Turnbull Wildlife Refuge
Friends Newsletter

Friends of Turnbull
Annual Report October 2023 – Sept 2024

by Lorna Kropp

Oct 23-Dec 23

- Walk for the Wild #1 raised approximately $1000 with Amplifier Fund from Public Lands Alliance
- Fall Plantings in Pollinator Garden from seed collections, plants from EWU Prairie Restoration
- Funding for Jaelyn Wesche, AmeriCorps Volunteer .“Wildlife Educator”, shared with The Lands Council $8000

Jaelyn Wesche AmeriCorps Volunteer

Jan 24 – Mar 24

- Quarterly Report with Refuge/Board Meeting – Biology Program by Molly Dixon
- Decision to fund 50% Biology Tech position for 24 Spring/Summer Field Season - $15,000
- Nature Store starts using barcodes/reader to facilitate sales; recruiting and training volunteers
- Purchased new official “US F&W Brown” sign about Nature Store seasonal open information for the Pine Lake Overlook area
- Bought ads in the Cheney Press Neighbors & Visitor Guide

April 24 – June 24

- Nature Store Opens for season; FOT taking on volunteer staffing 4 days each week this year
- Earth Day 24 Tree Planting (with The Lands Council, WA F&W, National Parks, more
- Quarterly Report with Refuge/Board Meeting – Private Lands Biologist, Brian Walker
- MayFest booth – FOT pollinator activity; Refuge had popular “Touch Table” and more
- Research Grant Committee awarded grant to Marion George, EWU Biology student, for research on amphibians for the 2024 Field Season - $1000
- Pollinator Garden planting, watering, weeding
- FOT Flower walk with Wendal Kane from Native Plant Society
- FOT/SAS workday to put Bird Tape on windows of the Refuge Administration Building
- Quarterly Report with Refuge/Board Meeting – Ken Meinhart, Refuge Fire Program
- SAS Docent, Joseph Cooney has presented monthly Bird Walks on first or second Saturday of March – October.
- Annual Membership Renewal = 85 members as of 9/17/24

Earth Day 24 Tree Potting, hike +

A large group of all ages from The Lands Council, Friends of Turnbull, and the community celebrated Earth Day together with a little work, and play.

(Cont. from page 1)

July 24 – September 24

- Signed a Funding contract with Mr. Eli Holm to create a new Environmental Education curriculum to include 7 lessons at 3 age-levels (Upper Elementary, Lower Elementary, and Middle and High School) to for local classroom teachers to use with their students at the Refuge. The project will be completed in 9 months (September 2024 – June 2025) - $10,000
- Planning for our 2nd annual Walk for the Wild 5K Fundraiser on October 12, 2024
- Friends Partnership Agreement between FOT and Turnbull NWR/US Fish & Wildlife for next 5 years renewed and signed off by the Regional Office
- Attended Spokane County Planning Commission Hearing on new code for siting Wind Energy Facilities in the county; advocated for appropriate tower setbacks for the Refuge Stewardship area.
- Invited the Friends groups of the other two Refuges in our Complex to visit Turnbull and participate in Walk for the Wild/Annual Meeting
- Funding for Jaelyn W. to attend the Region 1 Visitor's Service workshop in November near Olympia, WA - $1500
- Funding for TNWR/The Lands Council Planting Days with Cheney Middle School Spring and Fall; $4000
- Board begins discussion regarding long-term funding goals and Advocacy for Refuge Budget, and use of FOT funds
- 2024 season Nature Store Net sales = $20,000; profit tbd.

New Board member elected at the FOT Annual Meeting on October 12, 2024

Denise Buck, a Cheney resident and retired Environmental Educator, has agreed to serve on the Board and was elected by the membership attending the Annual Meeting. Thanks to our Nominating Committee (Alice Hanley, Lisa Langelier, and Nancy Curry) who assisted with screening and informational conversations with potential Board volunteers. Denise served as a Nature Store Volunteer for this season. She also participated on the Board Committee preparing the Request for Proposal for the Environmental Education Contractor, working to produce a revised set of Lesson Plans for Field trips at the Refuge.

