

Turnbull Wildlife Refuge Friends Newsletter

Friends of Turnbull President's Report Summer 2023

by Lorna Kropp

Each Friends group has a formal "Partnership Agreement" with the US Fish & Wildlife Service laying out the details of working together and responsibilities of each party. That Partnership Agreement is revised and renewed each 5 years. Our Partnership Agreement is up for renewal this year. A sub-committee of the Board of Directors (Molly Zammit, Board Treasurer, and Nancy Curry, Board Secretary) has been working with the Refuge staff (Joshua Contois, Supervisory Park Ranger, Cassandra Roeder, Turnbull NWR Manager, and Kelly Moroney, Complex Project Leader) to update and revise the agreement. We expect that the Agreement will be completed before the end of this calendar year.

Check out this page of the US Fish & Wildlife Refuge System website to learn about the whole network of 95 million land acres, 755 million marine acres in all 50 states and 5 US Territories, about the recreation opportunities, and engagement of volunteers and community members to work toward conservation solutions.

US Fish & Wildlife Service

<https://www.fws.gov/program/national-wildlife-refuge-system/what-we-do>

"Through partnerships, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leads the way in developing community-driven conservation solutions that reap ecological and economic benefits for fish, wildlife and people. Within the Refuge System, we work with landowners, Friends groups and local communities."

Membership Day – June 10, 2023

The Friends of Turnbull NWR is a membership organization with an Annual Membership donation at several levels. The membership funds support the organization's work with Newsletters and website, activities and outings for members and the general public, environmental education and advocacy for importance of the Refuge System for conservation

of lands for wildlife. Our Nature Store, all volunteer run, earns funds specifically to enhance our contribution to the Environmental Education program at the Refuge. This year we will be joining with The Lands Council in sponsoring an Americorps Volunteer for the coming school year.

At the Membership Day activities, participants had the opportunity to join in a Bird Walk led by long-time FOT/Audubon member, Joyce Alonso in the morning, meet author, Gerald Hickman, for an Author's signing at the Nature Store, and go on a Wildflower Walk in the afternoon. It was an exciting day and resulted in the store's first \$1000 sales Weekend!



Membership Day Bird Walk

Pollinator Garden progress:

The Pollinator Garden committee met with Thurman Johnson at the EWU Greenhouse for Prairie Restoration on June 3. Thurman gifted the Turnbull Pollinator Garden several flats of plants to help start the Fall planting for Turnbull's Pollinator Garden. The plants are being cared for over the summer in committee member's shade gardens in preparation for the first seeding/planting of the garden in the Fall. Watch for notice of workdays to join if interested in volunteering.



EWU Prairie
Restoration Project
Thurman Johnson

FOT Pollinator Garden
committee
John B
Mike B
Molly Z



NCTC
Shepherdstown
West Virginia
4/28-5/1/23

Lorna K
Molly Z

Board members attend the National Friends Training Workshop:

Nature Store success – best year of sales; could use a few more volunteers:

The Nature Store is having the best year yet, with increased hours open and many new items for sale. The dedicated volunteers, Refuge Ambassadors, have been marvelous and many taking several shifts each month. Volunteering is a great way to get out to the Refuge and to share your enthusiasm and knowledge. To sign up and be trained to be a Refuge Ambassador, please contact the Nature Store Management Team at nature-store@fotnwr.org

Two Friends of Turnbull Board members, Molly Zammit, Treasurer, and Lorna Kropp, President, were chosen to attend the **National Friends Training Workshop** from April 28 – May 1, 2023, in Shepherdstown, WV at the National Conservation Training Center. Members of Friends groups from all over the US plus US Fish & Wildlife Service staff gathered to hear experts and share ideas and experiences, and be inspired for our conservation advocacy.

Looking forward to **“Walk for the Wild”** fundraising event during National Wildlife Refuge Week, October 7-14: See details on page 4.

Put this date on your calendar now. If you are not available to walk on Saturday, October 14, you are encouraged to do your walk another day during that week, so there is some flexibility in participation. Encourage friends and family to join in. Let’s gather a big group for support of the Environmental Education program at Turnbull.

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Nature Store Features Talented Friends Members Works

The Friends of Turnbull Nature Store has carefully selected items for sale related to wildlife conservation that have come from both near and far. This month we will feature the work of three talented FOT members, whose creative works are for sale in the store.

