

Turnbull Wildlife Refuge



Spring 2018 1st Quarter

Friends of Turnbull N.W.R. Quarterly Report

Volume 20 Issue 33

The Nature Store's New System

by Lorna Kropp

The Friends of Turnbull NWR Nature Store transformations have been one year in the making. The new system includes a Square POS (Point of Sale) iPad in a stand, a chip reader, and receipt printer, plus an Internet connection via HughesNet Satellite service. Your Nature Store purchases are now much more secure, faster, less errors, and the Square system works directly with our bank and our Quickbooks. The store inventory has been entered into the online app as well, so Priscilla Bowen, our store manager, gets updates regularly regarding low stock. We have taken an enormous step into the modern world and have needed to learn and grow a bit ourselves. And, yes, please have patience with us as we work out the bugs, and find the best ways to use our new tools.



Our Nature Store has always been volunteer-run. The Nature Store is open on weekends from 11am – 4pm. We have 2 shifts each day, 4 shifts each weekend and 16 shifts each month. We are welcoming new volunteers; so far Lorna has held 3 training sessions for volunteers. The next one will be in the morning of May 19, 2018.



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Friends of Turnbull Nature Store

Priscilla Bowen

Hello from the Nature Store. Hooray, the store is really open. It has been an interesting couple of months trying to get everything worked out.

The store looks different this year. New merchandise has been introduced. The store has been reconfigured some, not as much as I had hoped, but it does look pretty good. There are new displays and new fixtures. Presentation of some items has also been changed.

So far there have been many positive responses. As you visit the store, please let the person volunteering know what you think of the changes. I am always looking for suggestions. Suggestions for new merchandise and other concerns are welcome and helpful. Please send comments or drop into the store.

We are always hoping for more volunteers to work in the store. It is a fun experience and our customers are very appreciative of the purpose of the store. The store can't be open without the assistance of our volunteers.

Speaking of the volunteers, if for some reason you can't cover a shift you have signed up for please call me, Priscilla, at 509-954-6899. Leave a message if I don't answer. If possible, I will cover your shift or find someone who can. When we miss a shift the customers get discouraged.

Our sales have been very good so far this year. We've already sold \$896.56 in merchandise. That is from just three weekends Sales have been in all categories and that is very encouraging. At this rate, I will need to replace sold-out items. Hopefully our readers will make a trip to the store and check it out. Please let your friends know about the refuge and specifically about the Nature Store.

Best wishes to you all and thank you for your encouragement.



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Visit our great website!
www.fotnwr.org

Activities Report

Lorna Kropp

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

Spring, yeah, SPRING will show up soon! The Friends of Turnbull NWR has been busy getting ready for the new outdoor season. We have several ways for you to get involved, join with other environmental, wildlife advocates, and meet new people. Here are some ideas for you to choose from --

1. Make a trip to the Refuge on a week-end day and check out the fresh new displays and POS system in the Nature Store, open from 11:00 am – 4:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Priscilla Bowen has worked very hard with her gifted retail sense to re-arrange shelves and add new display features, plus some new items in the store.
2. Getting Internet into the Nature Store has finally been accomplished!! It took nearly a year of research and negotiations with several parties. A satellite for Hughesnet service was installed on the side of the Refuge administration building on March 21. Thanks to help from Satellite Professionals, the Refuge Manager, Alice Hanley and staff, the new system is working and making purchases in the Nature Store faster and more secure.
3. Sign-up for a shift at the Friends of Turnbull Booth at MayFest in Downtown Cheney on May 12. We will be giving out Bird Migration Stickers, information about FOT and the Refuge, and encouraging kids to play a game about Bird Migration or try out the “Touch Table.” There will also be activities at the Refuge and also the Refuge Environmental Educators will be making “Tracks” near us in downtown Cheney. If you can’t volunteer, please come by and enjoy the activities.
4. The very popular Beginning Bird Watching Classes, which we co-sponsor with Spokane Audubon Society, for 3 sessions on the first Saturday in April, May and June were completely subscribed within two weeks of setting up the registrations on Eventbrite! In case you missed out on signing up, you can take advantage of the FFF activities on the Refuge on May 12 at the Refuge.
5. Are you a photographer? An artist? Do you know someone who could share a photograph from the Refuge? We need to re-energize the Friends of Turnbull Fund-raising committee. You may have missed having the Wild Refuge Auction this year. We are gathering people who can serve on a committee to plan a Fall fund-raiser. Our fund-raising supports the Environmental Education Interns at the Refuge. Supporting Friends of Turnbull is

a win-win for 8000 children and youth in our region, for the Refuge and for the young educators who gain valuable experience in their chosen field!

