

Turnbull Wildlife Refuge Friends Newsletter

Friends of Turnbull President's Report Spring 2023

by Lorna Kropp

Thank you for being a member of the Friends of Turnbull NWR and for supporting our local National Wildlife Refuge. Being a member of a Friends group usually means that you think conserving public lands for both wildlife and for people is important to our community and the whole country. What are the reasons that you support Wildlife Refuges?

The Friends of Turnbull has a long history of supporting the Refuge through offering educational opportunities for children and youth in school field trips and for community events. We have also supported many habitat restoration planting events. Individual members are encouraged to share their time and talents to help with citizen science projects and other volunteer tasks. We also can share our support by telling our neighbors and friends about why the Refuges are important! When was the last time you shared an experience from a visit to the Refuge or invited a friend to join? Our annual Membership Month is coming up in June and I want to encourage you to both renew your membership and think about how you can share why Refuges are important to all.

I recommend that you check out an article on the US Fish & Wildlife Service website titled - "11 Ways National Wildlife Refuges Make Life Better" by Susan Morse and Bill O'Brian

<https://www.fws.gov/story/11-ways-wildlife-refuges-make-life-better>

Spring is always a very busy time on the Refuge and this Spring is no different. Here is a report on several specific accomplishments and activities that Friends have been involved with this Spring.

- The Friends of Turnbull/Rabe Research Grant has been awarded to 2 students for projects during this spring/summer season. The grant announcement was sent in October 2022 to area college Biology/

Environmental Studies department faculty (Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University, Washington State University, Whitworth University, and Spokane Falls Community College). The FOT Research Grant committee held a "Meet and Greet" session in March which was well attended by prospective students and faculty. We received three proposals for the \$1000 grant. This year we are fortunate to have investment funds earnings from two years to award. The committee selected two students from Eastern Washington University to receive the grant.

- 1) Bukky Oredugba, an EWU undergraduate Biology major, will be investigating the macroinvertebrate communities and water quality in several lakes on the refuge, comparing the conditions in known fishless lakes with those containing Brook Stickleback.

- 2) Megan Garvey, an EWU graduate Biology student, will be investigating vernal pools on the refuge and nearby lands to document the presence and species distributions particularly of "fairy shrimp" Anostraca, a family of small crustaceans, thus learning more about the timing and conditions for their favorable hatching and life-cycle success.

As a condition of this grant, both students will share results in a report and presentation to a Friends meeting and newsletter when their projects are completed. We are excited to be supporting students and research on the refuge. Thanks to Peggy O'Connell, Nancy Curry, Lorna Kropp and Molly Dixon, Refuge Biologist, for their work on this committee.

- The Friends of Turnbull will be supporting re-starting of the Environmental Education program at the Refuge as proposed by Joshua Contois, Visitor's Services/Supervisory Park Ranger. Josh is working with

Environmental Education providers, including volunteers who participated in the past and area educators, to update the EE program and plan how to provide and deliver Field Trip kits for area teachers to use with their classes along with support on-site.

1) The Board voted to authorize payment for a shared Americorps Volunteer position to be split with The Lands Council during the coming school year. The Americorps volunteer will live at Turnbull and split time between projects of the two sites, focusing on beaver habitats and issues.

2) The Board also voted to support the cost of hiring a Curriculum Design contractor to revise and update the EE program curriculum materials during this next year.

We look forward to supporting this program and to re-engaging our fund-raising efforts once again to meet our obligation of \$8,000 for our share of the Americorps volunteer stipend.

- The Earth Day Pollinator Garden and Tree Potting Workday in cooperation with The Lands Council was a huge success on April 22. It was a welcome sunny day and over 100 volunteers: adults, teens and children came out to the Refuge and were divided into 4 projects:

1) A group of Friends and volunteers helped spread a large pile of wood chips on the middle section of the future Pollinator Garden to begin the process of “weed control” prior to planting this Fall/Winter. Using wheelbarrows and rakes several workers spread the chips, while others cleared out space around existing native shrubs which needed some pruning and special care.

2) A group of volunteers potted bare-root trees and shrubs which will be used in habitat restoration projects on the refuge and nearby lands in the area this year.

3) A group of volunteers planted shrubs and trees to fill in the Riparian areas along Pine Creek.

4) Another group of volunteers removed wire cages from trees within the Riparian enclosure areas.

