Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

Friends of Turnbull Newsletter

Fall 2025

President's Report

by Lorna Kropp

President's Report covering activities at the Refuge during July, August, and September, 2025

The Board has participated in three lively discussions/brainstorming sessions regarding the Visitor's Services Action Plan for Turnbull NWR that will guide Refuge staff for the next five years.

1) A Visitor's Service Scope Meeting back in May, led to completion of the Visitor Services Action Plan for Turnbull NWR by Supervisory Park Ranger (Visitor Services Manager), Joshua Contois.

2) Riley Vance, an Interpretive Research Fellow with the Great Basin Institute, came to Inland Northwest NWR Complex for the summer specifically to help flesh out the Visitor's Service Action Plan. Riley spent one month at each Refuge and developed more ideas and themes for the Visitor's Services Action Plan. The process, called "Interpretive Thematic Matrix" can serve as a guide for decision making and community engagement and refuge programming. She met with FOT Board in August and included our discussion to help create Turnbull's Thematic Matrix. The document is available on the Complex website link here. https://www.fws.gov/refuge/turnbull/library

3) We also met with Tim Lower, Psychology Department at EWU, who has organized a class research project for this Fall Quarter. His students will examine the Yearly Narrative Refuge Reports (approx. 30 years' worth) to discern community use patterns at Turnbull over the years. Students will be analyzing the reports and identifying trends and community connections, and also highlighting stories. We look forward to a presentation by his students to the Board in November.

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Riley Vance, Interpretive Research Fellow
August FOT Board Meeting

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This summer the Board accepted the resignation of Joanne Powell who has been the Friends of Turnbull Newsletter editor since 2000. In addition to being the Newsletter editor, Joanne served as President of the Board from 2000-2014 and then as Secretary from 2015-2017, and Auction events over the years. We are very grateful for the years of leadership and service to the Friends' and the Refuge that Joanne has given.

We are pleased to report that Carolyn Wright has agreed to serve as Newsletter Editor beginning with the Fall 2025 edition. Carolyn also serves on the Nature Store Management Team.

Friends of Turnbull received a donation from the employees of Metals Fabrication for $1,950.00 for Environmental Education and other interpretive programs for visitors, and students. Thanks for your support.

Also this summer, Board members met with the new EWU Office of Community Engagement staff, Mark Este and Jasmin Davis, to talk about how to involve more EWU students in both learning and service on the Refuge.

Update on Advocacy for the Refuge with County Planning & Zoning

The Friends' Board and Refuge Staff were represented at the Spokane County Planning & Zoning Wind Energy Facilities Workshop at the end of July. The topic was the development of guidelines/rules for how the County will determine where to allow development of wind energy facilities in the County. The County Planning and Zoning Department has received a very strong letter from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist, Garrett LaCivita, regarding the importance of excluding all the Channeled Scablands from the possible wind energy siting. In addition to noting the importance of maintaining and supporting the habitat, she included information on the geology and hydrology of the Channeled Scablands. The basalt layers and water holding capacity is very fragile. Any development which drills anywhere in the area threatens the destruction of water-holding capacity of the basalt layers of the entire area.

The county planners have developed a map overlay which identifies sections of the county which may be appropriate for wind energy facilities (windmills) that are six sections in the SE corner of the county and does exclude all of Turnbull NWR and the rest of the Channeled Scablands. We did extend an invitation to each of the five Spokane County Commissioners to come to Turnbull for either the Community Tree Planting event or the Find Your Wild in October.

Coming up this Fall: (Subject to cancellation and re-scheduling due to the Government shut-down)

Fall Community Planting days – October 4; and other groups in October (AgWest, etc.)

Find Your Wild Fundraising Day and Friends of Turnbull Annual Membership Meeting – planned for October 11

