

Turnbull Wildlife Refuge



Fall 2016 3rd Quarter

Friends of Turnbull N.W.R. Quarterly Report

Volume 19 Issue 3

Message from the President

Your Board has been busy preparing for the upcoming strategic planning meeting! Cheryl Hart and Tracy Casselman will be coming to mentor the board as we develop a plan, which will guide us over the next several years.

Cheryl served on the Board of Directors for the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, which is an urban refuge in the Portland, Oregon area. She has also presented at the Friend's Academy, held at the National Conservation Training Center. Tracy is the project leader for the Southeast Idaho Refuge Complex. The Southeast Idaho NWR Complex administers five units of the Refuge System: Camas, Grays Lake, Bear Lake, and Minidoka NWRs, and Oxford Slough WPA.

At the general meeting Lorna Kropp led the membership in an exercise where we discussed the following questions:

1. What do you appreciate about Turnbull NWR?
2. What do you like to do when you visit the refuge?
3. How do you volunteer? (tell stories)
4. What is your hope for Turnbull or public lands?

We have been tabulating the answers and will use them to help guide us. Lorna also sent out a mailchimp a few days ago. It contained these same four questions asked at the general meeting. If you didn't attend that meeting would you please take a few minutes to answer the questions and send your responses to Lorna via email: activities@fotnwr.org. The more information we have, the better we can put a plan in motion that represents the best of everyone's hopes and desires for the Friends of Turnbull. Thanks to all of you for your continued support.

Advocacy and Lobbying by Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

Advocacy: noun ad·vo·ca·cy \ˈad-və-kə-sē\ the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal : the act or process of advocating something. As a non-profit that supports a wildlife refuge, we have the ability to advocate for Turnbull and the Refuge System in general. There are many ways to do this.

Perhaps the simplest way is to tell family, friends and neighbors about Turnbull. Tell them why the Refuge is important to you! Take them for a visit and show them why you support one of the most beautiful places in Eastern Washington.

Lobbying: noun lob·by \ˈlə-bē\ : an organized group of people who work together to influence government decisions that relate to a particular industry, issue, etc.

As passionate and dedicated work to the National Wildlife Refuge System has been noticed by lawmakers in Washington. The Senate recognized the Friends organizations in a 2014 Resolution to commemorate National Wildlife Refuge Week as an important link to local communities."

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Friends of Turnbull Nature Store

Marian Frobe

We have 3 new Store Volunteers that have been trained or will be trained and 2 of them are already helping out by filling those difficult summer slots when everyone seems to be out of town. Our Volunteer Coordinator, Lizzie Riesenber, has done the training for the 2 gentlemen that joined us in July, and one person volunteered at our August Annual Meeting, so she has yet to be trained as of this writing. Deanna, the Volunteer Services person, is now gone for the season. Many of our sales resulted from her efforts.

Our profit through August is \$966.93, but September and October will increase our profit and I do not anticipate more expense except for the credit card fees, unless something vital needs reordering. It is difficult to guess what will sell best in any given year. I reordered some of the Sierra Club Trail Guides as #1 was down to one and those are popular, and the patches and a few books were also expensed in July. A few more book titles are now out of stock, but I may wait until the spring to bring our stock up to date. It seems like T-shirts have sold well, as well as sweatshirts this year, but I haven't compared those to prior years yet. We have one month before the store closes for the year at the end of October. We will, however, be open during Winterfest on December 3rd.

If you would like to volunteer to help out at the store, please call me, Marian Frobe, at 328-0621 or at rrfrobe@msn.com; or Lizzie Riesenber at 991-2604 or lizzieries@gmail.com. Or check the "I want to volunteer" box on your membership form and we will contact you.

Essential to the Refuge System are good laws and adequate funding. Friends organizations must lobby Congress on these issues if they are to continue to thrive.

