

A National Voice for Friends

The NWRA offers leadership, guidance, and support

By Evan Hirsche

For one hundred years, refuges have drawn people to become more involved in protecting our nation's unique natural heritage. Fledgling Audubon societies helped establish some of our earliest refuges. Sportsmen provided critical support to refuges during the Dust Bowl years. Throughout this time, volunteers helped the staff accomplish important projects. At some refuges, these volunteers joined together to form what we now call "friends" groups, combining their talent, energy, and dedication into a vital source of enduring refuge support.

The National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) was formed in 1975 to build national support for the Refuge System. Over the years, the Association has promoted beneficial legislation and addressed refuge threats. It is a leading member of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a group of 21 organizations that has made great



Marty LaVoi

Friends volunteers show off TR Bear and Centennial blanket.

strides over the last seven years to increase Refuge System funding.

Recognizing the importance of having grassroots support, the Association is working to forge the nation's 240 friends groups — and their estimated 30,000 to 40,000

See NATIONAL VOICE... Page 12

"Old People" Make Good Friends

Demographics show they have time, health, and connections

By Susan Saul

Someone recently complained that the friends groups in her region were made up of "old people." But is that really so bad?

Not if you look at national demographics. People over 50 form one-third of the U.S. population, but control three-fourths of the wealth. "You're talking about a huge amount of people with money — and the time to spend it," says Senator John Breaux, D-La, chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, who recently held hearings on ageism in ads, entertainment, and media.

The graying of America also presents a significant philanthropic

opportunity. In 1900, life expectancy was 47 years; today, it is in excess of 76 years, a gain of three decades in 100 years. The opportunity may be most significantly denominated in sweat equity. Some 70 percent of those aged 50 to 75 volunteer, even if only on an episodic basis. Some 43 percent of those over the age of 75 volunteer, a rate that is up nine percent in the last year. Moreover, elderly volunteer rates compare favorably with the youngest ages; 46 percent of those aged 18 to 24 volunteer. A Civic Ventures survey indicated that half of respondents

See OLD PEOPLE... Page 4

OUT & About



The Pacific Region
Outreach Newsletter

Volume 9, Number 3 Summer 2003



Friends Groups

Table of Contents

A National Voice for Refuges1
 Old People Make Good Friends....1
 Field Notable Gary Hagedorn2
 Partnering for
 Invasives Control3
 Announcements.....4
 Bookstores and Beyond5
 Starting from Scratch6
 Keeping Old Friends7
 Friends or Cooperating
 Association8
 Resources8
 Eat, Drink, Bid and
 Make Money.....9
 Announcements.....10
 It's All About Learning11

Upcoming Themes

- Fall — Migratory Birds
- Winter — Endangered Species
- Spring — Managing to Minimize Wildlife Disturbance
- Summer — Land Protection



OUT & About

Out & About is published quarterly for Region 1 Fish and Wildlife Service employees.

STAFF

Editor
Jeanne Clark, Stone Lakes NWR
Design
Kathie Nute, Western Type

SUBMISSIONS

We welcome your submissions to **Out & About**. Regular sections in the newsletter are:

Feature Articles
Case Studies
Outreach Accomplishments
Trainings & Workshops
Announcements
Q & A
Letters to the Editor
Outreach Resources

Articles should be submitted by E-mail or 3-1/2 inch floppy and run 150 to 500 words. Gear writing to newsletter style; avoid technical jargon. Photos welcome. Publication is not guaranteed, though every effort will be made to use submissions.

Submit articles to Jeanne Clark:
Stone Lakes NWR
1624 Hood Franklin Road
Elk Grove, CA 95758
Phone: 916/775-4421
Fax: 916/775-4407
E-mail: jeanne_clark@fws.gov

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Spring	April 1
Summer	May 15
Fall	August 15
Winter	November 15

Out & About has received U.S. Department of the Interior and Fish and Wildlife Service DI-550 approval.

It is the policy of the U.S. Department of the Interior to ensure that individuals are not denied employment opportunities or program delivery because of their race, color, age (40+), sex (gender), national origin, religion, physical or mental disability. Unlawful discrimination in any form is strictly prohibited by agency policies and should be reported to the Fish and Wildlife Service Region 1 Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor, Office for Diversity and Civil Rights, 503/231-2081, 911 NE 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97232-4181.

FIELD NOTABLE

Meet Field Notable Gary Hagedorn

Highly regarded project leader wins praise from Friends

By Jeanne Clark

When two retired scientists mentioned that it was difficult for them to set up tables several times a week at the refuge's environmental education teaching stations, Project Leader Gary Hagedorn listened.

The next morning his fire crew was there to set up the tables, a small daily task they have continued. When the volunteers suggested creating a shrub steppe demonstration area, the fire crew prepared the site. The volunteers did all of the planting and handle the interpretation. This type of teamwork is a Hagedorn hallmark, whether it's gathering the maintenance staff from five refuges to tackle a big project, or encouraging his 30-plus staff to help at a Friends' event.