Membership Renewal this summer – Check your last annual payment to be up to date

Friends of Turnbull NWR Pollinator Garden
September 2025

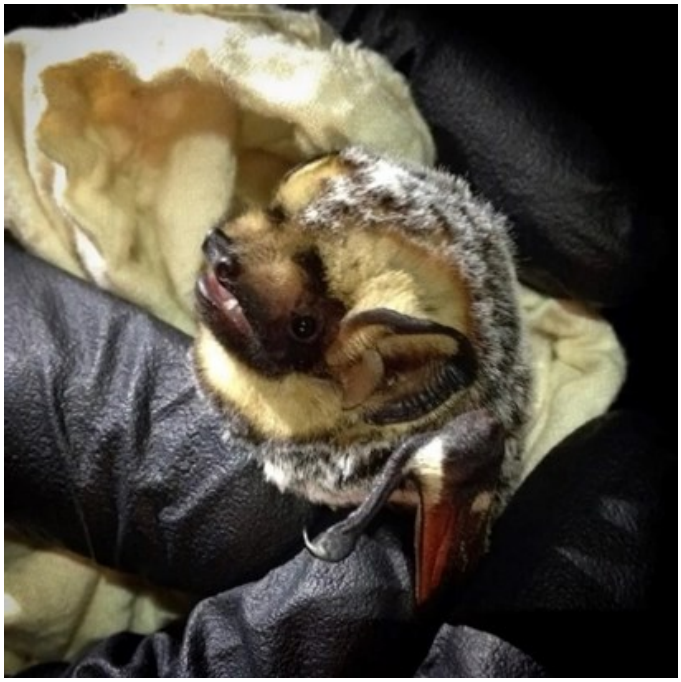
Bat Acoustics

By Christen Long

Our Friends of Turnbull NWR group benefits when new volunteers join in to help keep our projects going. I recently asked one new volunteer in the Nature Store to share a bit about her work for the Friends Quarterly Newsletter. Christen Long is a Bat expert in addition to taking on regular shifts as an Ambassador/Nature Store volunteer. Lorna Kropp

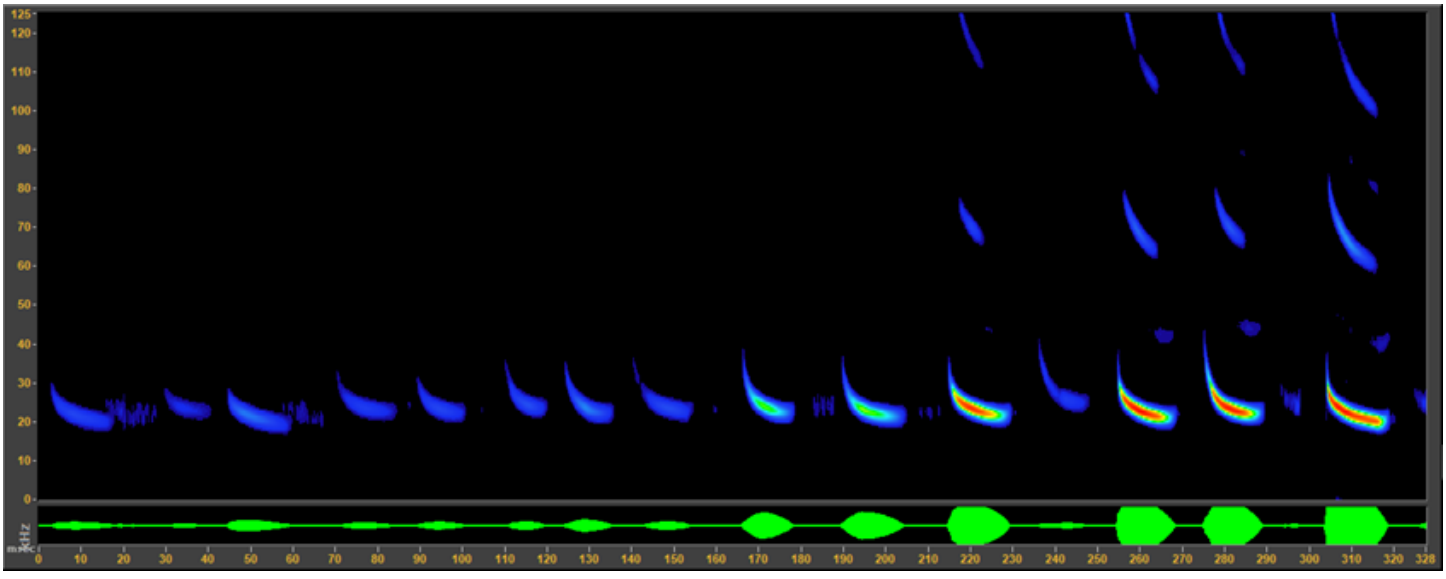
For the past eight years I have worked as the Bat Acoustic Specialist for Bat Conservation International. My work involves analyzing large sets of acoustic data that can be used to monitor species' presence and activity both temporally and spatially. I also occasionally head into the field to support a variety of research projects across the United States.