Did you know that Refuge Friends and volunteers contribute 1.4 million hours annually to refuges? That is the equivalent of more than 700 full-time employees! Friends host refuge events, manage nature stores, aid in habitat restoration projects, and assist with countless other activities. Lobbying our congressional leaders is another way to help the Refuge. Congress listens to and values our input. We help to inform them on how they can help their local refuges and the National Wildlife Refuge System. Your voice is one of the most powerful tools available to enhance your local refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System as a whole — so don't be afraid to use it! You can write or email our Representatives at the following addresses:

Maria Cantwell

Email: <http://www.cantwell.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-maria> or write:
920 W. Riverside Avenue, Suite 697
Spokane, WA 99201

Patty Murray

email: <http://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contactme> or write:
10 North Post Street, Suite 600
Spokane, Washington 99201

Cathy McMorris-Rogers

10 North Post Street, Suite 625
Spokane, WA 99201

by Molly Zammit, President

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Visit our great website!
www.fotnwr.org

Activities Report

Lorna Kropp

News Flash:

We have been given a date for a Members and friends "Night Hike on the Refuge." Join us on Wednesday evening, October 12, 2016 at 6:00 pm in the parking lot outside of the Classroom building. We will get a chance to do the Night Hike with an Environmental Education staffer. This is a very hands-on and other senses-on experience that you will not forget! We will hike through the various habitats of the refuge, use our sense of smell, try out echolocation, listen for, and maybe call in wildlife, plus, if the night is clear, be able to do star gazing.

When: October 12, Wednesday evening; 6:00 pm to 8:30 -pm

Led by: Refuge Environmental Education staff

Where: Meet outside the Refuge Classroom building

Preparation: Dress for the weather, wear comfortable shoes, bring along water

Sign-up through Eventbrite - 16-18 spots (free event –but need to sign up)

Mark your calendars for the Winter Fest on December 3, 2016

This annual event features an interesting program; van tours of the closed areas of the Refuge; the 3rd Annual Chili Contest (winner gets to tickets to the Wild Refuge Dinner and Auction on March 11, 2017).

Support the Refuge Fall Planting Day on October 15. Join in the digging fun and then bring along a dish to go with the hamburgers/hotdogs provided by Friends of Turnbull after working.

WinterFest, Dec. 3, Birds of Winter program and our 3rd Annual Chili Contest. See page 4 for details.

Needed: 2-3 volunteers to serve on the Friends of Turnbull Activities Committee. Our goal is to have 1 activity during the active outdoor months of March – October, for both members and the general public. The committee will brainstorm ideas and then divide up the work to make arrangements. Join in and plan some informative and fun activities for next year.

Contact Lorna Kropp (activities@fotnwr.org) or Molly Zammit (president@fotnwr.org).

For activities or other information you would like to let Lorna know about, here is the link: fotnwr.org/activities.html

Welcome to Nancy Curry our New Board Member

Nancy J. Curry is a graduate of Washington State University with a B.S. in Wildlife Biology, 1976. She retired as a wildlife refuge manager with the D. O. I., U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in 2009 after 30 years with national wildlife refuges, and two years with U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, one with U.S. Forest Service, Quinault Ranger District and one with Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Olympia, WA. As a refuge manager Nancy worked in three regions, Mid-West, Southwest and Pacific Northwest. Her experience included working on migratory bird refuges, waterfowl production areas, wintering refuges, and marine bird refuges. As part of her management duties she held credentials as a wildlife refuge officer. Stations at which she was assigned besides Turnbull NWR included Dungeness and Protection Island NWR's, WA, Cibola NWR, AZ/CA, DeSoto NWR, IA/NE, Litchfield Wetland Management District (WMD), MN, Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Cassville District, WI. Since retirement she has served on the board of the Inland NW Land Trust, and volunteered for Conservation NW, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, Colville National Forest doing wolf monitoring and as a campground host, and U.S.F.W.S. Turnbull NWR conducting songbird point count surveys.