Hagedorn is project leader for the Mid-Columbia River Refuge Complex in Washington. The two retirees are among more than 75 members of the Friends of Mid-Columbia River Refuges who operate the McNary Environmental Education Center, located on one of the complex's refuges.

"Fish and Wildlife Service employees are usually committed to their jobs, but we do get paid to put in an eight hour day," observes Hagedorn. "Our Friends volunteers often put in just as many hours, simply because they love what they're doing. We would not have an environmental education program of this stature without them," says Hagedorn.

Hagedorn has learned a lot about teamwork and communication working at other refuges. He recalls controversies involving hunting, farming, and water supplies at Klamath NWR. "I didn't wait for trouble to find me," he says. "As soon as I caught wind of criticism, I sought out the source and gave them my ear."

Hagedorn's approach has empowered the Mid-Columbia Friends group. "When they come to me with an idea, I try to listen to what they want. You can't have a successful relationship if you are constantly pushing them to do what you want." When they suggested opening an education center, Hagedorn provided an old farm house at McNary NWR (see article page 11). He pays their way to conferences. He attends their



Gary Hagedorn presents an award to Friends President Paula Clark.

meetings and invites them to his. They feel his trust, his lack of territoriality, and the support of his staff. "Often, just hearing what we're doing spurs them to act on our behalf," says Hagedorn.

"When we tackle our annual work plan, we always allocate funds for Friends' projects. We've provided a computer, a printer, and money to buy learning tools." In return, the Friends have garnered nearly \$100,000 in grants for signs, trails, and other projects. They organize major events, and contact legislators. They are selling the Centennial blankets. "They are doing jobs that the refuge could never do with its current staffing," says Hagedorn.

A person that has worked at such diverse refuges as Julia Butler Hansen, National Bison Range, Klamath Basin, and Malheur has had many career high points. When asked to mention one, he didn't hesitate. "I've got one this evening. Tonight is our annual volunteer appreciation BBQ. It's not something I have to do; it's something I want to do because, this year, we've accomplished more than ever because we're doing more things together, as a team." Hagedorn's constant effort to support and include them has clearly allowed one of the most successful friends groups in the Pacific Region to flourish. O

Jeanne Clark is editor of Out & About.

Partnering for Invasives Control

Combating *Spartina* at Willapa NWR

By Kelly Rupp


Tackling the invasive cordgrass that infests over 10,000 acres of Willapa Bay in southwest Washington requires partnership, creativity, and persistence. *Spartina* threatens both the economic and environmental health of this pristine estuary, which supports over 35 species of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as one of America's largest concentrations of commercial shellfish beds. "*Spartina* emerged as the number one threat to the Bay's health nearly ten years ago," notes Charlie Stenvall, project leader for the Willapa Refuge Complex, "defying our early attempts to mow, till, and spray."

A breakthrough in control methods was achieved with the introduction of cost-saving GPS-guided spray equipment with sensors that direct herbicide only on *Spartina*, not on uninfested areas. This technical solution, combined with months of planning and collaboration, led to a coordinated, six-year master plan, jointly authored by the refuge, state agriculture and natural resource agencies, and local shellfish growers.

Once drafted, the plan needed a quick injection of funds to experiment with spray schedules and equipment deployment. Working through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Friends of Willapa Bay NWR secured a grant of \$60,000 in 2002 to enable a series of tests. The Friends have been actively involved in test monitoring, with volunteers recording shorebird activity in previously-treated plots.

The Friends also guided efforts to enlist public understanding and financial support for the multi-year control effort. "Friends spokespersons reached as many major community organizations as possible," said Bev Arnoldy, president of the Willapa Friends organization. "Our message was two-fold: here's what the plan is to save our refuge, and here's what you can do to help." Through presentations and newspaper articles about the carefully-choreographed spray program, the public was entreated to send letters of support to state and federal legislators. "The Friends' outreach was invaluable," confirms Stenvall.

Repeated visits by Friends board members to legislators helped educate their staff and encouraged support for the control program budget. Visits to the refuge were regularly arranged for legislative staff. Thus armed with a complete understanding of the economic and conservation interests at stake — and backed by hundreds of concerned citizens and business people — legislators ensured that \$1 million needed for first-year treatments was included in the 2003 federal budget. The help is timely: Willapa Bay was recently listed as number two on the National Audubon Society's list of invasive species "hot spots" nationwide.

Washington senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, along with congressmen Brian Baird and Norm Dicks, have championed the *Spartina* control plan. During a recent refuge visit, Senator Murray recognized the ongoing commitment of Friends volunteers, local business people, and involved government agency staff. "Your efforts to protect and enhance this special place from the threat of this invasive species are enormously important. My staff and I are proud to contribute to this program at Willapa and to the Refuge System everywhere. These are national treasures that deserve our broad support." 