There are over 1,450 bat species in the world with Eastern Washington being home to 14 species. Our region's bats play important ecological roles that are vital to the health of our natural ecosystems and our economies. Bats are difficult to observe and identify because they are most active at night and roost in small spaces. However, using bat acoustic detectors, scientists can record the echolocation calls of bats as they travel and forage for food during the night. These recordings can then be used to identify the species of bats present in an area. By following standardized protocols and uploading species results to a national database, we are able to assess and monitor population status and trends at local, regional, and national scales.



Hoary bat (Lasiurus cinereus)
captured in Humboldt County, California
Photo by Christen Long

Below is an example spectrogram of a hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*) that shows a sequence of bat pulses. Bats typically emit calls at very high frequencies, most above the range of human hearing.



Example spectrogram showing a search-phase call sequence from a hoary bat (Lasiurus cinereus).

Treasures at Turnbull

by Carlene Hardt

Dear Family and Friends,

The blue skies and cooler weather in the mornings have made walking at Turnbull more comfortable as I look for wildlife activity on the Refuge. On a couple of mornings, one single American White Pelican was on Middle Pine. Maybe it's a "stray" that's off its usual migration route (which usually starts in mid-September) or maybe it's just making a pit stop to forage here. It did seem unusual to not be with a flock...

Passing Ice Pond on the Pine Lake path, I first heard and then saw a moose calf gobbling the leaves off of a bush. It glanced at me and then just kept on eating! I was earnestly looking around for Momma moose and quickly found it happily browsing on bushes too (and ignoring me). Whew! With their *long* legs and stretched out neck, they can reach *p-r-e-t-t-y* high to get the tasty leaves!

When I arrived at Cheever Lake, I was delighted to see the swan family active! While the cob and pen parents were flying around the Pine Chain lakes, the cygnets stayed (mostly) hidden and huddled together by a clump of tall reeds patiently waiting for them to return. And when the parents did return everyone started moving around on the lake again. Then, another pair of Trumpeter swans flew low over the lake, and the parents took off to chase them away. Once again, with the parents gone, the cygnets huddled together between two clumps of tall reeds. Looks like they have learned how to stay safe while the parents are briefly away!

After a while the entire family moved to the shallow end of Cheever where there were rocks to climb on and preen and stretch their wings. While I was watching and taking pictures, the *whole* family all of a sudden took off to circle Cheever just one time. The cygnets can fly! A great start, now that they are 14 weeks old.

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As I was going back to the car , an American Red Squirrel popped up on a pile of branches and seemed to pose just for me for a few seconds and then scurried off.

"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous." - Aristotle

Stories from the Store

By Molly Kennington

I usually volunteer two or three times a month throughout the 'store season'—and I always look forward to it. I enjoy the reminders of the progress of the three seasons, and unfortunately, reminders of the effect of too little rain. Then I had the joy of having seen the mama and baby moose twice this year

I've never had a negative experience interacting with the public, thankfully. I believe that the Refuge has a calming effect on folks, and the unspoken shared understanding of respect and care for the natural environment.

Many of the local visitors include 'regulars' for whom the Refuge is a place of quiet refuge (no pun intended!), either on foot or by car, hoping and waiting - for the lucky photograph or sighting. The Refuge challenges visitors to slow down and listen—to the quiet, the flag in the wind, and the birds. A gift and even surprise for some.

I enjoy learning how people made it to the Refuge, if they've never been before. This year I've talked to a number of people—some

retired, some younger—on 'open road' car trips—trying to avoid freeways--'blue highways' (state and side roads, on the map) and small towns. My kind of adventure ("blessed are the curious, for they shall have adventures"—a bumper sticker I like!). These are the adventurers who tend not to have strict itineraries or agendas, except loosely held ones, such as 'heading west' or 'back home before school starts' or 'back to work in two weeks'. They look at maps (or check the internet) for interesting things to see and do. Fearless travelers!

I'm enriched hearing about the adventures they've had.

One couple this summer was from Australia, crisscrossing the United States. Another couple was on their honeymoon, an open-road trip.

Oh, and the man who I thought was picnicking on the back of his truck, tailgate down, with a folding chair. I learned otherwise when he came in to ask if internet was available, since he was a ham radio enthusiast. He was so excited and said I'd made his day by helping him connect to the internet so that he could transmit from nature for a few hours. Life's little (or big) pleasures. Two weeks later, another man, who was a Morse Code enthusiast, set up at the picnic table by the Ed Building. Before he came in to say farewell, he said he was the first person *ever* to have signaled from Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, and that he'd heard from other similarly situated Morse Coders from all over the world. That made *his* day.

The things I've learned!

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 _____

Phone _____

Email _____

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 NWR
PO Box 294
Cheney, WA 99004

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

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