- The Nature Store had a very successful opening month, with one additional day open each week, and many new items in the store. We are recognizing that Nature Store volunteers play a very important role in welcoming visitors and answering many and varied questions while on duty in the store, in addition to selling items to customers. The store hours are increased to be open 10am – 4pm on Fridays, Saturdays

(Cont. on page 3)



Future Pollinator Garden area

President: Lorna Kropp activities@fotnwr.org
president@fotnwr.org

Vice President: Open

Treasurer: Molly Zammit treasurer@fotnwr.org

Secretary: Nancy Curry secretary@fotnwr.org

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and Sundays. That means that we need two additional volunteers each weekend for a total of 6 each week or 20-24 volunteers each month. Thank you to the new volunteers this season. We can still use 4-5 more, so please consider joining our cadre of Refuge Ambassadors. All the earnings in the Nature Store go toward the expenses of supporting the Environmental Education programs at the Refuge. Training and support for the Refuge Ambassador role are provided. Also, the role is fun and you get a chance to get out to the Refuge regularly.

Note: Starting later in May, the Nature Store will be open 4 days: Friday, Saturday and Sunday staffed by FOT volunteers and on Mondays by the on-site Refuge volunteers.

Activities for Spring planned:

1) **Come to Mayfest in Cheney and help us spread the work about Turnbull NWR on May 13.** You can take a turn saying hi to folk who pass by our booth on 1st Street in Cheney. Sometimes it is amazing how many people do not know about the Refuge. We will be making native bee/bug houses (bundles of hollow sticks or paper straws) and handing out stickers and information. It is fun. Take a shift:

9:00 – 10:00 Set Up; 10:00 – 11:30; 11:30 – 1:00; 1:00 – 2:30; 2:30 – 4:00; 4:00 – 4:30 take down.

2) **Join in a Flower Walk on the Refuge** - a joint activity with the NE Washington Native Plant Society, led by Wendal Kane, on May 20 at 10 am. RSVP to activities@fotnwr.org. Meet in the parking lot next to Administration Building and EE Classroom.

3) **Friends of Turnbull Membership Open House Day on Saturday, June 10.** You are invited to a Bird Walk led by Joyce Alonso on June 10, 9:00 am, and a Flower walk led by Lorna Kropp at 1:00 pm. Take in one or both activities, making it a day at the Refuge, and visit the Nature Store, too!

Website articles to check out:

11 Ways National Wildlife Refuges Make Life Better. (Susan Morse and Bill. O'Brien)
<https://www.fws.gov/story/11-ways-wildlife-refuges-make-life-better>

A Beginner's Guide to the National Wildlife Refuge System
<https://www.fws.gov/story/beginners-guide-national-wildlife-refuge-system>

Conserving Native Bumblebees Citizen Science Data Employed in Washington State Project

By Bea Harrison

Using data collected by local volunteers, Washington State wildland managers have created a plan to conserve native bumblebees. The Xerces Society, in partnership with state and federal wildlife agencies, is taking action to manage lands to ensure that bumblebees can thrive. Bumblebees are essential pollinators for both wild and cultivated plants.

Washington is the first state to implement a statewide conservation plan using the data collected by the Pacific Northwest Bumblebee Atlas.

Several Spokane Audubon members participated in gathering data for this effort. Government agencies who are coordinating with the Xerces Society on this effort include the US Bureau of Land Management Oregon, Washington State Offices, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the US Forest Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Land managers now will be able to use information gathered by this citizen-science endeavor to take action to benefit eight species of bumblebees, in areas identified by the project. These actions will improve habitat that bumblebees rely on for foraging, nesting, and over-wintering.

Insects, including bumblebees, are declining worldwide. The vast majority of bats, birds, and freshwater fish depend on insects for food. Causes for insect decline are not totally understood, but insecticides, especially the widely-used group of neonicotinoid pesticides, are deadly to bees and other insects and birds.



Photo by Bea Harrison

By protecting bumblebees, we also will be protecting these other animals. Click here for more information:
<https://xerces.org/blog/washington-state-becomes-first-to-adopt-statewide-strategy-to-protect-bumble-bees>

Introducing Joshua Contois



Hello, Friends of Turnbull! I'm Josh Contois, the new Supervisory Park Ranger / Visitor Services Manager for the Inland Northwest National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes Kootenai, Little Pend Oreille, and Turnbull National Wildlife Refuges.

