



Turnbull Wildlife Refuge

Summer 2012, 2nd Quarter

Friends of Turnbull N.W.R. Quarterly Report

Volume 15 Issue 2

Floods, Flowers, and Feathers Festival (FFF)

by Sandy Rancourt

Turnbull partnered with the community on a spring nature festival held on May 19th. This new event turned out better than we expected, and it provided the community with yet another opportunity to experience and learn about the wildlife, habitats, and geology of the Channeled Scablands. Thanks to a lot of help, everything went pretty smoothly for our first attempt. The Festival was held at the Refuge for the first year but we are hoping to expand it to Cheney in the years following. We estimated that about 350 people attended. We had quite a few partners help us with planning, organizing, staffing booths, and leading folks on different activities. Numerous partners staffed booths and provided the public with information about their organization. Several bird walks were conducted by Marian Frobe, Fran and Brad Hayward, and Kim Thorburn. Joyce Alonso, Sandy Sollie, and Carmen Yount conducted a drop in scavenger program called "Can You Find That Bird? I liked it so much that we will incorporate this activity into our environmental education program. Ken Swedberg from the Native Plant Society led a group on a plant walk. Howard Ferguson and Peggy O'Connell led a

walk on the Stubblefield Lake Loop Trail where they instructed their group on plants, birds, and telemetry. Gary Ford, of the Ice Age Floods Institute, Cheney-Spokane Chapter, conducted two geology presentations and tours of the area. Refuge biologist Mike Rule conducted a songbird mist net demonstration in the morning and a refuge management tour during the day. Russell Frobe assisted Mike with the banding. I conducted a morning and afternoon aquatics ecology class, and Jan Reynolds assisted me. Working with Jan is always a highlight. She gets as excited as I do when we catch all those neat aquatic invertebrates. Our fire crew put on a great demonstration for families. I saw several youngsters having a great time using those fire hoses. We just might have to buy some plastic fire hats next time.



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Testing the waters at FFF (SR)

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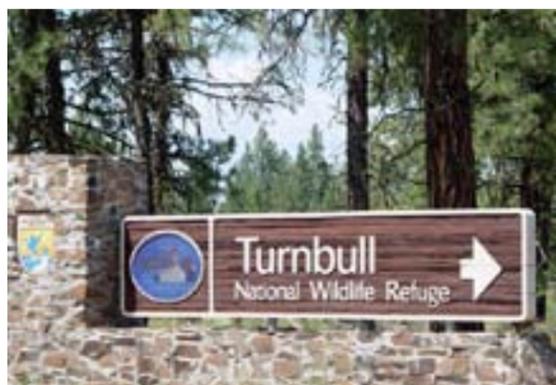
~Special thanks to all our partners in making this festival such a success~

**Friends of Turnbull NWR
Spokane Audubon Society
Ecological Services
West Plains Beekeeping Association
Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)
Inland Northwest Land Trust
Ice Age Floods Institute Cheney-Spokane Chapter
Eastern Washington University
Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Native Plant Society
Natural Resource Conservation Service
Friends of Little Pend O'Reille
Pheasants Forever**

Friends of Turnbull Bookstore and Gift Shop Report

Marian Frobe

As I'm writing this, we have completed two months of sales this year. The new Floods, Flowers and Feathers Festival held May 19th really brought us a lot of sales, so this year we have attained a profit the earliest ever. Our figures for May 19th show that we sold \$1,161.69 that day, bringing our sales for the year to \$3,509.54 and our expenses to \$2,783.33, giving us a net profit



of \$726.19 at the end of May. Sales for all the spring weekends have been strong. I hope that trend continues.

Some of the new books we ordered have sold out, either during the Festival or during our regular hours. I have reordered books to bring our stock back up. We are also very low on patches and pins and earrings, which I have also reordered this month. We have quite a few Festival T-shirts remaining, so if you would like one, we have them in adult sizes medium through extra-large, and children's sizes small and medium. I think the design is very clever. They come in white and navy.

