

Turnbull Wildlife Refuge

Friends Newsletter



Messages from the President by Lorna Kropp

Friends of Turnbull, NWR Board and Organization Life

The Rabe Trust Property was successfully sold and closed on June 18, 2020. A big thank you to the Task Force members – John Barber, Molly Zammit, and Joyce Alonso, along with Lorna Kropp, who were charged with the task of shepherding the process and leading our volunteer efforts to prepare the house. The Task Force plus realtor, Mike Bass, decided the best way to proceed was 1) to hire a contractor to fix and upgrade the interior of the house and 2) to have the Task Force and volunteer crew of FOT members manage the exterior clean up. There are always some unexpected problems and extra expenses, such as a new sewer connection needed. The final amount of the gift to support FOTNWR programs supporting the Refuge is \$176,000.

At the Board meeting on June 18, the Board asked the Refuge staff to review the list prepared at the February Brainstorming meeting for tech equipment needed now, and the remainder will be saved for the future.

The Board also appointed a Finance Committee to recommend a strategy for investment/savings and financial procedures to maximize the gift and advise the Treasurer. The Finance Committee members are Richard Sollie, Libby Beck and Mike Otis. Thanks for your expertise and willingness to help out.

Environmental Education funding project:

Our Friends group has taken on funding the Environmental Education Intern (WA Service Corps Intern) each year for the last several years. The annual charge is approximately \$10,000. That has been our goal for fundraising each year, through events, grants, Nature Store profits and donations. We anticipate that the Rabe Trust gift will give us “seed money” toward the annual goal, but not the entire amount each year.

Nature Store

The Nature Store will not be open until after the Refuge staff have returned to work in the Administration Building which may be at the earliest in September. As the opening is unsure, the store may not open this year at all. In the meantime, there are two T-shirts available for purchase on line through the Zome e-store. There are blue swan shirts and the new colors of the Moose collage shirt. The profits from the Nature Store will be severely restricted this year.

Swan T-shirt link: https://www.estoresbyzome.com/product_page.php?p_ref=104624

Moose Collage shirt link: <https://www.estoresbyzome.com/friendsofturnbull.php>

Membership Renewal Campaign

This is the start of the new membership year which runs July 1 - June 30 each year. Thanks to all those who have renewed. Our practice has been to allow old members to remain on the list to receive the Newsletter for a year following their last membership payment.

Members who have renewed or joined for the current year: 40 plus 5 Lifetime members = 45
Members who have been members through 6/30/20 but not yet renewed to be current = 68
Members who have not renewed since 2017/18/19 = 42 (These names will be removed during this summer.) However, we plan to launch a phone call reminder this month to all non-renewed members.

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Membership fees go toward costs of the Newsletters, membership activities, the technology for the Nature Store to operate, liability insurance and other organizational expenses. Our goal is for Fundraising earnings (including Nature Store profits) to go toward Environmental Education and Refuge beneficial projects. So your membership fees enable the organization's good work.

Activities

Due to the Corona Virus Pandemic, we have not been able to offer in-person activities at the Refuge. We are planning to organize a Virtual Annual Membership Meeting in September. Washington Wildlife Biologist (retired) Woody Meyer will be available to give the second half of his presentation on "Moose." He gave the first half of the presentation at our last WinterFest event in December 2019. Date and time, sign -up for link TBA.

While social activities are not available at this time, getting out individually in nature is available to you. This is a good time to set some personal goals to develop new skills related to birds, wildlife, and maybe making improvements to your own environments for wildlife. There are online resources for courses for bird watchers and participation apps for recording sightings of birds that you see (citizen science opportunities). There are live cameras on bird-feeders and nests to explore. There are also resources for engaging children and youth outdoors. Check out our Friends of Turnbull website Activities page for links to many resources.

Volunteer

When we do get together again, think about volunteering for Friends of Turnbull. We need:

- new members for the Activities Committee; leaders for in-person and virtual activities
- additional volunteers for the Nature Store
- members for a fundraising committee
- members who keep us informed on advocacy issues and news from other Refuges
- more ideas for . . .
- more stepping up for leadership for

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING AT A REFUGE
You Give :: You Get

CONNECT WITH OTHERS
Dedicating your time as a volunteer helps you make new friends, expand your network, and boost your social skills. Volunteering allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place.

IMPROVE YOUR WELL-BEING
There is scientific evidence that being in nature is good for your brain, body, and soul AND that volunteering makes us happy. That makes volunteering in nature the ultimate super-activity.

INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE
Volunteering can be a way to get experience for a new career or pursue an interest you've never had time for. You'll develop communication, teamwork, problem solving, and organizational skills plus learn more about nature and your refuge.

ACCESS AREAS OTHERS CAN'T
While volunteering, you may get to explore areas not open to the public where you'll encounter plants, animals, and landscapes rarely seen by others. You can develop your inner citizen scientist and give back to the greater scientific community, too.