When I think back, it seems almost obvi-

ous why I'm in the career I am. I grew up near Tampa, Florida, as the kind of kid who was always outside collecting snakes and spiders, building tree forts, and exploring empty lots for hidden treasures. Some of my earliest wildlife memories are from when I was in kindergarten or first grade; on a field trip to a local farm I found a small garter snake and decided to put it in my pocket. You probably can imagine the surprise it gave the teacher when I took it out during the bus ride back to school! Years later, while in high school, I earned the moniker, "Frog Boy," for having fallen into a swamp while attempting to catch a frog (I succeeded) during one of the Environmental Club meetings. I always had been the kid who could talk about science for days, but it never occurred to me that it could become a profession.

My career began almost by happenstance back in 2012 when I accepted an internship at Rock Creek Park, in Washington, DC. Even though I was an "outdoorsy" kid, I did not know what types of jobs there were working in such a field. My internship allowed me to sample many different aspects of public lands management, from visitor services and environmental education to natural resources and biology. I was also fortunate to have a supervisor and mentor who helped guide me through the federal system. That internship really helped to solidify my passions and desires.

After my internship ended, I went on to work seasonally at Statue of Liberty National Monument in New York City and Redwood National and State Parks in Crescent



City, California. I left the National Park Service briefly to take a permanent position with the U.S. Forest Service in Anaconda, Montana, before returning to the NPS at Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. A couple of years later I said goodbye to the NPS again and headed back to Washington, DC, where I worked as the volunteer coordinator for the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. From there, I moved to Las Vegas, Nevada and joined the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. After four years at the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, I accepted the position at Inland Northwest Complex and moved to Spokane. All told, I have been working in federal service, public lands, and science education for over a decade.

In my short time here so far I have been exploring Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho while getting to know the staff and partners for the Complex. My most immediate goal is to craft a vision for a long-term management plan, which ultimately will help to guide the development of a new and improved environmental education program, volunteer program, updated signs and brochures, and more. Most of all, I am appreciative of the many people with deep ties and institutional knowledge of the area who have offered me advice. I am looking forward to working with Friends and for the progress we can make together.

Photos courtesy NPS/NWS

An Early Spring Walk

by **Carlene Hardt**

It was a lovely spring day for a walk around Turnbull NWR. The Red-Winged Blackbirds, with their boldly-colored shoulder patches, have returned and were singing their songs (in this case it was a Tri-colored Blackbird). There was quite a variety of ducks as well. The Hooded Merganser was showing off his elaborate crest-raising, head-pumping courtship dance. Quite the sight!

At the north end of Middle Pine Lake, I heard a rustling sound as I walked by and saw a Painted Turtle hustling over the dry grass heading somewhere! It's long claws really helped it move along over all that winter-dead grass.

I have rarely seen a Painted Turtle out of the water!

And then there was another turtle climbing up the nearby little green hill towards the parking lot! It certainly wasn't moving towards any water. I did notice, however, that it can zip along when it wants to. Well, "zip" is a relative term here.

Happy springtime!

Carlene

all photos by **Carlene Hardt**



May 13 is World Migratory Bird Day

By Madonna Luers

World Migratory Bird Day officially is celebrated on the second Saturday of May in Canada and the US (May 13 in 2023), and the second Saturday of October in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean (October 14 in 2023).

World Migratory Bird Day is an annual global awareness-raising campaign to celebrate the amazing journeys of migratory birds, and to inspire worldwide conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. Traditionally observed on the second Saturday of May and October, the two dates of World Migratory Bird Day are a way to reflect the cyclical nature of bird migration as well as the fact that there are varying peak migration periods in the northern and southern hemispheres.

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), now World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD), was created in 1993 by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. From 1995 to 2006, the program was under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because of its consistent growth, these organizations sought a new home for the program. In 2007, IMBD found its “forever home” at Environment for the Americas (EFTA), a non-profit organization that connects people to bird conservation through education and research.

EFTA recognized that migratory birds leave and arrive at breeding and non-breeding states at different times, depending on many factors. They also stop at different sites across the Western Hemisphere to rest and refuel, providing opportunities to engage the public in learning about birds and their conservation. The traditional second Saturday in May celebration of IMBD is maintained for the northern hemisphere and the second Saturday in October for the southern hemisphere, but EFTA encourages organizations and groups to host their activities when migratory birds are present.

EFTA also developed the concept of a single conservation theme to help highlight one topic that is important to migratory bird conservation. These educational campaigns have been integrated into numerous programs and events, focusing on topics including the habitats birds need to survive, birds and the ecosystem services they provide, the impacts of climate change on birds, and the laws, acts, and

conventions that protect birds, such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Convention on Biodiversity.

