



Turnbull Wildlife Refuge Friends Newsletter

Friends of Turnbull NWR Plans for 2019

Lorna Kropp, President

The first order of business is getting the government open and funded for the long haul! We have done advocacy to start the process, but we need to keep working to finish for full funding for the entire mission.

Second, we will be reaching out to encourage more appreciation of the role the Refuge plays in providing and enhancing wildlife habitat. We want everyone to come out to observe and enjoy it. The Beginning Bird Watching Classes will continue on the first Saturdays of April, May and June, with leadership from Joyce Alonso and Nancy Curry. We will have booths at the spring festivals, with information and games for kids. Come and help, more dates and specifics later. We are open to suggestions for additional outings and events.

Third, we will be planning an evening of music and art, with some special silent auction items, snacks and fun. We could use one or two more helpers with the committee whose meetings will begin in February. Watch for the date and place of the event sometime this Spring/Summer. We are calling all photographers, artists, musicians to contact us about participating, demonstrating, selling and/or donating toward this fundraising event. Our fundraising efforts and the Nature Store are the primary sources of funding for our mission of supporting the Environmental programs on the Refuge.

Fourth, we are celebrating a successful past season with our Nature Store. Thanks to the hard work of the Manager, Priscilla Bowen, the store had over \$7000 in operating net income during last season. We made several changes at the beginning of the year in displays and in getting a Satellite Internet connection and the Square POS system. There was a very steep learning curve, but we are ready to build from there. Watch for a Refresher Course in Square iPad procedures for Nature Store Volunteers in the second half of March and training for new volunteers, as well. Plan now to volunteer for a shift at the store this season.

Enjoy the rest of winter. We look forward to seeing you out at the Refuge come Spring!

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Winter 2018
4th Quarter
Quarterly Report
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I hope you all had a wonderful holiday time and are as excited as I am about the New Year!

The New Year is here and it is time to be thinking about opening the Nature Store for 2019.

The government shutdown has caused problems with the orders for replacement of merchandise and for ordering new items because of delivery issues. As soon as I can be assured that the refuge offices will be open, I will get the orders on their way.

I have purchased a new display shelf that will give us quite a bit of additional space for different kinds of merchandise. I am anxious to get into the store and get that put together and in place.

I am planning to have some training times for review of opening procedures for our returning volunteers and some times for new volunteers as well. Watch for emails from Joanne for those schedules. We had a very successful year last year and I am excited to see what we can accomplish this year. With the continued enthusiasm and help from all our volunteers, I am sure we can do as well or better.

We are looking at some new items for the store, one of which is a new t-shirt designed by Echo Kane, a student at Eastern Washington University. Her rendition of a moose that we first saw on posters was well-received by our visitors at WinterFest, and there were suggestions to put the design on a T-shirt. We will have more posters with Echo's design as well. New book titles, puzzles, and a new mug are in the works. I am always looking for new things to add to our inventory. Suggestions are welcome.

As soon as possible I will be in the store, moving things around, cleaning up and getting ready for our official opening the first weekend in April. I may open earlier than that, depending on the weather and the new orders.

If anyone is interested in working in the store during the week, please let me know. Our onsite volunteer, Deanna, may not be with us this year and we will miss having the store open. It will make a big difference in our total sales; also our visitors to the refuge will miss the opportunity to take home a keepsake from Turnbull. Our success is totally dependent on our wonderful volunteers.

Turn Tables and Chairs into Functional Art

The North Market Starbucks donated two bistro tables and 8 chairs to the Friends of Turnbull. The fundraising committee currently is looking for artists who would donate their time and artistry to create beautiful outdoor/patio sets (each set contains one table and four chairs). Artists could work alone or collaboratively with another artist. Please contact Molly Zammit at molly.z@comcast.net if you are interested in doing this.