The two ladies who worked the Store on Festival Day are really owed a big Thank You! Lizzie Riesenberg came in two hours early so we could have the store open and she really worked hard during her shift. Pam Carsey worked the afternoon shift and I think it was a little calmer in the afternoon, but I'm sure it had its moments. We are considering having two people work the morning shift next time if the Refuge holds this festival next year.

We have several new people now who volunteer at the store and I'm grateful for them. We can always use more, though, so if you are interested in volunteering for the Store, please call MaryJane Booth at 235-4466 or me, Marian Frobe, at 328-0621 or at rrfrobe@msn.com.

Membership: Just a reminder to renew your membership. We depend on your support to continue our important work with the Environmental Education program at Turnbull.

If you would like to receive your newsletter through your email, please let us know. It not only saves paper but you can enjoy all the pictures in living color! Email jcorder@hughes.net.

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Visit our great website!
www.fotnwr.org

Friends of Turnbull Activities 2012

July 18 Wednesday Turnbull NWR 7:30 pm

Join bat experts and wildlife biologists Sandy Rancourt and Mike Rule for an illustrated presentation on "Bats of the World and the Channeled Scablands" at 7:30 p.m., followed by a walk where special sound detectors will be demonstrated and a few bats may be caught for identification and examination. It is recommended that you wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, a sweater or jacket, and bring a flashlight. Suggested \$5.00 donation.



For more info call Louise OLeary 235-4531 or looezoleary@netscape.net

Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge



General Membership Meeting Headquarters area of the Refuge



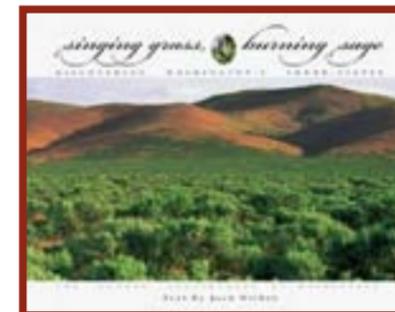
**Tuesday, August 21, 2012
6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**

6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Pot Luck Dinner

**Please bring a salad, side dish or dessert to share
Hamburgers/veggie burgers/hot dogs and beverage will be provided by FOT.**

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. The FOT year in review followed by our special program.

Guest Speaker: This year we have a special treat for everyone. Jack Nisbet is a teacher, naturalist, and writer who lives in Spokane, Washington. He is well known throughout the Pacific Northwest; we are lucky to have him speaking before our group.



Books by Jack Nisbet:

**Purple Flat Top
Singing Grass, Burning Sage
Sources of the River
Visible Bones
Mapmaker's Eye
The Collector**

The business conducted at this meeting will emphasize the Environmental Education Program and the Refuge in general. Supporting the Environmental Education Program is what Friends of Turnbull is all about! We look forward to seeing you.



**Please R.S.V.P. to
Friends of Turnbull Activities Chair
Louise O'Leary
looezoleary@netscape.net**

Going Underground

by Lisa Langelier,
Inland Northwest NWR Complex Manager

As we approach the dog days of summer, I ponder the advantages of an underground life. Cool, dark, and no need for sunscreen. However, you have to love digging. . . Animals that dig for a living share certain traits. These include a short neck, small ears, a stout body, robust shoulders and chest, powerful front limbs, and heavy claws. Some animals adapted for digging include ground squirrels, pocket gophers, and badgers. If you prefer an animal with an attitude, the American badger is legendary.



A member of the mustelid or weasel family, the badger is cousin to the wolverine, marten, skunk, otter, and weasel. Weighing between 13 and 25 pounds, badgers have short legs, a stocky flattened body with thick baggy skin, long, grayish grizzled fur, and a short bushy tail. Their broad head has a distinctive black and white pattern with a white stripe from the nose over the top of the head to the shoulder, dark eye stripes and black patches or “badges” in front of each ear. A special membrane, called the nictitating membrane, protects the eyes while badgers are burrowing.