This year’s theme is “Water: Sustaining Bird Life.” Virtually all migratory birds rely on water and its associated habitats at some point during their life cycles. Lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, and coastal waters all are vital for feeding, drinking, or nesting, and as places to rest and refuel during long seasonal migrations. Unfortunately, these aquatic ecosystems are becoming increasingly threatened around the world, and so are the migratory birds that depend on them. The increasing human demand for water, as well as the effect of pollution and climate change, is having a direct impact on the quantity and quality of water resources and on the conservation status of many migratory bird species.

Events to celebrate IMBD

Many activities happening on World Migratory Bird Day include an Audubon field trip. Spokane Audubon Society has a field trip scheduled for May 13 this year – the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge Family Trip led by members Sandy & Richard Sollie and their 4-year-old granddaughter. This two-hour (8:30 to about 10:30 a.m.) outing is “child-friendly,” with the emphasis on fun, some exercise, and an introduction to birding. Target species include a variety of ducks, geese, and swans, plus bluebirds, swallows, chickadees, nuthatches, and blackbirds. To register and for more information, contact Richard at contactme@richardsollie.com or 509-981-9003.

“ Another nearby “all-ages” event celebrating bird migration is the May 18-21 Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest, sponsored by the Wenatchee River Institute and North Central Washington Audubon Society. It includes a May 20 “Magnificent Migrations” Field Trip at the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery targeting Says Phoebe, Rufous Hummingbird, Tree Swallow, Belted Kingfisher, and more. For details and registration, see <https://wenatcheeriverinstitute.org/education-programs/community-programs/bird-fest.html>.

Saving birds through reducing our use of plastics

by Shenandoah R Marr

Anyone reading this newsletter knows the depressing facts about birds and plastics. Large pieces of plastic are ingested by birds and cause painful deaths. Birds are entangled in plastics that immobilize them. Plastics never truly break down – they are degraded into microplastics, which contaminate both ocean and fresh water. These microplastics then are ingested by wildlife and ourselves. When I start going down the rabbit hole of hopelessness and despair, I think of all the people who truly care about preserving wildlife and the individuals who inspire me to take more action. We know the facts; we can use them as an opportunity to make a difference. One of my personal heroes, Jane Goodall, says, “You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

One of the most effective things we can do is refuse. Refuse promotional freebies unless you’ll really use them. Refuse single use plastics at restaurants. Send a message with your wallet by refusing to spend money on products that are overpackaged. If you want to take it a step further, let the company know why you aren’t buying their product and suggest a change. Most companies have a “contact” section on their website, making it fast, easy, and convenient to communicate with them.

When we really want or need something, we can still make a difference by reducing our use of plastics. If you have a choice of products, choose the one that uses less plastic. For example, use an old-fashioned paper coffee filter instead of reaching for the plastic pod. If you are a tea drinker, buy loose leaf tea or look for bags that are not individually wrapped in plastic. When I started really inspecting my purchases, I was surprised to see how much plastic I hadn’t been noticing – and how I could make small and painless changes to reduce my personal use of plastics.

We are lucky here in Spokane to have several options for re-using containers. Friends of Manito will take unwanted flower pots for use at their plant sales. Bulk foods, including grains, nuts, spices, oils, vinegars, and

pasta, can be purchased locally at the Main Market Co-op, Winco, and Huckleberry’s. Locally grown lentils, split peas, wheat berries, flour, and beans are sold in plastic-free packaging through Linc Foods (<http://www.lincfoods.com>) or directly from Palouse Brand (<https://www.palousebrand.com>). Plastic-free cosmetics are sold at Bee You Organics in the Perry district. Opening next to Hotel Indigo in March, the Spokane Refillery will offer cleaning products, hand soaps, laundry detergents, and plastic-free shampoo and conditioner bars. Simply bring in a clean container, and they will fill it up for you.

Sadly, recycling is not the panacea we think it is. Most of the plastics put into the recycle bins in Spokane end up incinerated at the city’s Waste-to-Energy plant. However, some plastics are turned into new things and we should recycle whenever possible. Purchasing products made of recycled plastics rather than virgin plastics is a step towards producing a market for recycled goods.

Feeling talkative? Start a conversation with friends or family about plastic waste and its effect on birds and other wildlife. A conversation centered around hope and positive action is uplifting and empowering. Let’s be proactive in this battle and make a positive impact today!



Vanessa Garrison/Greenpeace

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