Visit our great website!
www.fotnwr.org

- President:Lorna Kropp activities@fotnwr.org
- Vice President:...Open
- Treasurer:Molly Zammit treasurer@fotnwr.org
- Secretary:Nancy Curry secretary@fotnwr.org

- Board Members:
- Joyce Alonsojbalonso3@msn.com
 - John Barberpattianandjohnbarber@hotmail.com
 - Priscilla Bowennaturestore@fotnwr.org
 - Olesia Lettsmembership@fotnwr.org

Impacts of Government Shutdown at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge Board of Directors

Visible impacts: The Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge Public Use Area is open to the public, but the office and other headquarters facilities may be closed. Public restrooms are open. Limited staff are working at Turnbull and Little Pend Oreille Refuges and currently no Kootenai refuge staff are working. At this point no vandalism or damage to facilities, structures and equipment has occurred. Turnbull, Kootenai and Little Pend Oreille are all in the Inland Northwest Refuge Complex, with the Complex headquartered at Turnbull.

Work not getting done:

- Planning for the upcoming field season, including habitat survey work, and fuels management.
- Needs assessment for upcoming fire season (equipment, supplies, upgrading wildland fire engine),
- Coordination meetings with other partners (including federal and state) postponed/cancelled.
- Four weeks of environmental education activities at schools have been cancelled.
- Planning for the upcoming on-site environmental education program and training of volunteers has been impacted.
- Coordination with partners for the Refuge's Spring Festival is on hold (federal/state/county/city/private partners).
- Winter time maintenance of refuge equipment is on hold.
- Water management and facilities management (servicing buildings and road maintenance) are on hold.

Personnel actions are on hold: Hiring of seasonal employees, which usually begins in January, has been held up. The list includes firefighters, maintenance, and a biological technician. Two vital, permanent vacancies are waiting to be filled. The loss personally to all staff, in addition to income, is in morale and the uncertainty that the situation brings to their lives. There is worry about getting work done in a compressed work year, and questions of value and purpose come up. Why are their jobs being de-valued?

Future impacts: Priorities will have to be set, looking at the Refuge's mission. Budget delays will cause many unknowns as no one can be sure which projects will be funded, what positions will be filled. Depending upon the length of the shutdown, some planned projects/activities may not occur, impairing the refuge's mission progress. While winter visitation is light, as the weather improves, public visitation will grow. The Refuge usually provides Environmental Education activities for 8000 school children, but some will miss out. Wildlife and plant surveys will end up being chopped. Delayed equipment maintenance will impact project work. Given the many unknowns, we are concerned.



Refuge Happenings

by Sandy Rancourt
Visitor Services Manager

Community Planting Event

On Saturday, October 13th, Turnbull hosted its annual community planting event. It was a gorgeous fall day for our habitat restoration activities. We had a great turnout, with 135 very energetic volunteers participating. In addition to numerous individuals, volunteers came from Boy and Girl Scouts of America, EWU Office of Community Engagement, Camp Fire, Spokane Audubon Society, Friends of Turnbull, Church of Latter-Day Saints, and the Washington Trails Association. Hundreds of native saplings were planted, existing protective fencing was repaired and new exclosures were erected. Potted plants in the refuge nursery needed some extensive weeding so several individuals tackled that job. The planting was followed by a well-received potluck which nearly everyone attended. I don't believe that has ever happened before. Friends of Turnbull provided the burgers, hotdogs and chefs. Russell and Marian Frobe welcomed and signed in volunteers, not an easy task considering that the majority of folks came all at once.

We are very grateful to all our volunteers and partners who helped make this a very successful planting event.



Removing the invasive species, reed canary grass, is an arduous job that has to be done before planting. (S. Rancourt)



Long-term refuge volunteers and Spokane Audubon members Sandy and Buck Domitrovich (S. Rancourt)



Volunteers getting the panels ready for a new protective fencing area. (S. Rancourt)



(Left) Spokane Audubon Society and Friends of Turnbull board member Joyce Alonso, other volunteers and Project Leader Alice Hanley (far back) did a great job weeding the potted plants in the nursery. (S. Rancourt)