Carlene Hardt: Carlene's photography has been enjoyed by members and supporters for many years, and you will recognize her work featured with an article in most every FOT quarterly Newsletter.

What is for sale:

Postcards of wildlife and flowers of Turnbull, bookmarks, and Mug with elk as the main picture.



How long have you been coming to Turnbull?

Around 13 years.

Tell us how you got started taking pictures and writing.

Many years ago, my mother gave me my first camera and I have been "hooked" on capturing special moments ever since. When I first started going out to Turnbull, I heard about the Trumpeter Swan, Solo, and he captured my attention. I watched and took pictures of him and his families for several years until he didn't return. That sparked my interest to take pictures of the

swans to record their behavior, habits, families, and personalities. That later led to the book I self-published, *A Swan and His Family (Solo)*, printed in 2013 and other DVD animal projects. I have also had several of my Turnbull pictures (and others) published in the Cheney Free Press over the years.

What is special about Turnbull Refuge to you?

It is a wonderful place for me to enjoy nature and its beauty. I find it is a peaceful place to walk and to keep an observant eye (and ear!) out for wildlife. I never know what I will see! It is a place that challenges me and gives me something that I can share with others to enjoy.

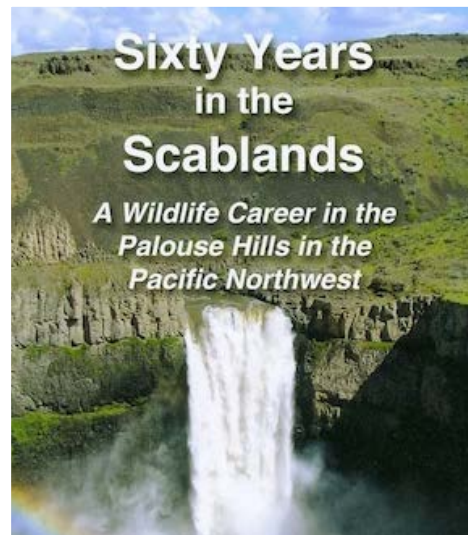
Gerald Hickman: Gerald is the author of the book, *Sixty Years in the Scablands*. Gerald is a Cheney resident and retired Wildlife Biologist with WA Department of Fish & Wildlife and a Ranger with National Park Service, and has been a Refuge Volunteer and member of FOT since retiring.

Tell us how you got started writing.

I had written many articles about nature topics during my years as a professional wildlife biologist and for some national magazines, such as: *Outdoor Life*, *American Rifleman*, *Gun Week* and several newspapers which published "how to" articles on nature and wildlife projects. An example is the study WDFW did on wood ducks and other wildlife species at the Cheney Wetlands for the city of Cheney. I think I always wanted to try writing a book, and the word on the street is to write what you know about. In addition to the *Scablands* book, I wrote *Medal of Honor* (Indian warriors and soldiers who fought at the Little Bighorn) which is the archaeologist's best description of what really happened to General Custer and the Lakota

nation, a historical book about the National Battle site after I worked there for the National Park Service as an Interpretive Park Ranger. Following the success of the first book effort, I began a book about the history of my boyhood town,

Genesee, Idaho. This book is another effort to combine natural history, cultural and pioneer history of the town, starting when the town was established in 1881 and tracing my two families and the way a living was made on the prairies of the Palouse Hills. My third book is the *Scablands* and events from my profession working and studying wildlife in the region. I added information about the Prehistoric floods that created the environment of Eastern Washington.



What is special about Turnbull Refuge to you and how long have you been visiting?

I first visited TNWR when I was an undergraduate at WSU as a junior (1963). It was a favorite birding sight for the professor of Ornithology, Dr. George Hudson.

That trip to TNWR was the first time I saw a Yellow-headed Blackbird, and I have been returning to Turnbull ever since and bringing my family with me. I volunteer at Turnbull and especially since I retired from working with state and National agencies as a biologist. Turnbull has always remained a special place for me, as is the Little Bighorn National Battlefield.

I have helped with environmental education at the Refuge, done water bird surveys and, for over a decade, have conducted and reported the bluebird nesting season on the Refuge. And I still like to hike Turnbull Trails with my family.

Ann Hurst

Please describe the items which are for sale in the FOT Nature Store.