The Board currently is seeking additional new members so that there can be a rotation of members serving 3-year terms. The Board Member rotation plan was interrupted during the COVID Pandemic. The Board meets monthly to guide the Friends' Refuge support activities, community outreach activities and organizational business and fundraising. Involvement, inquiries and interest from members are welcome any time during the year. Contact: president@fotnwr.org or any Board member.

Advocacy for the Refuge in the new proposed Spokane County Zoning Code regulations regarding the siting of Wind Energy Facilities within the county.

Spokane County Department of Planning and Zoning and the County Planning and Zoning Commission currently are working on Zoning Code: ZBA-0004-2024 Commercial Wind Energy Facilities Chapter 14.830. In August, the Refuge Management staff and Friends' members responded to the Planning and Zoning Department desire to fast-track these rules, urging a full review. The initial community response made it clear that full hearings and public consideration in the code development process would be necessary.

Kelly Moroney, Project Leader for the Inland Northwest Refuge Complex, which includes Turnbull NWR, and I attended the first hearing on August 29, 2024. Subsequently Kelly was invited to submit comments and recommendations to the Planning Department regarding appropriate siting constraints and setbacks for the Refuge and other conservation areas in the county. The Refuge was notified that several adjacent landowners had indicated interest in having Wind Energy facilities on their land, along with others in southern Spokane County.

In this Issue:

President's Annual Report **1**
Pollinator Garden update **4**
Walk for the Wild **5**
Turnbull 2024 Accomplishment **6**
Carlene's Porcupine Adventures **7**

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Main points:

1. The Refuge Management - Kelly Moroney, Project Leader, and the Friends are supporting the use of the refuge "Stewardship Boundary" which was established in the 2007 CCP for the Refuge as the starting point. The Stewardship Boundary identified lands adjacent to the current boundary of the Refuge which would be valuable and considered as Critical Habitat by the WA Department of Ecology. The Stewardship Boundary defines lands which could be added to the Refuge from willing sellers in the future.
2. The Wind Developers and two landowners are objecting to the Stewardship area being recognized. They feel that using the Stewardship boundary is government over-reach, making it impossible for them to do what they want with their land. They want the Refuge to be seen as an ordinary rural neighbor, with a setback of 1.5X = 1.5 times the tower plus blade tip height, from the actual Refuge boundary.
3. The TNWR request is for the Refuge to be allowed a 4X setback (the same setback allowed for urban areas, Critical Habitat areas, Parks, Airports, etc.). That is 4 times the height of the proposed tower plus blade tip = the amount of distance from the property line/stewardship line that is needed for Wind Turbine placement.

Please help support significant/reasonable setback distances for conservation stewardship areas, including Turnbull NWR and other county resources. We endorse that TNWR boundaries used in the constraint maps be the "Stewardship Area," rather than current project boundaries.

How to make comments to the Spokane County Planning and Zoning Department:
Please consider attending or send written comment following this link. Go to:
https://www.spokanecounty.org/5175/Planning-Commission-News
Note the blue icon "comments" on right side and be sure that you identify "ZTA-0004-2024 Wind Energy Facilities".

You can find the Meeting Agendas and the Board of Commissioner documents presented at:
https://spokanecowa.portal.civicclerk.com/

Use the "View Today" box as necessary to scroll to the current date.

Note: All BoCC meetings are available live on YouTube to audit and observe over the Internet, and each of their meeting recordings is available there for review later as well.

November 4 Board of County Commissioners Briefing
The Planning and Zoning Department will give a Briefing regarding this issue to the County Commissioners

January 16, 2025 Planning Commission Hearing issue **ZTA-0004-2024** - Hearing on the completed Zoning Code on Wind Energy Installations; 9am, County Public Works Building, Lower Level.

To Sum up:
We will have need of increased renewable energy in our region's future, and it is a given that wind turbines do present issues for birds, and bats. More than half a million birds are killed by wind turbines in the U.S. each year. Considerable effort has been expended seeking ways to minimize these impacts through smart wind facility siting, technology, and mitigation. Above all, siting facilities in low-risk areas is of paramount importance."
September 3, 2020 · American Bird Conservancy
https://abcbirds.org/program/wind-energy-and-birds/bird-smart-strategies/

Some facts about the proposed Wind Turbines: A Canadian firm, Cordelio & Tenaska, has projected a wind energy facilities tower with blade tip heights of more than 700 ft. The tower = 160 meters + blade tip 70 m = **230 m = 754.59 ft**. They are scheduled to be built in 2026, so this is the planning phase.