Kelly Rupp is a board member of the Friends of Willapa NWR.

"Our plan was two-fold: here's what the plan is to save our refuge and here is what you can do to help."



Friends of Willapa Bay

*Willapa Bay's custom-designed amphibious sprayer is equipped with infrared *Spartina* sensors and GPS navigators.*

Friends Workshops Coming

Many conference attendees and others have expressed their desire for local workshops with a local focus. So, instead of a National Friends Conference during 2004 there will be regional workshops.

These regional meetings offer an outstanding opportunity to explore local topics and network with those closer to home. If there are topics you'd like to see included, or would like more information, please contact Marguerite Hills at 503/872-2739.



Need Volunteers?

If you have a special refuge, hatchery, or office project and need help, take

advantage of a new, multi-departmental website that lists hundreds of volunteer opportunities on Fish and Wildlife Service and other public lands.

This is an official national website where you can post volunteer needs and volunteers can apply. You can access the site through the Service's or Refuge System webpages, or type in www.volunteer.gov/gov. For more information, contact Marguerite Hills at 503/872-2739 or Trevor Needham at 202/358-2392.

Disney Contest Winner

On May 22, Refuge System Chief Bill Hartwig visited the Jiminy Cricket "Environmental Challenge," sponsored by Disney Entertainment, to honor school children for their environmental awareness. San Diego

Refuge Complex staff participated in the program and helped assure that a list of California refuges was included in the registration materials.

The grand prize went to a fifth grade class calling themselves Protectors of the Earth, from El Verano Elementary School in Sonoma. The class researched conditions causing the malformation of local frogs and conducted 10 monthly local clean-up projects on local creeks and waterways.

The Service presented the kids with a special award and is featuring them on the Wild Things 2003 Distance Learning Broadcast, "Habitat is Where It's At."

The Service will continue its participation next year, also offering fifth grade classes the chance to work with the Service's endangered species and hatchery programs.

Old People...

Continued from Page 1

preparing for retirement saw volunteering as fairly or very important in their future plans.

The elderly are also community-tied. The common assumption of sun-belt retirement belies the truth. Surveys indicate that three-fourths of Americans approaching retirement have no plans to move upon retirement. Finally, the elderly are healthier than ever before. A Duke University survey found that disability among the elderly has declined 15 percent in the last 12 years. So, the elderly (in general) have the time, linkages, and health to volunteer, which is why they dominate refuge and hatchery support groups.

Most important, "old people" vote. The peak age group for voting participation, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, is 65 to 74 years, where 72 percent voted in the 2000

election. The lowest voting rate is for people aged 18 to 24, who were half as likely to vote as older people. The National Association of Secretaries of State reports that fewer than 20 percent of 18 to 24 year-olds voted in 1998, a non-presidential election year.

A good outreach strategy markets to every demographic, including those post-55ers. And it shouldn't overlook the value of "old people" as support group members. Based on national demographics, they are the ones who will ensure the survival of our refuges and hatcheries until today's 18-year-olds mature and acquire the education, incomes, and jobs that will make them more likely to become voters, volunteers, and donors. **O**

Susan Saul is an outreach specialist in External Affairs in the Regional Office.

Bookstores and Beyond

Lessons learned at Kilauea Point NWR's retail store

By Dave Aplin

Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge on the island of Kauai is one of the most visited refuges in the United States. Nearly half a million visitors each year are drawn to our retired lighthouse perched above spectacular cliffs and a cobalt sea, a sky full of sea birds, and an ocean teeming with whales, dolphins, monk seals, and sea turtles. Many want to carry away something tangible to help them recall the experience or their connection to wildlife and wild places. Thankfully, the Kilauea Point Natural History Association (KPNHA) has helped us respond to this marketing opportunity by operating a retail sales outlet at the refuge.

The transactions that take place in refuge stores, whether large or small, profit all involved. Visitors take away reminders, like field guides and binoculars, that will aid in their appreciation of nature. The refuge benefits, as the profits fund conservation and education projects. These projects, in turn, benefit future visitors, who enjoy healthier refuges, improved facilities, and expanded visitor services.

Our tiny sales outlet is remarkably successful largely because of the talented KPNHA staff. The bookstore takes in \$400,000 annually, providing funds for diverse projects, from buses for our education program to an albatross research project.

Even though our annual sales figures were impressive, we saw untapped potential but lacked the technical expertise and vision to make it reality. The National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) came to our rescue. Two years ago, our KPNHA bookstore and business managers attended the outstanding course, "Sales Outlets: Beyond Bookstores," at John Heinz NWR near Philadelphia. They returned energized with new resources, ideas, and enthusiasm for what is possible.

The bookstore was part of our building's original design and people must walk by it to visit the point. Even so, we are working with the KPNHA to redesign our retail space and systematically improve our entire operation.