Embroidered cards on linen. I have a variety of designs, but I concentrate on birds, wildlife, and flowers. Some are whimsical such as the chickadees dressed up as golfers, chefs, and artists. I have a series of wildlife youngsters that you might find in the refuge such as the porcupine, badger, cougar, coyote and fawn. I also sell rope baskets. Most of the baskets in the store are made with cotton rope and are embroidered on the bottom with various designs. I have done bluebirds, robins, chickadees, hummingbirds, and goldfinch. I also do some baskets with a design on faux leather which is stitched onto the bottom of the baskets. Some of those designs include wolves, moose, cougar, eagles, pileated woodpecker, and great horned owl. In October I am going to bring in Christmas cards, some traditional and some of whimsical wildlife.



Rope baskets and embroidered wildlife cards
by Ann Hurst



Tell us how you got started making cards and the rope baskets.

I've been making greeting cards and notecards since the 1990's. In the early years of the craft, most of the cards were paper crafts and rubber stamps. I was looking for something more unique and that had more variety. I had an embroidery machine (basically a computer that sews) and I decided to try to incorporate designs into card-making. It worked! I made the switch to embroidered cards. As far as the rope baskets, I came across a demonstration on YouTube and I was hooked. I make different size and different shaped baskets and only recent decided to try embroidering designs into the baskets. Baskets are so versatile in the household and make great gifts.

How long have you been coming to Turnbull?

My husband, Chuck, and I moved to Spokane in 1990 when Chuck was stationed at Fairchild AFB. After he retired, we decided to stay because we both loved the region. I have been coming to Turnbull NWR since 1990.

What is special about Turnbull Refuge to you

I like the variety of habitat and interesting history geologically. I come in all seasons because there are interesting things to see in winter as well as the other seasons. I have been a bird watcher since childhood and I just love to come out and hike a little and photograph birds and other wildlife. I think that being out in nature, being quiet, is very healing for the body and soul. Coming to the refuge is a very grounding experience for me and helps to keep the chaos of world in perspective.



“Walk for the Wild” Fundraising Event at Turnbull during National Wildlife Refuge Week, October 7-14

by Molly Zammit

Friends of Turnbull and TNWR will participate in the “Walk for the Wild” 5 km (3.1 miles) walk on the Refuge on Saturday, October 14. The event is free and a signature event of the America’s Wildlife Refuge Initiative of the Public Lands Alliance (PLA), established in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As the National marketing and fundraising partner of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, PLA is dedicated to inspiring meaningful connections and private support for the National Wildlife Refuge System through collaborative initiatives, campaigns, and signature events, including Walk for the Wild. This year’s roster is comprised of 47 Teams hailing from 26 States, who serve more than 70 Refuges spanning over 1.6 million acres!



Spokane area participants will register for the “Turnbull NWR team” on the Walk for the Wild website beginning September 1. Registration is free! Participants are encouraged to donate at the time of registration with 100% of the funds donated coming back to Turnbull. These funds are unrestricted and can be used for the benefit of Turnbull. Funds raised by the Friends of Turnbull will help support an Environmental Education intern. In addition, a percentage of a national Amplifier Fund being solicited by the Public Lands Alliance will be divided among participating Friends groups. Those funds will also go toward the EE intern.

Put this date on your calendar now. If you are not available to walk on Saturday, October 14, you are encouraged to do your walk another day during that week, so there is some flexibility in participation. Encourage friends and family to join in. One of the goals for the PLA is to get 500 people to come to a Refuge who have never been to one. Let’s see if we can make a substantial dent in that 500. Let’s gather a big group for support of the Refuge System at Turnbull, get people in Spokane connected to nature at Turnbull, and raise a few bucks while we are at it!

Mayfest downtown Cheney May 13, 2023

The Friends, Turnbull Park Ranger, and EWU Biology Department were grouped together for the Mayfest event on Main Street. This year’s event was on a warm Saturday in May with big crowds of people stopping by our tables. Turnbull Park Ranger, Breanna Hild brought the very popular “Touch Table” with the surprise box, and various pelts and skulls and antlers, along with posters. Friends of Turnbull had an activity to make native bee houses from bundles of hollow sticks and paper straws, plus information about supporting native pollinators. EWU Biology department brought along tanks with stickleback fish, an invasive species being studied on the Refuge by several groups of students and faculty. It was a fun outreach event for both young and old.