6. The FOT Board is recruiting a Membership leader and committee members to help out. The Membership committee keeps the member list up to date (an excel spreadsheet) and sends out welcome letters and renewal letters (email and snailmail) for the annual membership renewal drive in June. Willing members should call Lorna Kropp or email her: activities@fotnwr.org
7. Why be a Friends of Turnbull NWR member? Did you know that there are Friends groups in many other refuges as well, including the other refuges in our region? You are supporting a refuge for animals and plants; you are supporting a great place to observe and learn about the web of life, animals, birds, habitats and our corner of earth. You are supporting an engaging classroom where children, youth and adults can learn about and come to respect our environment and how to preserve and protect it for future generations. You are supporting both animals and our learning by raising funds, donating to our Friends group support for the Environmental Interns who carry out this mission through the Refuge Environmental Education program. Your membership, your donations all support the mission of the Friends of Turnbull NWR. Please renew your membership for the 2018-2019 membership year. You can do that securely on the website through Paypal. Membership year is July 1 – June 30. If your active membership has been renewed in the last several months, your membership has been applied to the 2018-2019 year.
8. The webmaster (Lorna Kropp) is also working on revisions to the website to make it more “responsive” to mobile devices. Watch for the new format by June.
9. During our March FOT Board Meeting, we had the opportunity to hear the Sprague High School FFA group make a presentation about Fire Management on the Refuge. Several staff members joined us for the presentation by the high school students who are preparing to compete at the state level with a Pro/Con Agriculture Issue. They had chosen wildfires as their issue this year. We were able to give some helpful feedback and were impressed with their research and professional presentation.
10. Lots of choices for involvement – pick out a couple and join in the Fun at your Refuge!!



Refuge Happenings

by Sandy Rancourt
Visitor Services Manager

Although we are no longer hosting a community planting event in May, a few restoration projects were completed in early spring. Past spring planting efforts have had mixed results from early drying that often requires watering plantings into the summer growing season. These smaller projects have more flexibility with regards to timing, and they can be targeted to smaller areas where the potential for early drying is not as much of an issue.

Greenheart Exchange – Riparian Restoration Project

Mike Rule, the Refuge Biologist, AmeriCorps members Hans Lohmeyer and Michael Ploegman, and I had the pleasure of working with a group of exchange students and their host families on Saturday March 24th on a riparian restoration project on the Refuge. The Greenheart Exchange mission of connecting people and planet to create global leaders is a very adequate description of this organization based on our annual interaction with the group. This year was no different. Despite a very cold, snowy, and windy day the group was very engaged. After visiting the Environmental Education Classroom and learning about the Turnbull, the National Wildlife Refuge System and riparian management, we took them out to the Collin Leach Memorial Restoration site and planted quite a few native trees. It was actually perfect planting conditions. Although there was a couple of inches of snow on the ground, the ground was not frozen. We hit water in many of the holes so watering was not a problem. Fifteen aspen trees were also donated to the Refuge due to the groups' efforts of successfully competing for a mini grant. Merle Barr, a very dedicated individual and the groups' leader, has been bringing exchange students annually to the refuge for the past 10 years. Merle delegated Paulius Šiaučiukėnas, a very polite and responsible young man from Lithuania, to coordinate with me on this year's project. He did an outstanding job.



Greenheart Exchange (S. Rancourt)



Zoe Ruchti and Paulius breaking ground. (S. Rancourt)



**WSC AmeriCorps Hans Lohmeyer helping Airim from Mexico prepping a site.
(S. Rancourt)**



**Mike and Greenheart volunteers
(S. Rancourt)**



**WSC AmeriCorps Michael Ploegman and Trinity get ready to plant a tree.
(S. Rancourt)**

Spring Waterfowl Surveys

The refuge has been conducting several road and walking surveys in the spring to document and monitor waterfowl migration through the Scablands. This initiative will help identify important migration habitat in the Scablands to increase awareness of its value to the Pacific flyway and direct habitat protection efforts. Additional surveys are being conducted in Adams, Lincoln and Whitman counties, and state waterfowl biologists have been conducting aerial surveys. Refuge area surveys have been completed with the assistance of refuge staff, AmeriCorps members Hans and Michael, and volunteers Marian and Russell Frobe and Kim Thorburn.