The KPNHA and refuge staff have developed a philosophy and mission

statement to guide product selection and development. Together, we have crafted themes for merchandise that mirror the interpretive stories we tell on site. KPNHA does the purchasing, with occasional suggestions from the refuge staff. We are now developing a narrative describing our interpretive themes, categories of merchandise we intend to feature, and special physical requirements and fixtures needed. This narrative will guide our product selection and help a retail designer create a space that is attractive and profitable, while helping us tell the story of this remarkable Hawaiian setting.

The refuge manager must give final approval, usually a "slam dunk" because of our partnership planning effort. The entire staff can get involved at times, but at least one of us serves as liaison to assure that regular communication and sharing occur.

A retail sales outlet can do much to complement refuge or hatchery goals and expand the visitor experience. We could not run ours without the dedicated volunteers of our friends group. They initiated ours with a \$2,000 loan from the Arizona Memorial Cooperating Association, which supports the memorial commemorating the ships and lives lost during the World War II attack on Pearl Harbor. We've been so successful we were able to provide start up funding to San Francisco Bay for their retail outlet. **O**

Dave Aplin is an outdoor recreation planner at Kilauea Point NWR.

"The transactions that take place in refuge stores, whether large or small, profit all involved."



USFWS

Kilauea Point visitors spend \$400,000 annually at the friends-operated retail store.

Starting from Scratch

First steps in establishing a new friends group

By Eileen McLaughlin

Over many months, the gap became evident. San Francisco Bay Area refuges needed some special “friends.” Even though our refuge complex is in an area that is home to seven million people, residents rarely know that the refuges exist — testimony to the Centennial slogan that refuges are “America’s Best Kept Secret.”

FROM PROBLEM TO VISION

During the 1990s our volunteer numbers leveled off as the refuges’ need for volunteers continued to grow. By the summer of 2002, the issues of community awareness and volunteers had become very serious. State and federal partners were about to purchase 16,500 acres of commercial salt ponds largely located in the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR. This action would launch the largest wetland restoration — ever — on the West Coast.

The media trumpeted the environmental opportunity. Who was going to trumpet the refuge’s need for community understanding and participation through decades of restoration? If there was ever a time for a new friends group, this was it.

TAKING THE FIRST STEPS

I met with Project Leader Marge Kolar and I laid it out for her — a friends group focusing on community outreach and support for the volunteer program. She asked some well-considered questions. She had words of guidance. Then she supported the idea. The first step had been achieved!

Now, could I find support within the corps of volunteers? Our own Centennial planning meetings provided an opportunity to share the idea with them and seek their support. More than 50 people said “yes” and the idea morphed to plan. An eager dozen met, intent on creating a friends group called “Wildlife Stewards.”

GIVING SHAPE TO PASSION

United by a concept and the love of our refuges, we now faced very pragmatic issues. How should Wildlife Stewards be structured?

How do we build our partnership with the Refuge Complex?

We quickly realized that legal and financial structure had to come first. We needed the 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status of a charitable nonprofit corporation. We saw the complexities of managing unrestricted and restricted funds and, likely, payroll. Our refuge partners needed to feel confident that we could efficiently manage funds. Potential funders would look for financial credibility, as well. These needs would define our start-up structure.

INCORPORATION OR SPONSORSHIP?

We discussed two structures that would provide tax-exempt status. The first, incorporation, was thoroughly outlined in *How to Form a Nonprofit Corporation*, published by Nolo Press, a step-by-step guide to bylaws and legal submissions. However, this action would still put us on our own — financially.

The alternative, sponsorship by a fiduciary agent, another nonprofit, would give us tax-exempt status, financial and legal services, and time to initiate programs, develop our refuge partnership, and begin fundraising. The sponsor would charge a fee of six to 10 percent of revenue for services rendered. It seemed a reasonable exchange and made sense for a start-up.

Finding a sponsor was next. We knew eligible sponsors must, legally, have environmental missions complementary to our own. We soon found several that actively incubated new groups. Choosing one, we applied for sponsorship.

While our application is processed, we’re not sitting still. We’re busy learning the art of grant writing, co-developing a salt pond docent program with Visitor Services, and looking forward to our upcoming friends mentoring workshop. 

Eileen McLaughlin is project director of Wildlife Stewards, which serves seven refuges in the greater San Francisco Bay Area.

“The media trumpeted the environmental opportunity. Who was going to trumpet the refuge’s need for community participation...”