Solitary and secretive, badgers live in dry, open, uncultivated country including sage deserts, grasslands, mountain meadows, and open forests. Nature’s backhoe, badgers are the fastest digging animals. They can out dig a human with a shovel and when pursuing prey appear to swim in the dirt with all four legs going. Their front claws are almost as long as their

front feet. Badgers use their well-developed sense of smell to detect prey, and then dig rapidly to capture their quarry, which commonly consists of burrowing rodents. Ground squirrels, marmots, ground nesting birds and their eggs, lizards, snakes, and insects are all on the menu.

A large mound of soil around the 8-12 inch oval entrance hole, make badger burrows conspicuous. The entrance and tunnels are wider than tall. In areas where prey is widely dispersed, badgers may dig many burrows throughout their range and cover as much as eight miles in one night. They are particularly itinerant during summer and may have as many as

ten dens per square mile. Their tunnels extend about ten yards with an enlarged sleeping chamber. Vacant badger burrows provide homes for burrowing owls, snakes, and other wildlife.

One day in May, a few years ago, I was walking at midday and noticed an expanse of exposed sand on a pine flat. As I got closer to this sandy area, I heard growling and moved slowly toward the growl’s owner - a baby badger or kit. It was about six weeks old and sat on the edge of its den grumbling. Buff colored, it weighed about two pounds. Its eyes were open but squinting. Since badger moms are fiercely protective of their young, I was cautious. If this was its natal den, the grass-lined nest chamber was between 5 and 30 feet from the entrance hole. One or two brothers or sisters could share this den. Above ground, this youngster was vulnerable to other hunters like coyote, golden eagle, mountain lion, bear, or even other badgers.

As a public land manager, occasionally I contemplate a life underground. It is one way to beat the heat!



News from Washington

Chief’s Corner: Living Up Close to Nature

Jim Kurth, Chief
National Wildlife Refuge System

Americans are willing to pay to live near national wildlife refuges, as detailed in the North Carolina State University study, “Amenity Values of Proximity to National Wildlife Refuge”. From personal experience, I totally understand why.

Like many Refuge System employees, I’ve twice lived in Fish and Wildlife Service quarters on national wildlife refuges – and there’s nothing like it. At Loxahatchee Refuge, I lived in one of three houses that sit on more than 145,000 acres. Talk about a backyard! We called it the most exclusive gated community in Florida. My son caught his first fish at Lox.

When we lived on Seney Refuge in Michigan my kids named a snowshoe hare that lived in our yard Sally. They cross country skied right outside our back door. And they fed the black-capped chickadees from their hands as though that was something every kid does all the time.



In fact, every kid should have the chance to see black cap chickadees – and a host of other wildlife – as part of their everyday lives. They don’t. And that’s where we come in.

I just read another news story – in the Wall Street Journal, of all places – that says humans are becoming an indoor species. From 2006-2010, the percentage of young children who regularly engage in outdoor recreation fell by about 15 percentage points. American children between the ages of 8-18 are spending more than four hours a day interacting with technology.

That ain’t good.

Those of us who live in Refuge housing can’t invite all of America’s kids into our homes. But we can invite them onto their wildlife refuges. The more we do that, the more we make sure that a new generation grows up strong. Because being in nature isn’t just fun, it’s healthy. And all Americans deserve to be up close and personal with nature, just like we are



Did You Know that one of the rock houses on San Andres National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico is reported to have been used by the outlaw William Bonney, alias Billy the Kid?



Refuge Happenings

by Sandy Rancourt

Our spring is always packed with multiple projects and events, and this year was no exception. Fortunately, we had some great help from volunteers and partners. Just in the past couple of months, much was accomplished with riparian restoration, biological surveys, environmental education, and outreach.

Volunteer Program

Riparian Restoration

International Migratory Bird Day Community Planting Event

Despite the colder than normal spring, we had perfect weather for our community planting event held on May 12th. Sixty-five volunteers and refuge staff planted over 75 trees and erected 250 feet of protective fencing. Volunteers from Veterans Conservation Corps, Spokane Audubon, Asia University America Program (AUAP), Discovery Group, Good Sams Club, EWU, City of Cheney, Friends of Turnbull, and several individuals worked tirelessly to get everything done. Virgil Bowen procured donations for 8 dozen donuts to fuel the group, and Discovery Group purchased and cooked all the hamburgers and hotdogs for the potluck. Thanks to everyone for their continuing support of this project.