WinterFest

Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

(26010 S. Smith Rd., 4 miles south of Cheney)



The BIRDS OF WINTER

Some birds fly south for the winter, some simply change elevation, and some are year-round residents. Which ones can we enjoy all year round?



Chili Contest!

You are invited to be a part of the 3rd Annual Winterfest Chili Contest. Bring us a slowcooker filled with your favorite chili to share by 10:00 a.m. on December 3. Lunch starts at 12:00 and the judging will be held at 1:00. The three categories are “**Regular**,” **Vegetarian**, and **Wild Game**. List the major ingredients on a 3 x 5 card with your name, address, and phone number. The prize? Bragging rights to the best chili at Turnbull and a pair of tickets to the Turnbull Auction to be held on March 11, 2017.



Wildlife Tours
Restricted Refuge areas
9:00 and 1:00

Who are the
Birds of Winter?
11:00 - 12:00

Chili Feast
Pasta dishes, Tea, Coffee
12:00

Two tours to restricted Refuge areas will be led by Chief Wildlife Biologist, Mike Rule. Reservations can be made through eventbrite.com. Go to our website (FOTNWR) to find the link for registering for the Winterfest Tours on the Activities page. If you don't have access to the internet please call Joanne at 509-999-2090.

Friends of Turnbull store open - great Christmas gifts!
Selected items at reduced prices

Celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week



*with a Community Work Day
at Turnbull National
Wildlife Refuge!*



Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, Spokane Audubon Society and Friends of Turnbull will host a community work party on Saturday, October 15, 2016. This is part of an ongoing community effort to restore native riparian habitat to benefit birds and other wildlife species. We have hundreds of native saplings to plant and fencing to erect to protect the trees from deer, elk and moose browsing.

Attention Groups: Please **call in advance to register**. It helps us in our planning if we know how many are coming. The Refuge will also host a “potluck” lunch. Please feel free to bring your favorite dish. Ask for Sandy (509) 235-4723 ext. 228.

Planting Time: 9 am to 12 p.m.

When: Saturday, October 15, 2016

Lunch: Potluck 12 p.m. (Friends of Turnbull will supply the hamburgers)

Where: Turnbull NWR Headquarters, 5 miles south of Cheney on Cheney-Plaza Road: turn left on Smith Road and drive 2 miles on gravel road to headquarters.

Clothing: Long-sleeved shirt, work pants, gloves, sturdy boots or shoes.

Equipment: (If you can) shovels and pliers.

Everyone is Welcome!



Refuge Happenings

by Sandy Rancourt
Visitor Services Manager

The last time I wrote an article for the FOT's newsletter, the Refuge landscape was bursting with color. It is amazing just how quickly everything dries up during the summer. As I write, we have been very fortunate at the Refuge to not experience any wildfires. Here's hoping that pattern holds until the wet, cold weather arrives. Regardless of heat, refuge staff and volunteers have kept very busy and much has been accomplished through everyone's efforts.

Riparian Restoration

Potting Project with Salish School

It is always a pleasure when the Salish School comes to the refuge. After helping us plant milkweed seedlings for monarch butterflies in April, the School returned in June to help us pot bare root native seedlings for future plantings. Lead Science Specialist Dominique Wiley-Camacho and several teachers brought 10 students to work on this project. Refuge staff involved included Mike Rule, myself, and AmeriCorps interns Michael Plegman. AmeriCorps member Colton Hodgson and Student Conservation Association (SCA) Brandon Panensky also lent a hand

when they returned from an outreach program off refuge. Together we potted over 130 seedlings. Our hats go off again to the young Salish School students whose enthusiasm to work on refuge habitat restoration projects never fails to amaze us.