Keeping Old Friends

Tips for nurturing and sustaining your friends group

By Kim Strassburg

Like any relationship, the partnership with your friends group is an ongoing and dynamic process. It's a two-way street requiring constant vigilance and involvement. Good communication must form the bedrock of your relationship, tempered with mutual trust and respect. Here are a few tips for keeping the friends you've made:

- Always designate a FWS liaison to your friends group, a diplomat to bring your group and the Service together.
- Regularly share your station's activities and encourage them to participate. Invite them to your staff meetings and make them feel a part of the Service. Attend their meetings to see how you can help. Make it a point to do projects together, to develop a team approach.
- Allow them to select projects that interest them, rather than pushing them to do the things you want them to do. Avoid dominating the dynamics of the group. Remember, they are volunteers, so respect their motivation and the gift of their time.
- Find ways to support their projects. Try to be flexible so you can respond to their ideas. Include them in your annual work plan budget and listen to their needs. Challenge them with projects that allow them to grow.
- Clarify who speaks on behalf of the Friends group and who speaks on behalf of the FWS.
- Expect the membership in your friends group to change. A core group usually remains, so maintain strong ties with them as they can help groom new volunteers.
- Avoid disagreements by identifying

potential issues ahead of time. Discuss issues openly and work to find common solutions. Many problems can be avoided by getting to personally know the members.

- Take advantage of the resources available to you. Have someone from your station and friends group attend NCTC's course in managing friends groups and volunteers. Several websites offer help: friends.fws.gov, volunteers.fws.gov, and www.refugenet.com.
- Reward their efforts with thank yous, public recognition, and special events. Encourage your staff to regularly show their appreciation and to offer help with friends' projects. Never take their contributions for granted.

Keep in mind that, like most healthy relationships, an enduring partnership with a friends group takes time. Be patient. If you need some inspiration, talk with some of the Pacific Region stations that have successful friends groups.

Kim Strassburg was formerly an interpretive specialist at Leavenworth NFH and is now an outdoor recreation planner at Tualatin River NWR.

"Good communication must form the bedrock of your relationship, tempered with mutual trust and respect."

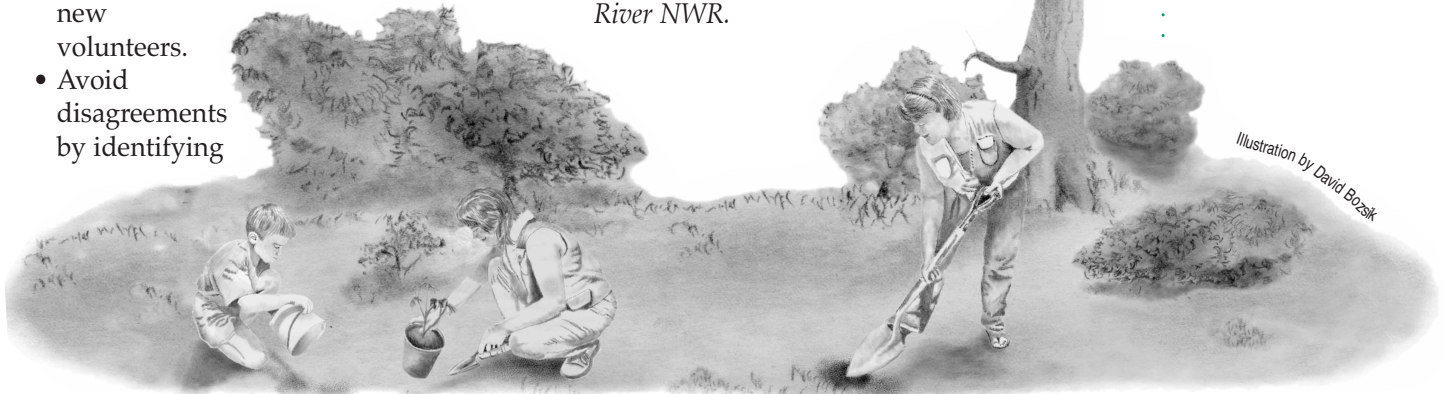


Illustration by David Bozák

Friend or Cooperating Association?

Sorting out the difference between support groups

By Marguerite Hills

Groups that support refuges and hatcheries go by a lot of names. The three most common within the Fish and Wildlife Service are refuge support groups, friends, and cooperating associations.

Friends and support groups make a long-term commitment of support by forming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. The group incorporates in the state where their headquarters are located, and sometimes other states, as required by local laws. They are governed by articles of incorporation, organizational bylaws, and the decisions of their board of directors.

Friends and support groups provide many needed services, from staffing visitor centers and educational programs to fundraising and community outreach. Some groups, like Audubon Refuge Keepers or the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, are associated with another organization, but have special projects on a refuge or hatchery.

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS


A cooperating association is a friends or support group that also handles retail sales or other business with the intent of donating money, goods, or services to enhance the

mission of the Fish and Wildlife Service or station they support. To do this, they must sign a “cooperating association” agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Some cooperating associations produce or sell products. For example, the Friends of Nisqually sell books, t-shirts and wildlife art. The Friends of Mid-Columbia Refuges sell Centennial blankets.