Members from AUAP returned to Turnbull to help out with another community planting event (SR)

CCI

One of our long term partners has been CCI (Center for Cultural Interchange) Program. Their group leader, Merle Barr, and high school student representatives from several countries around the world assisted the refuge biologist Mike Rule and me with a riparian restoration project at East Blackhorse Lake. It is always an enjoyable experience working with these exchange students from such diverse backgrounds. It was pouring rain when they arrived but everyone maintained good spirits. The students, chaperones, Mike, AmeriCorps member Sean Koester, and I planted 15, 5-gallon aspen trees purchased through a grant Merle received for the project. The students also learned about Turnbull and the National Wildlife Refuge System and planting techniques.



CCI students from around the world (SR)



VCC and SCC - Earth Day Restoration Project (SR)

VCC

Turnbull sponsored or participated in several events in celebration of Earth Day. One of those events involved a riparian restoration project at the new West Blackhorse Lake Environmental Education Study Site. Fifteen volunteers from Veterans Conservation Corps and Spokane Community College assisted Mike, Sean, and I with rehabbing the area around the education shelter in preparation for next year's field trips. The group planted 26 aspen, willow, and water birch trees. The veterans and SCC students are the same groups who did the bulk of the construction of the shelter so it was a nice way to see the project through to completion.

Eagle Scout Project

It is always a pleasure working with Scouts on different projects in order for them to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. This quarter I worked with another nice young man who needed a project to make this requirement. Like other scouts before him, Kit Foster from BSA Troop 356, did an awesome job. Kit coordinated with 25 scouts on potting a little over 1,000 aspen, hawthorne, and red-osier dogwood bare stock seedlings. The potted plants looked great and everything was arranged very orderly. He also procured donations to purchase peat moss and vermiculite for the project. The saplings will be used for future refuge and private lands restoration projects.

Eagle Scout Project - Potting Bare Stock Seedlings- BSA Troop 356 (SR)



Master Hunter

Master Hunter Ronald Van Horne is another individual who assisted us with potting all those bare stock seedlings we purchased for Turnbull and private lands projects. Ron, a former middle school principal, worked very hard on this project. He potted 600 cottonwood, red-osier dogwood, and currant seedlings. Ron's friend, Raymond Parker, also came out for a day to help him with the project.

We still have a thousand or so bare stock seedlings to pot. Inland Northwest Wildlife Council has offered to take on this project. They are scheduled to come out June 16th to finish potting the remaining seedlings.

Other Help

EWU student Chris Dwight volunteered to help us with the potting project. Chris potted a couple hundred native seedlings with AmeriCorps members Sean Koester and Erica Keene and SCA intern Christian Schroll.

Bluebirds

Bluebird Nest Boxes

Thirteen cub scouts from Den 3, Pack 307 built several bluebird nest boxes for the refuge. What a great job these guys did on this. The boxes are exceptionally well made, and we really appreciate all the time the Scouts invested on this project. On another note, this

group also participated in the aquatics lesson I provided with Jan Reynolds during the Floods, Flowers, and Feathers Festival. They were a very enthusiastic group and it was really a pleasure working with children who love to be outdoors.



Den 3, Pack 307 Bear Cub Scouts with bluebird nest boxes they presented during the spring nature festival (SR)

Bluebird Nest Box donation

Suzie Grainger donated bluebird box parts her husband was working on when he passed away. Looking at the precision of the cuts, her husband was obviously a fine craftsman. We are very grateful for this very generous donation. This material will really be put to good use. Scouts often choose to make bluebird boxes for their Eagle Scout project. I know they will be grateful to have material and parts to get them started.

