

Turnbull Wildlife Refuge Friends Newsletter

Friends of Turnbull President's Report Winter 2022

by Lorna Kropp

Turnbull Staff changes

The Winter of 2022 saw a continuing story of staff changes at Turnbull NWR.

At the end of October, Joshua Contois, who uses title Supervisory Park Ranger (Visitor Services Manager) for the Complex arrived from his last assignment in the desert SW. We are looking forward to meeting him in person soon with more Board members and FOT members to conceptualize EE and FOT Activities for Turnbull for the future. Our Partnership Agreement is also due for renewal/reworking by Summer 2023.

Lisa Wilson, Refuge Manager from 2021-2022 moved on at the end of November, leaving Kelly Moroney - Complex Manager/Acting Turnbull Manager. Brianna Hild (Seasonal Park Ranger) finished up her term. She provided monthly hikes for the public and groups requesting visits during Fall.

The FOT Board hired a part-time Bookkeeper - Calculate Success LLC, Lacy McGrew in October. She works remotely for reasonable monthly fee to handle the monthly reports and Quickbooks data entry.

Pollinator Garden initial plans

FOT Pollinator Garden Committee met several times with Kelly Moroney and Molly Dixon, Refuge Biologist to get permission for proceeding with plan to establish a Pollinator Demonstration garden on the Refuge. The location was chosen near the Administration and Classroom buildings. The group learned from Brian Walker, Private Lands Biologist, that earlier plans had been proposed for using the space in the parking lot as a pollinator garden.

The Pollinator Garden Committee made contact with the Native Plant Society leadership and obtained a copy of their list of plants found at Turnbull NWR and hope to have more contact as the committee refines the list of plants to be included.

We plan to include a Citizen Science component through Nature's Notebook to collect and track data about stages of plant development and arrival/emergence of pollinators to evaluate effects of Climate Change. We will also plan for an educational component to share information with FOT members and visitors to the Refuge. We will be relying on FOT volunteers to do the planting, weeding and watering as needed once the garden is planted. Interested members are welcome to join in both the planning phases and any workdays planned for the next year. Watch for both in-person and Zoom meetings to join in during January – May.

The timeline initially established is:

- Fall 2022 – initial weed control; TNWR Staff did some spraying for invasive weeds; Pollinator Garden Committee held a work day to pull and dig up weeds (skeleton weed, toadflax and thistle) and lay out a path through the space. (completed)
- Winter -Summer 2023 – Committee researches plants to be included; locates sources; plans drip irrigation; establish budget for irrigation and plants or seeds.
- Spring and Summer 2023 – more weed control; plan and build drip irrigation system to planned beds along the “path”.
- Fall 2023 – planting of both germinated and purchased plants

2023 FOT Research Grant for area college students
– Announcement of the FOT-Raabe Research Grant to all area Biology and Ecology Departments (EWU, WSU, GU, Whitworth, SFCC) for field research during the 2023 season. The Announcement letters did spark new interest from Faculty from Gonzaga, as well as EWU. We are looking forward having a “meet & greet” with potential researchers in March and receiving proposals in April 2023.

Nature Store Season 2022 Wrap-up:

Looking forward to the 2023 Season (Open April – October)

We have two new members of the Nature Store Management Team:

Carolyn Wright will take on ordering for most items in Nature Store.

Molly Kennington will take on managing the consignment goods with Copy Junction.

Gross Sales for 2022 season = \$12,100. The continuing Team members are: Lorna Kropp for Technology and ordering Books, and John Barber, who makes deposits and handles the mail.

Joanne Powell, who has handled the Nature Store volunteer scheduling for the last years and is the Newsletter Editor, and past President and founding member is resigning from being Volunteer Coordinator. A big Thank you to Joanne who ably filled this role for the recent seasons.

We need a new Volunteer Coordinator starting with the 2023 season. The responsibilities are to:

- 1) monitor the shift schedule and
 - 2) assist volunteers with the sign-up process as necessary
 - 3) to solicit additional volunteers with emails about the open shifts which need filling each month
- This responsibility can be done mostly on-line and by email contacting volunteers for the Nature Store.