A few provide unusual assistance. In addition to traditional activities, Stone Lakes NWR Association manages a \$360,000 investment portfolio for a mitigation bank administered by the refuge, providing income for management projects.

Cooperating associations can provide significant support. Kauai’s Kilauea Point store, managed by the Kilauea Point Natural History Association, grosses \$400,000 per year. They have helped to fund many refuge activities, from volunteer training to a GIS computer system.

If you need help establishing your friends group or cooperating association, please give me a call at 503/872-2739. 

Marguerite Hills is a refuge program specialist in the Division of Visitor Services and Communications.

Taking Flight: An Introduction to Building Refuge Friends Organizations

This helpful how-to handbook from the National Wildlife Refuge Association gives friends groups and refuge staff the tools to get started and promote the importance of forming and maintaining relationships that are built around natural resources. This guide book is a compilation of stories, insights and wisdom from those who have had a long history of success with a friends group. Copies are available from Marguerite Hills (503/872-2739); much of the content is available at www.refugenet.org.

Building Your Nest Egg: An Introduction to Raising Funds for National Wildlife Refuge Support Groups

This joint Fish and Wildlife Service/National Wildlife Refuge Association publication will help you assess your group’s approach to “friendmaking” and organizational management, both of which are key to raising funds. Copies are available from Marguerite Hills (503/872-2739).

Refuge Support Group Locator

The National Wildlife Refuge Association website, www.refugenet.org, includes an online locator for friends groups in your state. Just click on the map for contact information and a thumbnail sketch of the group’s focus.

Friends Listserve

The NWRA listserv is an online forum for discussing topics among volunteers and supporters of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Each list subscriber and only list subscribers can post messages to the listserv on any topic of interest to other refuge supporters. Subscribe by email at: friendsmoderator@refugenet.org.

Legislative and Advocacy Online Resources

Do your friends need to learn about how to become an online activist or how to send effective email letters? Do they need contact information for federal legislators or want to learn more about their voting record? Friends will find this, and more, at www.refugenet.org.

Eat, Drink, Bid — and Make Money

Stone Lakes' annual fundraiser finances projects and solvency

By Susan Peruzzi

Almost since its inception in 1994, the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Association has raised funds for refuge projects with an annual fundraiser. Wild Wild Night is a Friday evening event in an upscale setting that features restaurants, wineries, and breweries, a large silent auction, live wildlife, and music. Last year 450 people paid \$35 each to attend the three-hour event, our biggest and most successful event ever. The beneficiary is Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge located near Sacramento, California. Association fundraisers have provided matching funds to build a viewing platform and boardwalk on the refuge, interpretive panels, and seed money for an interpretive wetland.

A successful fundraiser demands many volunteer hours, knowledge of event planning, and contacts, contacts, contacts! Start by selecting an event coordinator and at least six months or more before the event, develop a “to-do” calendar.

CREATE COMMITTEES

Our fundraiser is driven by four committees normally headed by board members: sponsors, restaurants, beverages, and silent auction. The sponsorship committee locates cash contributions and other donations for the event. Over the years, the Association has developed a mailing list that includes previous event supporters, local businesses, and others. We are a Chamber of Commerce member and glean names from their membership directory. We surf the web and yellow pages for ideas. Association members provide contacts in their own companies. Each potential sponsor receives a personalized letter inviting them to support the event. The more donations you receive, the better your bottom line.

Restaurants, wineries, and breweries receive hundreds of donation requests every year. A personal relationship with an owner, chef, or employee often provides a foot in the door. Usually the same committee member calls year after year, nurturing repeat participation.

The silent auction committee is the heart of the fundraiser. Send out letters to previous donors and new prospects, and drop by businesses with a fundraiser brochure and support materials. The refuge provides special items, such as personal canoe tours, airboat rides, and the viewing platform for an elegant hosted dinner. In all areas, aim for donations; everything you must purchase reduces your event’s profit.

NEWS RELEASES, INVITATIONS

Your refuge or hatchery can probably help with a media list. Include small local newspapers, community calendars, entertainment sections, food sections, and other speciality sections to promote ticket sales. Develop your invitation list, considering refuge or hatchery supporters, past event attendees and prospective sponsors, local dignitaries, non-profit organization members, and others. To encourage attendance, our printed materials mention we will offer food and beverages, auction items, live music — and live wild animals provided by local rehab groups.

SAY THANKS

Thank you notes, complimentary tickets to the event, and recognition in signage and by the news media are not only polite; they will also give you a big jump start on your next fundraiser!

Susan Peruzzi is the membership/events coordinator of the Stone Lakes NWR Association.



Stone Lakes NWR Association

An attractive table display helps encourage bidding.