Outreach

Tours

Louise O’Leary and Fran Haywood led 2 tours for EWU Family Fun Weekend on April 28th. It was a pretty good turnout with 24 individuals showing for the morning and afternoon tours. Louise led one tour and Fran the other. The volunteers talked to the public about the refuge, history, and habitats. Fran and Louise were a big help and relief for refuge staff who had been working weekends regularly. In April, Louise also led a tour for North Pointe Retirement Center, and Joyce Alonso led a tour for Accent Tours. I provided a tour

for 17 seniors from Harvard Park Retirement Community on March 14th. This was a very enjoyable afternoon for me. The seniors learned all about the refuge its habitats, and management. They were very engaged and asked great questions.

Another group who asked great questions were 20, 5th grade students from St. George School who came to Turnbull on April 24th to interview me about the refuge’s Environmental Education program. St. George wants to develop their own environmental education program, and they are enlisting their 5th grade student’s help on this project.

Silver Lake Camp

Erica and Christian conducted an animal track station and nature walk for the students at Silver Lake Camp, a 5th grade recognition event. Seventy-five students were instructed on refuges, habitat, and animal tracks. Students made animal tracks out of Plaster-of-Paris and while the tracks were drying, the EE facilitators led the groups on a nature walk through the habitats in the area.

Earth Day

Two other Earth Day Outreach events the refuge participated in were Earth Day Spokane and EWU Earth Day Recycling Event. Sean, Erica, and Christian staffed a refuge information booth held in the Central Mall area on the EWU campus. The “Start Something Green” EWU Earth Day Fair was presented by EWU Recycling Department. The interns interacted with 100 students. Turnbull teamed up with our Friends group and staffed a booth for Earth Day Spokane. Volunteers, led by Louise, interacted with over 350 individuals and made several hundred animal tracks.



Spring/Summer Wildlife Observations

by Mike Rule

Well, spring held on for quite awhile and may not be gone yet. All the wetter and colder than normal weather has had its impact on wildlife. Migrations and breeding activity have all been delayed. Both the results of point count surveys and songbird banding have shown at least a 2 week delay. Bird species that do not nest on the refuge, but move farther north have been observed on the refuge up to the second week in June.

Waterfowl pair surveys found nearly all refuge wetlands near capacity. Whether it is the high water or the weather, there were noticeably fewer teal and redheads. Most of the wetlands with historically high numbers of yellow-headed blackbirds were found to have as many as half the usual number of males on territory. Both black terns and eared grebes which normally begin nesting at the time of our pair surveys showed no signs of nesting. Hopefully with warmer weather they will get down to business.

Willow Flycatcher



Western tanagers and several flycatcher species including Hammond’s, Dusky and Westerns and Olive-sided have been heard on point counts or seen on the refuge well beyond the normal migration period. Our local breeding willow flycatchers have only just begun singing on their territories, and none of the willows caught at our banding station were showing signs of breeding. During our first banding day of the season, June 5, besides the olive-sided flycatcher, a first for our banding records, 3 Swainson’s thrushes, a Wilson’s warbler and a warbling vireo, all migrants, were captured.

Eurasian Collared Dove



Eurasian Collared doves, an exotic species originally observed in the US in Florida, was observed on the refuge near HQ on 3/24. It was heard again near the end of May. Sightings of this species are on the rise in E. Washington.



Photo by Carlene Hardt

Solo’s widow and her new mate have produced 5 cynets for the refuge’s Trumpeter swan population. She has been nesting since May 21 and the eggs hatched around June 20th.

The great blue heron and double crested cormorant rookeries were doing well with over 20 nest of each species. Most nest contained young birds.

Volunteers monitoring our blues bird boxes have found good occupancy this spring, but the recent cold snap bringing snow to Mt Spokane resulted in nestling mortalities as the insects needed to feed the young and adults became scarce. Prolific nesters that can hatch 3 clutches in a summer, there is still time to make up these losses.

The first reporting of a moose with a calf was on May 31. No elk calves have been reported yet, but several lone cows have been observed indicating calving is occurring.

A Swainson’s hawk was observed by the ponds near the Cheney-Plaza Road bridge over the Columbia Plateau Trail on May 10. The bald eagle pair returned to nest on Upper Turnbull for the third year.



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 _____

My check is enclosed payable to:

Friends of Turnbull N.W.R.

P.O. Box 294

Cheney WA 99004