoping that all 3 visitor services volunteers are willing to come back next year.



Joe working on a public use trail that was washed out by all the runoff this year (S. Rancourt)

Deanna staffing the FOT Nature Store. (S. Rancourt)



Wildlife Observations

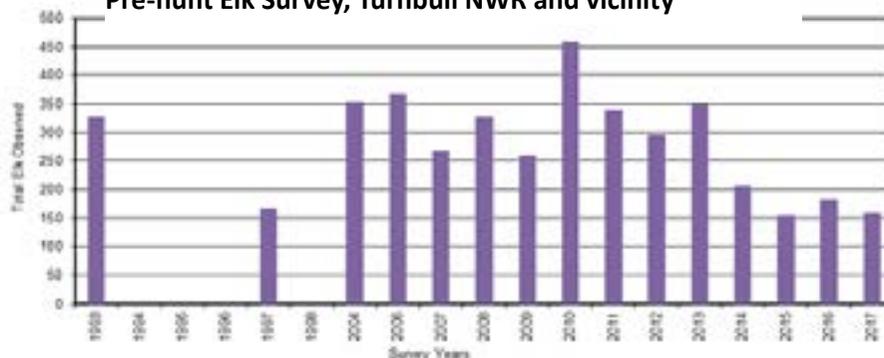
Mike Rule

With a record breaking hot and dry summer for Eastern Washington, our wetland and riparian habitats have been showing its effects, although not in the way you would think. Although many of our seasonal wetlands have gone completely dry, the large, permanent wetlands held up pretty well thanks to the generous run-off we received this spring. Our youth waterfowl hunt was open this year after being suspended for 2 years because low water made access to hunt areas difficult to impossible. Although waterfowl breeding populations were low this spring as a result of poor nesting and fledgling success over the past 2 years, the better conditions throughout the brooding season this year likely resulted in an abundance of juveniles fledged to the flyway. Hopefully we will see an increase in nesting pairs this next spring.

In years when we experience very dry and warm conditions such as this year, growth of aspen and other riparian hardwoods is often suppressed and

we see an early leaf drop that affects our fall color display. From what we have observed so far this fall this is going to be a good color year. The excellent spring run-off and very wet June this year coupled with the warmer than average conditions also fueled growth in our riparian areas that was well above the average. Many aspen stands exhibited growth in excess of 3 feet when average annual growth is usually around 1 foot. This rapid and abundant growth will help to minimize the impacts we see from browsing by elk and moose. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife counted a total of 159 elk on their annual pre-hunt aerial survey. Elk numbers have stayed consistently below 200 animals over the past 3 years. These reduced numbers should also help minimize impacts to aspen from browsing allowing more aspen to achieve heights where they are safe from browsing and can contribute to the overstory canopy of our riparian areas.

Pre-hunt Elk Survey, Turnbull NWR and vicinity



Several moose have been seen along the main driving route including several good-size bulls. The State biologist counted 11 moose during the elk flight, 4 cows, 3 calves and 4 bulls. One bull seen recently at refuge HQ is missing an antler. He likely broke it when he gained access to the Pine Creek enclosure and did some damage to our tree planting efforts. The fence has been repaired and we will plant more trees and shrubs this fall.

Although the majority of fall waterfowl migration has already occurred there are still several mallards, gadwall, and green-winged teal on the refuge and an occasional wood duck. Flocks of pygmy, white –

breasted and red-breasted nuthatches fill the canopy of the pines as well as large flocks of red crossbills and western bluebirds.

Over the past few weeks several sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks have been seen moving through the refuge.



Pygmy, white-breasted, and red-breasted nuthatches

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