Upcoming Events

Warm Springs NFH 25th Anniversary

When: August 26

Where:

Warm Springs, OR

Contact:

Amy Gaskill

503/231-6874

<http://pacific.fws.gov>

/fisheries

Oregon Shorebird Festival

When: September 5-7

Where: North Bend, OR

Contact: Cape Arago

Audubon Society

541/267-7208

Modoc Wildlife Festival

When:

September 13-14

Where: Alturas, CA

Contact: 530/233-3572

<http://modoc.fws.gov>

Wenatchee River Salmon Festival

When:

September 18-21

Where:

Leavenworth, WA

Contact:

Corky Broaddus
509/548-6662 ext. 250
www.salmonfest.org

Spring Creek NFH Open House

When: September 20

Where: Underwood, WA

Contact:

Spring Creek NFH
509/493-2934

Nisqually Watershed Festival

When: September 27

Where: Olympia, WA

Contact:

Sheila McCartan
360/753-9467

Dungeness River Festival

When: September 27

Where: Sequim, WA

Contact: 360/681-4006

National Hunting and Fishing Day and National Public Lands Day

When: September 27

Where: National

Contact: National Shooting Sports Foundation
203/426-1320

What's New?

Here's a roundup of breaking news and new resources:

Publications: A scaled-down version of the Visitor's Guide to the National Wildlife Refuge System has been shipped. This eight-page brochure contains the same text content as the visitor guide, but without the map and table. It was created for audiences who want an introduction to the Refuge System but don't need the detail of the full visitor's guide.

New Fisheries Plan: A regional step-down plan for the Fisheries Strategic Vision will be forwarded to Washington D.C. by September 1, 2003. The five-year plan describes how the Pacific Region Fisheries Program will implement goals and objectives identified in the national Fisheries Strategic Vision. It focuses on resources of

particular regional importance and show how fisheries will work with other programs, agencies, organizations, and stakeholders.

Exhibits: Funding for a Refuge System exhibit at the San Diego Zoo has been approved. More partners are coming on board as we aim for a March 13, 2004 opening. Watch for more on this upscale project that will set a new standard for FWS exhibits.

Congressional Directories: All employees should have received a copy of the *Congressional Directory for the 108th Congress*. If not, please contact Rusty Hare by email or at 503/231-6120.

Fast Answers: USA Services, a recently hired contractor, is now handling the 1/800-344-WILD phone line and responding to general fws.gov email to improve customer service associated with the Centennial.

Golden Eagle Passports

Golden Eagle Passports are an annual pass for entrance and parking fees for almost all public lands, including the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Forest Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and others. Purchasing a \$65 passport from a national wildlife refuge directly supports that refuge's visitor programs.


The following Pacific Region refuges are authorized to collect and spend these fees: Columbia, Deer Flat, Humboldt Bay, Kilauea Point, Klamath Basin, Mid-Columbia, Midway Atoll, Modoc, Nisqually, Ridgefield, Sacramento, Turnbull, and Willapa. Contact them, or Rebecca Halbe at 703/358-2365.

David Patte New ARD for External Affairs



David Patte admits he has always been a news and policy junkie fascinated by environmental issues. After completing graduate work in public administration and environmental policy, Patte joined the Service thirteen years ago. He worked in the Washington office budget division, eventually becoming chief of the region's budget and finance division before moving into Congressional Affairs in 2000. He has served as acting Assistant Regional Director for External Affairs for a year, an appointment recently made permanent by Regional Director David Allen.

"The last three years in External Affairs have been a fast-paced eye-opener" says Patte. "I've learned we must rely on far more than the news media to reach the public. We need to continue to improve our websites, exhibits, and outreach documents. We must redouble efforts to communicate at the community-level with kids, landowners, elected officials, Tribes, our partners and others. We must make better use of technology. And we must do this as a team through better listening and effective communication, and by offering assistance."

Patte takes his passion for nature home, where he enjoys hiking, biking, and bird watching. Studies in forestry have led him to Portland's Friends of Forest Park, where he serves as president to support the 5,000-acre park. Give David Patte a call with your ideas. You can reach him at 503/231-6120. 

It's All About Learning

Friends group staffs and steers the McNary NWR education center

By Naomi Sherer

Often, the experience and vision of a few people can inspire a following, and the birth of an entire organization.

The Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuges administers the McKay, Cold Springs, Toppenish, Umatilla and McNary Refuges in Washington and Oregon. More than thirty years ago, the Fish and Wildlife Service opened a viewing area at McNary to the public. Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society members explored nature with their children and led nature safaris around a wetland. Those dedicated naturalists dreamed and schemed with the refuge and in 1997 converted a former staff residence to an Education Center.

The refuge's early reputation with outdoor classrooms drew many enthusiastic volunteers to the program. One volunteer, Paula Clark, was curious when a colleague invited a member of the Wanapum Tribe to work with eighth grade students to create a full-size tule mat teepee. As Paula pierced the tule with a bitterbrush needle and wove the strings through mat after mat, somehow the strings got tangled around her heart.