West Blackhorse Trail Restoration Eagle Scout Project

Eagle Scout candidate Nicholas Webb and members from his BSA Troop 418 completed the West Blackhorse Trail Restoration Project on Saturday, November 17th. We have been working diligently on this project during this past year to make the alternate EE outdoor study site and trail more functional. Earlier in the year, University of Idaho's Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Club worked with staff on a riparian restoration project adjacent to the shelter. In July, Cheney High School summer science students put down over three dumptruck loads of wood chips on the trail. Even with all this assistance, more work needed to be done around the EE shelter and the remaining 1/8th mile of trail. Nicholas enthusiastically agreed to complete the trail and shelter work as his Eagle Scout Project. Fortunately, with this late date in November, the weather was perfect for his project. Maintenance staff provided additional loads of chips, as well as the wheelbarrows, shovels and rakes. The area around the shelter was thick with invasive species, which also blocked access to the wetland. Nicholas and his crew removed the invasive species, cleared access to the wetland and chipped the study site area. The Troop also completed the remaining trail work. It was a long, hard day's work. The large pile of chips was completely whittled down. The end result was a finished trail and shelter area looking great and fully functional.



Eastern Washington Students are always a big help. (S. Rancourt)



Biological AmeriCorps member Joseph Stewart lends a helping hand. (S. Rancourt)



Eagle Scout candidate Nicholas Webb (S. Rancourt)



Making a path to the wetland for future aquatic invertebrate sampling (S. Rancourt)



Nicholas directing the project's progress. (S. Rancourt)



To tackle this pile of chips, three's a charm...



...or not... (S. Rancourt)



The finished site and side trail leading down to the shelter (S. Rancourt)



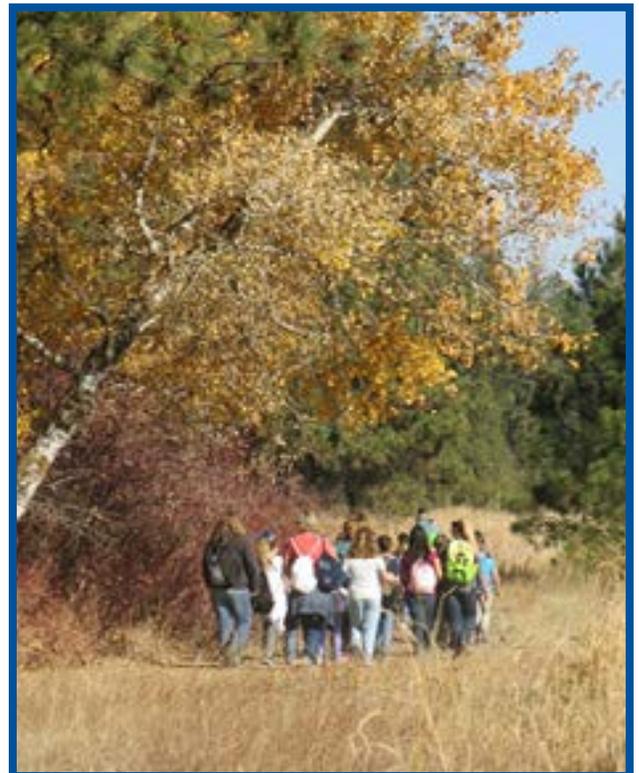
Almost there! (S. Rancourt)



Nicholas and BSA Troop 418 (S. Rancourt)

Environmental Education & Outreach

Participation in our Fall Field Trip and Night Hike Programs was amazing this year. Our schedule was packed solid, including an occasional weekend activity. Colors were fantastic and the weather was cool, but not too cold, providing ideal conditions for a field trip or night hike. Even the gentle rain during a couple of the night hikes was not a deterrent for a great time outdoors, after hours at Turnbull. Moose were a thrilling sighting for the students and seen often, including when we spied their eye shine from their bedding area in the tall grass at the end of one night hike.



What a day for a field trip! (S. Rancourt)

North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)

On October 10th, Mike and I had the pleasure of presenting programs for 36 participants from around the country and the world attending the NAAEE 47th Annual Conference in Spokane. Individuals from China, Israel and Canada, and folks from across the country had a chance to experience Turnbull for the first time on a gorgeous fall day. I provided a PowerPoint presentation on refuges and Turnbull's EE/Outreach and Volunteer Programs. Following the presentation, Mike led the conference attendees on a walk through Turnbull's habitats, which provided a great learning opportunity about Turnbull's forest management practices and history of the Channeled Scablands. Immediately following the walk, we had some hands-on fun in the wetland looking at aquatic invertebrates.