COALITION OF REFUGE FRIENDS AND ADVOCATES
National Volunteer Week :: April 7-13, 2019

Visit our great website!
www.fotnwr.org

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THE JOYS OF SUMMER BIRDING

I've suggested before...and repeat my request...if only Mother Nature would dispense with some dreary winter weeks, adding them to May or June! (Yes...in January we enjoy Snowy Owls and Rough-legged Hawks near Davenport, Peregrine Falcons chasing Grey-crowned Rosy-Finches in Lewiston, and Common Redpolls at our feeders, if we're lucky!) Still, the abundance and variety of summer birds at Turnbull are a joy to experience, for too short a time, I think.

We didn't even get up at dawn. Birding partner Sally English and I spent a couple of hours one morning last week wandering parts of the public area near Turnbull Refuge Headquarters. We saw no rarities but enjoyed watching and hearing quite a variety of birds.

The vocal competition was a draw...a four-inch, sputtering House Wren versus a brilliant, scolding Bullock's Oriole. The many flycatchers added punctuation with their fitz-bews, whits, and pee-eers. Warblers... mostly Yellow.... warbled, Tree Swallows twittered, and many Song Sparrows reminded us to "put on the teakettle."



Bullock's Oriole
©Pennington



House Wren
©Terry Sohl

Red-tailed Hawks and Turkey Vultures soared overhead. Wary ducks...Ring-necked, Goldeneye and Gadwall... skirted the edges of Windmill Pond. Black-capped Chickadees hopped about in the bushes and a White-breasted Nuthatch went up and down an evergreen trunk. A lovely Common Yellowthroat energetically defended his territory with his whichity-whichity-witz from an enclosure fence rail. A busy Red-naped Sapsucker entertained us during lunch as he made repeated forays to a nest high in a tree over our picnic table.



Common Yellowthroat
©Noppadol Paothong



White-breasted Nuthatch
©Local Color

We did miss a couple of species that I've always seen at Turnbull in the summer. I hope that their absence is due to bad timing or mislocation and not to declining numbers. The "kaow-kaow" of the cotton-tailed Pied-billed Grebe is a sound I haven't heard...nor have I even seen one this year. Also, the beautiful Black Terns may be over on the west side of the Refuge, but they're not flying over Headquarters ponds...at least, not when I've been there.

Finally, Sally and I had fun watching the newest generation of ducks. We stopped at Wheeler Pond on the way out to look at an oddly-behaving Great Blue Heron. I dragged out my scope for a better view, and in the process discovered an abundance of waterfowl in what had seemed unoccupied sections of reedy shallows. Camouflaged amid all those plants were dozens of ducklings, with their quietly attendant mamas. Mallards were obvious; the others, not so much, but all were just too cute as they enthusiastically paddled around in circles. The coot also had babies...those funny little red-faced balls of fluff.

So...if you have cleaned the house from top to bottom, yanked out every weed in the yard, or even if you haven't...I recommend a break from responsibility

for a visit to your favorite birding spot. June has become July and the singers will stop performing soon. Then you'll have the challenge of identifying fledglings...hmm! Before we know it, our migrants will be on their way to the tropics so enjoy them while you can.



Coot babies

Some Summer Turnbull Adventures

by Carlene Hardt

The Great Blue Heron Encounter

Last month I made it out to Turnbull for a mile and a half walk. At the far end of Middle Pine Lake, I spotted a Great Blue Heron near the stream that goes out to Cheever Lake. Usually, they see me before I see them, and they fly off, but this Heron stood still and barely moved for several minutes while I took pictures.

Of course, I didn't move much except to check if my camera settings were right. It appeared to be admiring the flowers but then its head darted into the grass and popped back up. It must have spotted a tasty insect. Soon after, it stuck out its tongue (at me?), made a racket and flew off. The picture sure does show off its long legs!

All photos by Carlene Hardt

When I got home, I looked up some Great Heron facts and found out that they have a five- to six-foot wingspan and can cruise at some 20 to 30 mph. They weigh anywhere from 4.6 to 7.3 pounds and they hunt alone.

This was the first time I had seen its tongue. Its tongue has spines on it to keep fish from getting away and to help the Heron swallow them whole. It primarily feeds on small fish, but they will eat whatever comes within striking distance. They occasionally snack on small mammals, small birds, rodents and insects.

In these tough and changing days, I still find wonder in nature. I hope you do too!



Trumpeter Swan Update

I walked to Cheever on July 5th and from the road I saw two adult swans and two cygnets. I was glad to see them! Mike Rule said they were the only pair that produced young, although another pair were hanging out at Kepple - no nesting but maybe next year.

The Avocet Adventure

You know, I am always on the lookout for something new to photograph! A friend and I went out to Turnbull last week and we were pleasantly surprised to spot a bird we had never seen before on Middle Pine Lake. It was quite a ways off with other ducks but I took a few shots of it so I could identify it when I got home.

Come to find out it was an American Avocet! A brand-new bird to me! It is a shore bird that generally forages in water less than 8 inches deep. This long-legged wader glides through shallow waters swishing its slender, upturned bill from side to side to catch insects, worms or snails.



It was fun to watch one of the ducks splash around and take a bath for several minutes and then s-t-r-e-t-c-h its wings out. It was a sunny day so some of the duck colors stood out and some of their eyes were bright color, too. My favorite picture was the male Green-Winged Teal swimming in the watery reflection of the purple lupine flowers and their green leaves.



Cinnamon Teal



Northern Shoveler



Gadwall bath-time



Green-winged Teal

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