Mallards in Flight
©Robert M Griffith

Bluebird Nest Box Eagle Scout Project

Soren Bates, from BSA Troop 323, built an astonishing 80 bluebird nest boxes for the refuge as part of his Eagle Scout requirement. Some of these boxes will also be given to the Refuge's Friends group who give out free bluebird boxes for memberships received at the nature store. Not only did Soren build a large number of bluebird boxes, the quality of the boxes was exceptional. The boxes were all made of cedar and very well crafted which will last for years. Soren did an excellent job organizing and leading his troop on this project, getting the materials needed from donations and completing his project quickly. The end result was an exceptional product.



Eagle Scout candidate Soren Bates.
(S. Rancourt)



Soren delivering his project. (S. Rancourt)

Environmental Education & Outreach

~ Environmental Education ~

Cheney High School Environmental Education and Stewardship Program

We wrapped up our busy Winter Outreach Program in April and dived right into our packed Spring Field Trip Program on April 10th and 11th starting with the Cheney High School Environmental Education and Stewardship Project, our largest EE program of the year for the 14th year running. A great deal of prep work goes into this program that is run differently than our normal spring field trips. The sheer size of the group over a 2-day span requires considerable planning, site preparation, different field booklets and the coordination of volunteers and partners to pull it off. Although our preference is to have this group out in the fall when wetlands and Pine Creek are at not at their fullest and the weather is usually more cooperative, it turned out to be a great 2 days with the students. Three hundred sixty sophomore biology students planted over 100 native trees, caught, identified and quantified aquatic invertebrates and conducted water quality studies. The students are rotated through 3 different stations during the day providing them great experiential learning opportunities that ties everything together. We partnered once again with Spokane Conservation District (SCD). Stacey Selcho and Seth Flanders from SCD conducted the water quality station. Refuge Biologist, Mike Rule, led the riparian restoration station, and I led my favorite activity, aquatic invertebrate studies. We had, of course, great assistance from AmeriCorps members Michael Ploegman, Hans Lohmeyer, and Jennifer McGovern, EE Contractor Kylie Gaard, Brian Walker, long term refuge volunteers Marian and Russell Frobe, Linda Long, Chuck Kerkering, and Diane Latta, and new volunteer recruits Sarah Valverde and Ruby Smith.



Mike Rule explaining the riparian restoration project to students. (S. Rancourt)



Marian (center) and her husband Russell (not pictured) have helped with CHS stewardship project for the past 15 years. (S. Rancourt)



SCD Seth Flanders and Stacey Selcho discussing water quality. (S. Rancourt)



Testing deeper waters... (S. Rancourt)



Sarah (far left) and Chuck (background) checking out the student's catch. (S. Rancourt)



All smiles and some "awesome" from students navigating at the aquatic site. (S. Rancourt)

Monarchs & Milkweed

We recently formed a new stewardship partnership at the middle school level with Spokane Public Montessori. To get this rolling, Mike and I met with middle school teacher Krista Rollins to discuss possible refuge environmental education stewardship projects. Mike and I visited the school in February and provided presentations for 40, 7-8th grade students. Students learned about the refuge and national wildlife refuge system, pollinators, monarchs and milkweed. To start their first project, we provided milkweed seed for them to grow in their classroom. The students are planning to visit Turnbull in June to plant around 50 milkweed seedlings they grew for their class project.



Monarch photo provided by Tom Munson.

Field Trip Training Workshop

A 2-day field trip workshop was conducted for EE staff and new volunteer recruits on April 16 and 18. Participants included Linda Long, Chuck Kerkering, Dianne Latta, Jennifer McGovern, Sarah Valverde, and Ruby Smith. I have to say, I don't remember ever providing a field trip training in the kind of weather that we experienced on the 16th. It was frigid, snowy and very windy. The weather certainly provided for great visual effects, especially when I was talking about the ice age floods. It certainly felt like we had travelled back to a distant time... The snowsqualls did not relent and peaked by the time we reached Middle Pine Lake. Fortunately, we have very dedicated environmental education volunteers

at Turnbull. What would we do without them? Everybody was a good trooper and stuck it out to the finish. Although the sun was slow presenting itself on Wednesday for the aquatic invertebrate training, at least the day ended with some bright sunshine and warmer weather. Although the wetlands are deep and very cold still, we captured a diversity of aquatic invertebrates and finished up with a beautiful water scorpion.



New EE recruits Ruby Smith & Sarah Valverde and long term refuge volunteer Chuck Kerkering having fun with aquatics. (S. Rancourt)



Last but not least - a lovely water scorpion to end our day. (S. Rancourt)

~ Outreach ~

The Refuge participated in several science fairs during the winter months including: Sunrise, Holmes, Moran Prairie, Longfellow, Trentwood, and Otis Orchards Elementary Schools' Science and Technology Science Fairs. We also hosted an

information booth at Gonzaga University Service Learning Fair where the AmeriCorps members got an opportunity to mingle with peers and spread the word on the different refuge programs and WSC AmeriCorps.