Swan Surprise

by **Carlene Hardt**

I hiked up to Cheever Lake early Saturday morning (July 8th) to confirm if a pair of swans there had cygnets. Another photographer had observed earlier that a pair of Trumpeters seemed to be nesting, based on their behavior.

I am happy to announce that there are three cygnets that look to be over a week old! What a pleasant surprise! Looks like the family has a nest site on the north end of the lake.

There also appears to be another swan pair that seem to hang around the south end of Cheever but they do not have young ones and they don't get very near the swan family. I heard the parental warnings to "stay on their own side of the lake!"

I observed the family for quite a while as they ate and the cygnets stretched their tiny little wings. They were a long distance away but I still got some pictures of them together. I was especially watching for any signs of affection, and as you can see in my picture, an adult and cygnet touched bills.

Reminds me that over the years I have seen that Trumpeter swans have very strong family bonds. The cygnets will learn key migration routes and food resources from their parents and then leave some time around 8 to 12 months.

On Monday, the 3rd of July, I went to Turnbull to check on the swans. As I was driving in, I stopped at Wheeler Pool to look closer at the beautiful carpet of purple flowers growing on this drying wetland. This low-to-the-ground flowering plant is known as Downingia and is in the bellflower family. It is native to western North America. And in all my years doing photography at Turnbull, this was the first time I have seen this plant! The glistening drops of dew on them was a nice touch.



all photos by **Carlene Hardt**

Northern Harrier

“Marsh Hawk”



Male Northern Harrier.

© Kenneth Rush,

The Northern Harrier, also known as the “Marsh Hawk” for one of its favorite habitats, is a slim raptor with long wings, legs, and tail. The sexes appear different: The male is bluish-gray above with white underparts, a distinctive coloration that earns it the nickname among birders of “Gray Ghost.” Meanwhile, female and immature birds are brown with streaked undersides. All have a distinctive white rump, an excellent identifying field mark that can be seen even at a distance.

A Northern Harrier’s low, buoyant flight style while hunting also helps to identify it: While searching for prey, this nimble raptor slowly flaps and glides just above the ground, holding its wings in a shallow V, known as a dihedral.

An Owl-like Hawk

A closer look at the Northern Harrier reveals another owl-like feature — a “radar dish” of short feathers forming a ruff around its face and neck. This attribute, known as a facial disk, amplifies a bird’s hearing, and is more often seen in owl species such as the [Northern Hawk Owl](#), and other raptors that depend on accurate hearing to help locate prey.

Breeding and Feeding

The Northern Harrier also has unusual mating habits for a bird of prey. Although many pairs are monogamous (one male/one female), others employ a polygynous breeding system, where one male will mate with several females. A polygynous male can have a “harem” of up to five females, although most have only one or two mates at the same time.

The male harrier advertises his territory to females through a swooping, twirling “sky dance” display of U-shaped dives. Interested females will move into the territory and claim a nest site. The female builds a platform nest of sticks and vegetation on the ground, with the male also contributing material. Nests are usually located at or adjacent to rich hunting grounds, often in a wet meadow or freshwater marsh, and sometimes in a farm field or on a prairie

During the winter, the Northern Harrier roosts in groups — another behavior similar to that of the Short-eared Owl. These two species often share the same winter habitats, the Northern Harrier active on the “day shift,” while the Short-eared Owl takes over the same hunting territory as night falls. The harrier and the owl often interact during their overlapping “shift change” at dusk — dive-bombing and harassing each other.

The Northern Harrier’s diet consists mainly of small mammals, such as voles, rats, and ground squirrels. This versatile hunter may also snatch open-field birds such as the [Horned Lark](#) and [Grasshopper Sparrow](#), or reptiles, amphibians, and large insects. It mainly forages while in flight, sticking low to the ground as it systematically quarters to and fro. It can also hunt on foot, and has been known to use its long legs to drown large prey by holding it underwater.

Region and Range

The Northern Harrier has a wide distribution throughout North America, breeding from northern Alaska and Canada to southern California and northern Baja California, Mexico. Some migrate as far south as northern South America, but if enough food is available, birds across a broad swath of the lower 48 U.S. states and as far north as the Canadian portion of the Pacific Northwest may remain on their territory year-round.



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