EE AmeriCorps member Jennifer McGovern leads 2nd grade students from St. Thomas More on a nature hike (S. Rancourt)



Finishing up our night hike with Get Outside GSA. (S. Rancourt)



NAAEE conference participants on the walk. (S. Rancourt)



Jennifer did a great job getting the girl scouts to participate in the blind-folded bat-moth night hike activity. (S. Rancourt)

WinterFest December 2018

by Lorna Kropp

This year's Winterfest, held on December 1st, was a fun day for about 40 members and friends. The day was filled with a tour of the Refuge areas, a presentation by Lee First of the Spokane Riverkeepers, and the annual Chili Contest.

Thanks to Lee First, the community outreach staff for the Spokane Riverkeeper office, for the presentation about "Toxics in the Spokane River." The toxics, mostly PCBs, are a legacy of the mining in North Idaho and industrial pollution from the area, as well as storm water run-off from city streets. Lee gave us information about whom to call when you spot run-off at construction sites or locations in the city or county.

- City of Spokane Pollution Reporting Hotline: 509-625-7900
- Spokane County Stormwater Hotline: 509-477-7525

The Riverkeeper office is also conducting a Citizen Science study, and gathering data of the sediment coming from Latah Creek into the Spokane River. For more information check out: <https://spokanefallstu.org/spokane-river-sediment-study/>

Two 20-passenger bus tours on the Stubblefielf trail, provided thanks to the Refuge and EWU, were full. The 9am tour came across a huge elk herd and other residents of the Refuge and all had a marvelous time. The 1pm tour had sunshine and swans, ducks, and also a good time. Thanks to Mike Rule for narrating and answering questions for both tours.

The chili contest had five scrumptious pots of chili and other great potluck dishes for lunch. John Barber, the Chili Chef of the year, won over the judges and took home a prize basket of items from the Nature Store. Congratulations, John!!



WinterFest Merry Goose

Wildlife Observations

by Mike Rule

Since we are out of work, I don't have much to report here. I did have our AmeriCorps person go down to Cheever Lake this week where he counted 21 Trumpeter Swans including three cygnets. Sandy and I saw an Evening Grosbeak and Wilson's Snipe on the refuge.

Some notes on the Cheney and Spokane Christmas Bird Counts

Cheney CBC submitted by Sandy Schreven - Spokane CBC submitted by Alan McCoy

Cheney CBC

Thirty birders were in the field on December 15, 2018 to count birds on the newly revived Cheney Christmas Bird Count. It was a wonderful day for birding and there were some great sightings. Counters included Sandy Rancourt and Mike Rule who, during the Cheney CBC, spent 8 hours covering about 60% of the refuge. Nearly all the wetlands were iced over resulting in very few waterfowl being seen. Other Cheney counters were Buck and Sandy Domitrovich, Alan McCoy, Ann Brinly, Lindell Haggin, Jon Isacoff, Peggy O'Connell, Lisa Langelier, and Nancy Curry. Sandy Schreven and Michael Woodruff found a Red-breasted Merganser and a Greater White-fronted Goose on Silver Lake. A couple of Cackling Geese were spotted by Jon Isacoff at Philleo Lake. The Domitrovich team saw a Snow Goose and one Western Bluebird while a couple of Killdeer were heard flying over Slavin Ranch. A Northern Goshawk



Northern Goshawk
©Jim Harrison

was found by Jim and Bea Harrison. Over 700 Red-winged Blackbirds were seen. It was a great day for raptors and nearly all of the likely species were seen. In all 71 species were recorded on that day.

Spokane CBC

Sixty-five field participants turned out for the Spokane CBC this year and 14 feeder watchers submitted their data as well. Last year we recorded very few American Robins. This year we nearly set a new high count (4064) for them. The high count of 4284 was set in 1976. Their abundance correlates well with the Mountain Ash berry crop. Other notable sightings were a Golden Eagle up in the Little Spokane area, seen by Mike Cliff; and the Mandarin Duck that has been spotted around the area for the last month was seen again by Mike Fulton at the sewage treatment facility. The waterfowl numbers were way down this year, probably due to the large amount of open water available to them. One exception to this were the record number of Double-crested Cormorants seen.



Double-crested Cormorant
© Steve Streit



Mandarin Ducks
© Martin Mere

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
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