AmeriCorps members Hans and Jennifer staffing Turnbull's booth at Holmes Elementary Science Fair (S. Rancourt)

2018 Refuge Photo Contest

Turnbull hosted its 2nd photo contest highlighting refuge wildlife and habitats. Christine Haines snapped the winning photo of 2 Great Horned owlets last spring. Her amazing photo will be featured on the 2018 Annual Refuge Pass. It is not too late. Wildflowers are just starting to blossom. If you love the outdoors and photography, visit our [photo contest web page](#) for information on how to participate in this year's contest.



Floods, Flowers and Feathers Festival

As most of you know, we have been extremely busy gearing up for the big event which is just around the corner. This will be the refuge's 7th year for the Festival and 3rd year of partnering with the MayFest folks. We have been coordinating both our events to fall on the same day to provide informative, educational, and fun activities. Please check out the [Refuge website](#) for more information. If you are interested in participating in one or more of the activities that will be hosted at the refuge, visit the [FFF webpage](#), on Turnbull's website for [additional information on the day's events, registration](#) and [how to register on line](#). Several of the refuge partners will also be hosting informative and interactive booths in downtown Cheney. All of our partners put up very nice booths to engage the public. This is a free event, so enjoy the day on us.

Turnbull NWR/Cheney MayFest
May 12, 2018

**Floods,
Flowers,
and Feathers**

MayFest Activities-Cheney
Booths and Displays:
(10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

- Ducks Unlimited
- EWU - snyaminout Residence Hall
- EWU Biology Dept.
- Friends of Turnbull
- Ice Age Floods Institute, Cheney-Spokane Chapter
- National Park Service
- Spokane County Water Resources
- Turnbull NWR Animal Tracks
- West Plains Beekeepers
- ...and many more!

Turnbull NWR Activities
(8 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

- Bird & Wildflower Walks
- Bird Banding Demonstration
- Bluebird Nest Box - Walk & Talk
- Can You Find That Bird? Scavenger Hunt
- EWU - mosquito/tick activity
- EWU - Nature walk with demonstration of refuge small mammals
- Fire Fighting Demonstration
- Ice Age Floods Institute Geology Tour
- Live Birds of Prey
- Photography Talk
- Pond Life

All activities are free
Details/Times: www.fws.gov/refuge/turnbull



Wildlife Observations

Mike Rule

The first ticks were picked up on February 9. This has got to be a record. Tick season is now in full swing, so check your clothes and dogs carefully and stay on the trails.

The first Columbia ground squirrel was observed above ground on March 7.

A varied thrush was first seen on April 9.

Several bald eagles have been observed throughout the area this winter and early spring.

The first western bluebird was observed on March 11, a bit later than average.

A male cinnamon teal was observed, and the first reported Virginia rail was heard on March 19.

Eighteen black-necked stilts were observed out at Stubblefield Lake just last week.

River Otters have been observed on Winslow and Middle Pine Lake on several occasions this spring since the ponds opened up.

Swan Update.

The family group from last year has been observed frequently this spring following break up. All four cygnets made it through the winter. They have been in the company of another pair and a few single adult trumpeters in the Pine Creek wetlands. The pairs have recently become more territorial running off the younger birds from their nesting wetlands. Unfortunately, we found an adult female swan dead below Middle Pine Lake just a few weeks ago. This bird may have been part of a refuge nesting pair as we saw a lone swan on several days flying up and down Pine Creek calling. She had been well scavenged so determining the cause of death was not possible. Let's keep our fingers crossed that she wasn't part of the very reliable Cheever Lake pair. No other swan mortality has been observed on the refuge.

Spring Waterfowl Surveys

Large numbers of northern pintails, American wigeon, mallards, common mergansers and tundra swans were observed in late March and early April utilizing the numerous shallow-flooded hay fields and croplands that abound this year. Other noteworthy observations included several red-necked grebes, greater white-fronted geese, snow geese, and Eurasian teal. A fair number of trumpeter swans have also been observed on local wetlands off refuge. Hopefully this will result in additional nesting pairs for the refuge.

Although buttercups have been up for some time, grass widow, yellow bells and red besseya have reached full bloom this past week. I recently observed nine-leaf lomatium, arrowleaf baslamroot, and blue camas beginning to sprout. With all this moisture it should be a 'blooming' good year for wildflowers.



North American River Otters
©Jack Mills



Cinnamon Teals
©Robert M Griffith

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