Enthusiastic and still smiling after a long day of potting. (S. Rancourt)

Eagle Scout Potting Project

Eagle Scout candidate Zach Withers from BSA Troop 418 organized a crew of over 20 scouts and their parents to finish potting the remaining bare root seedlings. Zach did a great job managing his crew. He instructed them on mixing the soil, potting techniques and placement of pots in the nursery. Zach and his troop potted several hundred black hawthorne, willow and aspen seedlings. The outcome of the potting project will provide vital riparian habitat for songbirds and other wildlife. The saplings are thriving now that they are out of the bags and potted so well.



Salish School students worked exceptionally well together on the potting project. (S. Rancourt)



Eagle Scout candidate Zach Withers (center) instructs scouts on mixing the right potting medium for the seedlings. (S. Rancourt)



Watering all those potted saplings is an important component of the potting project. (S. Rancourt)

Monarchs & Milkweed

YMCA

Six YMCA Earth Service Corps led by Outside the Box Site Director Joy Schneider came out to Turnbull in mid-July to participate in another refuge milkweed planting. Instead of maintaining the mowed lawn at headquarters, we have decided to let the native bunch grasses grow wild. Adding some milkweed and other native flora in front should help beautify the area in the coming years and help out the pollinators as well. Mike provided a great talk on monarchs and milkweed, and I talked to them about Turnbull and the National Wildlife Refuge System. They also got the

opportunity to tour our EE building and get a close up look at the taxidermy mounts and live specimens. It was an extremely hot day to plant, and the soil was rockier than we thought it would be, so fortunately our 2 AmeriCorps members Michael and Colton were with us to get a lot of seedlings into the ground. With everyone's effort, we planted over 300 milkweed seedlings in support of the monarch butterfly initiative.



YMCA Earth Service Corps (S. Rancourt)

Environmental Education & Outreach

Environmental Education

We finished up with another great field trip season. Schools are often sending more than one class out per day to reduce transportation costs. Having 3 classes out for a field trip during a day is rapidly becoming the norm. This means additional help is needed from our long term refuge volunteers to assist our AmeriCorps and SCA interns to facilitate these larger classes. Fran Haywood, Rachel Rule, Linda Long, and Chuck Kerkering were regular facilitators this spring which made hosting the larger groups even possible.

EE Facilities

YCC (Youth Conservation Corps) & the Backyard Fence

Four teens participating in the YCC Program were hired to work 40 hours/week during the summer for an 8-week period. This is a great deal for these youths who get incredible experience at a beautiful location. It is also a great deal for us. The crew led by Kadeem Smalls completed quite a few projects including; old building removal, constructing picnic tables, and fence construction. Over the past few years, we have been making great strides to improve our EE building and its surrounding grounds. As I mentioned in a previous article, individuals in the Master Hunter Program did an exceptional job landscaping the back of this building last year. However, adjacent to the landscaped area in the back of the classroom, is a very active ground squirrel colony meaning lots of holes. Since there wasn't a clear distinction between where the classes line up in the back of the classroom and the colony, students sometimes wandered into the adjacent field. This was not only a safety concern but also disturbed our neighboring wildlife and habitat. This year's YCC crew built a beautiful wooden, split rail fence that now separates the classes from the colony.



YCC's fence behind the EE building. (S. Rancourt)

One aspect of the YCC's tenure is having a weekly environmental education component. We had the crew out on one of our MAPS (Monitoring Avian Production and Survivorship) days, and this year they stayed with us for a full day. We caught an abundance and variety of birds which provided a unique hands-on experience for the kids.



EE AmeriCorps intern Colton Hodgson talking about plant adaptations on the nature hike (S Rancourt)



SCA EE intern Brandon Panensky (S. Rancourt)



Rachel leading a field trip (S. Rancourt)



Turnbull's YCC crew (s. Rancourt)

Pollinator Display Box Holders

It's has taken a couple of years of searching to find a volunteer to build display box holders for our pollinator cases so that they could be mounted in the EE classroom. The boxes were built by Kevin Durland in the Master Hunter Program in 2012. Gary Carver who was recruited in May to monitor a bluebird nest box trail also has some fine carpentry skills and so of course he was asked if he wanted to take on this project which he accepted. Not only did he do a great job monitoring bluebird boxes, the final box holders was a job well done. Take a look the next time you are in the classroom.