Some Comparisons:
Tallest building in Spokane – Bank of America at 288 feet
Space Needle in Seattle. – is 605 feet tall
Kittitas Wind Farms (3-4 Megawatt Turbines) with maximum 410 feet tower/ blade tip height.
Horse Heaven Hills Wind Farms will be. 500 – 571 ft towers/blade tip height.
....Spokane County SE and SW proposed Wind Energy facilities will be 6 megawatt turbines on 160 m. (tower) + blade tip 70 m = 230 m **= 754.59 ft.**

Pollinator Garden Update

by Mike Borysewicz

Friends of Turnbull NWR are working to create a pollinator garden between the paved parking areas in front of the refuge headquarters. The pollinator garden committee installed about 100 flowering plant seedlings purchased from Desert Jewell Nursery last spring, and another 50 seedlings from Plants of the Wild Nursery this month. Species planted this year included arrowleaf balsamroot, Canadian goldenrod, common yarrow, Indian blanket flower, nettleleaf horsemint, showy milkweed, silky lupine, and common yarrow.

Most plantings survived and appeared to be well established. This success was due in no small part to the watering they received from temporary sprinklers set up by John Barber. John used a timer on the sprinklers to run them for about an hour in the early mornings. In this drought year, consistent watering likely was essential to the seedlings becoming established.

Many of the more palatable seedlings were grazed to some degree by deer or moose. Grazing animals pulled all 21 of the silky lupines out of the ground, shortly after they were planted last spring. This species likely will need some form of protection when the plants are young, if we want them to be represented in the garden. Other species, such as yarrow, milkweed, and horsemint, appeared to be ignored by grazers.

Many of the plantings flowered this year. The nettleleaf horsemint plants were particularly well attended by bumblebees. The presence of native bunchgrasses, wood chips, and areas of exposed soil in the garden should provide bees and other insects with secure places to overwinter. We are very interested in how the garden will look next spring. Will the two native thistle plants provided by Eastern WA University send up tall flower stalks? Only time will tell.

Palouse Thistle

Photos by Mike Borysewicz

Yarrow in bloom

Blanket flower in bloom

Nettleleaf horse mint - flower

WALK FOR THE WILD

AMERICA'S WILDLIFE REFUGES

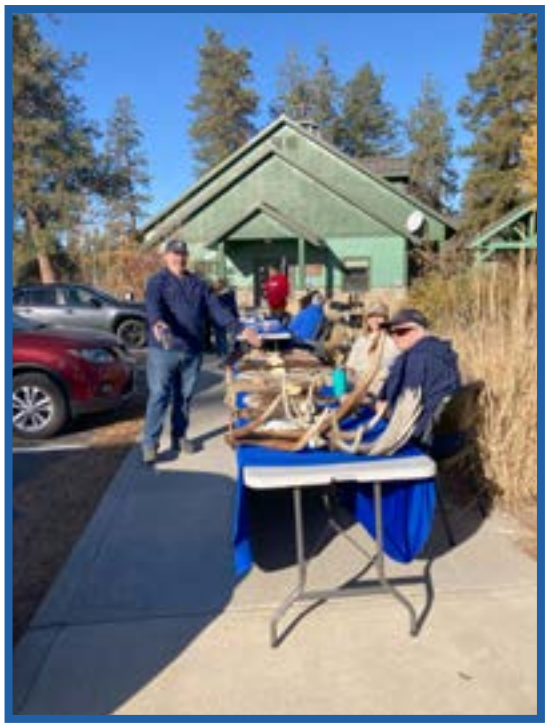
PUBLIC LANDS ALLIANCE

Walkers take a break from the walk and enjoy the view at Pine Lake

Saturday, October 12th, saw some 60+ walkers descend on the Refuge to take part in the 2024 Walk for the Wild fundraiser, sponsored by the Public Lands Alliance in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They have come together to raise public awareness and private support for the National Wildlife Refuge System. At least ten of the walkers hadn't ever been to the Refuge.