Then and there we formed the Friends of Mid-Columbia River Wildlife Refuges to support the complex refuges. Under Clark's leadership we collaborated with the refuge staff, looking at the education program, and our goals and dreams beyond it. We surveyed other friends groups. Then we applied for nonprofit status, which took three months.

During the school year, the education program is our top priority. It is designed to provide teachers with vocabulary and experiences that meet Washington's Essential Learning Requirements. We are able to handle 60 students in each daily session, which are so popular that teachers register months in advance. At our annual Friends appreciation dinner, Project Leader Gary Hagedorn recently confessed "I don't worry about the Education Center," referring to the Friends. "It just runs itself."

Hagedorn has supported his Friends, sending two of us to the first annual National Friends Conference. He also came along to

get up to speed with the rest of us. Two days of meeting, greeting, and eating with scores of other friends groups brought to our attention the Friends Mentoring program sponsored by the Service and the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA). Within six months, mentor George Hoffman facilitated a workshop for our group and refuge staff. Some of the issues we focused on were Friends/staff communications and ways to increase Friends membership.

The enthusiasm of thirty-some volunteers has spilled over into many other projects. We applied for and received a startup grant from the NWRA allowing us to develop a logo and stationery; provide booths at a sportsmen's event and Bi-county Fair; and fund brochures, newsletters, and microscopes. We hosted the Centennial Caravan. We designed our own stamp cachet (a stamp collector's item consisting of an envelope with a McNary photo and an illustration) for a special second day of issue cancellation that we arranged with the Postal Service on March 26. We are also handling the nationwide sales of the Centennial commemorative blanket, which is allowing us to provide needed funding for other refuge projects. ■

Naomi Sherer is secretary and education director of the Friends of Mid-Columbia River Wildlife Refuges.

"I don't worry about the Education Center... It just runs itself."



Friends of Mid-Columbia River Wildlife Refuges

Friends help with special events and school programs at the McNary Education Center.

National Voice...

Continued from Page 1

"These grassroots efforts have helped secure record funding increases and requests, \$50 million for this year alone!"

members — into a national voice for refuges. Over the past eight years, the NWRA has helped build new friends groups and strengthen existing ones by providing resources and tools they can use to benefit local refuges and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The NWRA's objectives include:

- Providing friends groups with the information, training, and networking they need to make their efforts more effective;
- Training friends groups to become effective advocates and communicators with local and national decision-makers;
- Recognizing the valuable contributions of refuge employees and volunteers;
- Implementing combined policy, grassroots, and communications initiatives that draw national attention to critical issues, such as the Refuge System funding crisis and invasive species; and
- Addressing important issues and policies affecting individual refuges that may affect the broader system.

TRAINING AND NETWORKING

In early February 2003, the NWRA joined with the Service to host the Centennial Refuge Friends Conference in Washington, D.C. The conference attracted more than 370 refuge volunteers, staff, and supporters from 46 states and 121 refuges. This past year the Association also sponsored three regional workshops that covered subjects such as board development and advocacy.

The NWRA's RefugeNet website (www.refugenet.org) also offers a wealth of information on wide-ranging topics including advocacy, fundraising, grant opportunities, media and communications, and organizational development. The friends listserv provides an electronic forum where NWRA staff, friends, FWS employees, and others can post legislative updates, questions, announcements, or advice.



Printed on recycled paper

Illustration by David Bozsik



EDUCATING DECISION-MAKERS

Early this year, NWRA led nearly 200 friends group volunteers from all over the country to Capitol Hill, where they met with their legislators to promote a \$100 million Refuge System funding increase. Prior to the rally, the NWRA and CARE held advocacy-training sessions to educate participants about the budget and appropriations process, teach them to successfully deliver their message, and encourage them to develop stronger relationships with their members of Congress. These grassroots efforts have helped secure record funding increases and requests, \$50 million for this year alone!


HIGH IMPACT ISSUES

In October 2002, the NWRA released its report, *Silent Invasion*, which examines the harmful impacts of invasive species and urges Congress and the Administration to implement a five-year strategy to educate and mobilize volunteers, deploy rapid response strike teams, and implement the strategic management plan of the National Invasive Species Council.

The NWRA worked with friends at several refuges highlighted in the report to create op-eds for local and regional newspapers. The NWRA also secured \$1 million in federal funding to train volunteers to combat invasives.

AWARDS AND MEMBERSHIP

Finally, the Association recognizes the importance of celebrating the incredible contributions made each year by refuge professionals, friends, and volunteers. The NWRA shows its appreciation through the annual Refuge System awards program, jointly sponsored with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

If you are a refuge employee, volunteer, or friends member, the NWRA is your national organization. Join this dedicated group and help ensure that the Refuge System is even stronger in its next 100 years! Please don't hesitate to call our new director of friends and constituent outreach, Charles "Max" Schenk, at 202/333-9075. 

Evan Hirsche is the president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association.