Rolling up a mist net after a great day of banding (S. Rancourt)



Gary Carver built 2 box holders to mount the pollinator cases. (S. Rancourt)

John Ivie proudly displays his creation. (S. Rancourt)

Cougar Mount

To help conserve space in our classroom a new spot was made for the cougar mount. Last year, Master Hunters Jim Gladden and Wayne Ward constructed a platform to house the cougar mount in the rafters. Something was still missing, so we contracted John Ivie from Ivie Interpretive to build a very realistic basalt ridge out of foam and mount it on the platform. John just returned recently to add the finishing touches on the basalt and mounted the cougar on the basalt foundation. He adjusted the color of the rock and added mosses and lichens. It's a very nice addition to our classroom.



Fond Farewells

AmeriCorps and SCA Interns

Our two AmeriCorps members Michael Ploegman and Colton Hodgson completed their 10.5 month of service at the end of July. Michael's service was in the biological program, and Colton's service was in EE. Fortunately, Colton will be returning for a 2nd term in mid-September. Unfortunately for us, however, Michael Ploegman is now past the WSC age requirement for Individual Placement. Michael's service was exemplary, and he will be missed. We also were fortunate to have 3 SCA interns this spring and summer. Brandon Panensky was an EE facilitator and Emma Charlet and Shelby Hunter were SCA Conservation Interns in the biological program.



**A farewell party for our AmeriCorps members.
(S. Rancourt)**



**SCA interns (Left to Right) Emma Charlet and Shelby Hunter
(S. Rancourt)**

Visitor Service Volunteers

Where would we be without our Visitor Service Volunteers? RV volunteers Bob Michaels and Deanna and Joe Veilleux returned for another very productive year. Soon they will be heading south. Wonderful folks to work with, we are all hoping they will want to return in the spring. Bob did his usual magic including all the custodial work that no one else wants to tackle. I can't stress the importance of this enough. Besides maintaining the vault toilets and public restroom facility, Bob also maintained a pristine lawn at all the environmental education sites, weed whacked, watered our milkweed seedlings, and recycled. Deanna provided great assistance to refuge staff and Friends of Turnbull. She answered phones and provided information to the public several days /week. Our phone lines were fried by lightning over 2 months ago so the staff has to share a hands free phone. Deanna always makes an effort to make sure we get our calls which has been very much appreciated. She also did an outstanding job organizing and inventorying the volunteer storage room and has been keeping very busy on many other projects including; digitizing slides, assisting with entrance fee accounting and opening the FOT nature store 3 days during the week. Her husband Joe has been instrumental in assisting the refuge maintenance staff. RV volunteers are only required to work 20 hours /week. Joe, however, puts in long days often volunteering 40/ week rather than the 20 hour requirement. He has done a multitude of projects including assisting with training workshops, installation of fence, road maintenance, invasive species control, and helping out with a private lands project. All our visitor service volunteers take a huge amount of initiative. If they see something that needs to be done, they tackle it without asking.

Biological Program

This summer was a very productive one for the biological program. Our big emphasis this year was to revisit the over 100 pine and aspen landbird point count stations and measure the habitat characteristics for comparison with a data set collected 20 years ago. As we look at the trend in the relative abundance of different bird species collected over the years by staff and volunteers, changes in habitat could be a factor in the trends we are observing. The habitat data we collected this summer will go a long ways to answering some of these questions. We were able to hire Dustin Cousin, a past 2-term AmeriCorps, as a temporary biological technician after his return from a 2-year stint in the Peace Corps in Africa. Dustin took the lead in conducting the point count measurements with the help of AmeriCorps member Michael Ploegman and 2 SCA interns, Emma Charlet from Spokane Community College and Shelby Hunter from Eastern Washington University. Along with staff members Mike and Sandy, point count volunteers included Marian and Russell Frobe, Kim Thorburn, Nancy Curry, Craig Corder, Lisa Langelier, Nancy Curry, and Tim O'Brien. For the 5th year we conducted bee monitoring in different habitats of the refuge. For the past 2 years, we have been collecting bees in the different forest restoration sites to compare different thinning and prescribed fire treatments. To see a sample of the native bees collected on the refuge, look at the new pollinator displays in the classroom. Following a training session by past weed surveying contractor and volunteer Rachel Rule, the summer field crew also conducted