One of the goals of the walk is to demonstrate commitment to deepening human connections with nature and protecting the thriving ecosystems we depend on. We raised $1,043 in online and in-person donations. More will be coming our way from the Public Land's Alliance when they distribute money they have raised for the participating Walk for the Wild Friends groups.

Last year we used the money to help provide a part-time intern for the EE program at the Refuge. We shared Jaelyn Wesche with the Land's Council. When her term was up, the Refuge kept her on to help with visitor's services. She has been a wonderful asset to the Refuge. This year's fund also will go to the EE program as new curriculum is developed for teachers and students who visit Turnbull.



David and Theresa Kappus with Jaelyn Wesche show walkers different pelts of animals found at the Refuge.

A beautiful day at Turnbull for Walk for the Wild

Nancy Curry, Molly Zammit, Carolyn Wright man the table, checking walkers in for Walk for the Wild.

Turnbull NWR Refuge Manager - Cassie Roeder

2024 Accomplishments

Tree Planting

Goal of 2000 trees in 2024-2025

Currently planted - 348

Wheeler pond is the new riparian planting project for this year. The Fairchild Airforce Base Volunteers helps install exclusion fencing for the trees. We had a very successful planting day on Oct 5th with 35 community members working for 3 hrs.

Visitor Services

Offered over 16 programs including school field trips, adult education and community talks.

The Refuge saw over 45,000 visitors in 2024.

Refuge Habitat Restoration

McKinlay restored 75 acres of wetland habitat and planted 1000 riparian trees and shrubs.

Fire Education

On Track Academy – Career talk inspiring the next generation of fire fighters.

FWS Continuing Education to improve fire management across the FWS.

Fuels Reduction

Logging of 400 acres to reduce fuel loads to meet habitat goals for forest management.

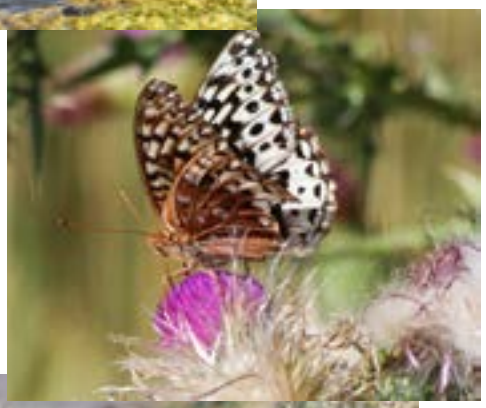
Carlene's Porcupine Adventure

Pulling into Turnbull, I spotted a deer family and they spotted me! They glanced at me for a few minutes and then meandered off.

I parked the car and began my walk on the Pine Lakes Loop trail. It's the end of August and it seemed a bit...quieter. Certainly not as many bird calls happening. However, I was to discover that it is still teeming with life as I noticed a busy chipmunk going for the berries on the bushes, five turtles basking in the sun, a Pied-billed Grebe and chick, and at least 15 Gadwall ducks on Winslow Pool.

Many plants (weeds!) were in bloom *as well as* going to seed along the trail, and the nectar attracted hungry bumblebees and butterflies. Did you know that butterflies taste with their feet, smell with their antennae and their straw-like proboscis unrolls from under their chin to drink?

As I neared the end of my mile walk, I saw something dark and rather large enter the path ahead of me. My first thought was that it was a dog or coyote; but as it got closer, I saw it was a large adult porcupine! I was a bit alarmed (!) as it looked directly at me, and actually *sped up,* waddling towards me! I saw that there was heavy vegetation on both sides of the path and I knew that there would not be enough room for me to walk by it. Porcupine quills in my legs - well, I did not want that!



Porcupines don't "throw" their quills, of course, but just how fast can they waddle? I took a couple of quick pictures of it, turned around and started walking back to my car, then called my husband, who informed me that they are slow-moving (except at the point where they're actually lashing you with their tail...). They're not aggressive and are generally afraid of people. Well, this one did *not* look afraid of me!

I later learned that they have poor vision but an excellent sense of smell. I wonder where it was headed? When I looked at my pictures, I noticed the long claws and now I see why it is so easy for them to go up and down trees in search of food.

Needless to say, I made it safely back to the car. And another adventure came to a close.

All photos by Carlene Hardt

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