Mike Rule, Refuge Biologist

invasive plant surveys of several refuge management units including a new acquisition off Mullinix Road. These surveys help us assess the level of invasion and target control strategies. Michael Ploegman has been keeping up with the biweekly water level monitoring in the larger managed wetlands. Although we saw better than expected recovery this spring from last year's drought, we were still below operating levels. We have seen an almost 60% drop (>2 feet) in most of the wetlands that only receive runoff from rain and snow melt. We do have good news on the wetland front. Thanks to monitoring work by EWU graduate students, we know that wetlands that held populations of invasive fish last year and went dry last summer, are still fishless this summer. Let's hope they stay that way for a while. We had another excellent songbird banding year. Marian and Russell Frobe, again provided Mike and Sandy exceptional assistance with extracting birds, processing and recording all the information needed on the correct forms. Rachel Rule helped us to both extract, process and band birds on several occasions. This experienced help was much appreciated because of the higher than average captures we experienced this year. We captured more than 30 birds on all but 1 day for a total of 139 birds representing 27 species.

All of our bluebird box trails were monitored at least every 2 weeks all summer with the help of several volunteers. Don and Cathy Richter, Jerry Hickman, Charmaine Gural, Gary Carver, Jim Newberry, Nicole Simon and the River Day School students, and the refuge summer field crew.



AmeriCorps member Michael Ploegman extracting a songbird from a mist net. (S. Rancourt)



Rachel Rule processing one of the few cedar waxwings captured this summer at the MAPS station. (S. Rancourt)



Mike with a beautiful male American Goldfinch (S. Rancourt)



Belted Kingfisher © Mark Boyd

Late Summer/Fall Wildlife Observations

Mike Rule

Although late winter precipitation and spring rains partially recharged many refuge wetlands for the spring nesting season, the hot dry summer resulted in significant drying of refuge wetlands. Most seasonal wetlands were dry by July and mudflats began to show—up in many of the larger permanent wetlands by mid-August. Fortunately the 2 swan pairs that nested on the refuge this year are using wetlands that are holding up pretty well. At last count the pair in Cheever Lake had 3 cygnets and the pair in McDowell Lake across from the main entrance had 2 cygnets. They should be ready to fly by the end of the month.

We completed a recent banding day to check on the status of the fall songbird migration, We caught a over 30 birds representing 13 species. Warblers are definitely on the move. We banded 6 species of including; Wilson's, Nashville, MacGillivray's, common yellowthroats, orange –crowned and an Audubon's . Wilson's warblers were the highlight of

the day with 16 banded. We also banded hermit and Swainson's thrushes both migrants and a couple of striking Lincoln's sparrows. The star of the day in my opinion was a recaptured Bewick's wren in brand new winter plumage. Some might disagree and cite the spectacular bull moose that we scared up during one of our net runs and ran by the banding station.

A belted kingfisher has been observed fishing on Pine Creek below HQ. They can't eat enough of the invasive brook stickleback.

Sure signs that fall is here are everywhere to be seen. Flocks of migrating waterfowl are moving through the area, aspen groves are alive with songbirds, and bull elk have been heard bugling in the early morning hours. Our first hard frost came and deciduous trees and shrubs are starting to turn every shade of red, orange, yellow and gold. It is a beautiful time of year to visit the refuge.



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