New volunteers are welcome. Volunteer Training sessions will be scheduled during the last week in March and the beginning of April. Being a Nature Store Volunteer is a great way to start your involvement with the Friends group. The 2.5 hr. shift gets you out to the Refuge and allows a chance to look around before or after the scheduled time in the store. We provide training and support for sales duties, and the greeting and interacting with visitors is always rewarding. We have four shifts each weekend covering four weekends each month, so our goal is to have 16 volunteers who can each take on one shift a month, approximately. Please give it a try.



Visit our great website!
www.fotnwr.org

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INTRODUCING:

Kelly Moroney

Project Leader for the Inland Northwest National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Hello Friends of Turnbull! I'm Kelly Moroney, the new Project Leader for the Inland Northwest National Wildlife Refuge Complex that includes the Little Pend Oreille, Kootenai, and Turnbull NWRs. My new position started in May 2022. This marks 27 years working on nine different refuges and five Refuge Complexes spanning Oregon, Washington, and California.



I grew up in the SF Bay Area where my dad took our family camping, fishing and hunting. This got me interested in the outdoors, conservation, and the environment. Our family is large, and I hold them as an important part of my life. I graduated from Chico State University with a degree in social science and Wildlife Management from Humboldt State University. While in school I volunteered at the Humboldt Bay NWR, and this started my interest in working for the USFWS. It was during this volunteer experience that I realized I really wanted to work for the USFWS. I worked seasonally in New Mexico on Spotted owls for the Forest Service while applying for positions with the Service. My first break was working at a waterfowl check station at Umatilla NWR. I am grateful for the career path and opportunities working for the USFWS has afforded me. Grateful to serve its mission and, equally as important, to serve alongside other passionate and dedicated people.

I first visited Turnbull NWR as a biological technician in 1995. I was there with the biologist from Mid-Columbia River NWRC to learn about the refuge's biology program. Seeing the diversity of habitats and wildlife on the refuge made an impression on me then and still does today. In 2010 I served in a three-week detail as the Acting Deputy Project Leader at Turnbull assisting in developing deferred maintenance project descriptions, drafting the youth hunt implementation plan, and reviewing and providing input on the draft Goals and Objectives for the Kootenai NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan. It was helpful to have

had some experience at the Inland NW Complex before beginning this job.

My leadership style is collaborative in nature, I seek input from staff and stakeholders on management decisions, make decision with transparency, and develop trust and teamwork with staff, friends, volunteers and partners. A team that trusts leadership and helps with decision making is a more effective team and ensures a positive working environment. Most of my work on refuges has focused on wetland and riparian restoration and management and incorporating public use opportunities into the design or management actions. That passion remains, but as I have matured in my career, I found something as important as the fish and wildlife resources we protect and manage that brings passion and excitement. That passion is developing and mentoring the next generation of land managers and conservation leaders. When I started on refuges as a biological technician, I was exposed to all aspects of refuge management including maintenance, biology, restoration, visitor services, and equipment operation. These experiences made me a better manager as I have direct knowledge and experience in the difficulties and success staff experience implementing their programs. My supervisors and mentors cared enough about the next generation to expose and challenge me with a variety of projects where I could learn and grow. They provided good leadership, offered suggestions, and didn't come down on me when things didn't go exactly as planned. They challenged me, provided learning opportunities, and celebrated success in a way that built confidence. Mentoring and developing the next generation of leaders is now one of the most rewarding aspects of my job.

My last eight months have been spent getting to know the refuges, staff, and the partners of this diverse Complex of refuges. As many of you know, there have been several vacancies in leadership positions throughout the Complex during the last year. I've focused on filling those vacancies with high quality people with relevant skills and qualifications including the biologist at Turnbull, visitor service manager for the Complex, and refuge manager at Kootenai. We are rebuilding the team, developing a vision for those programs to flourish, re-establishing relationships with our partners, and enhancing the programs and efforts of our long-term staff members. Rest assured, we have several habitat improvement and public use projects planned for all three refuges. I look forward to an exceptional 2023 and wish you all a Happy New Year.

Who is the Pollinator Garden at Turnbull NWR for?

by Lorna Kropp

The answer was a resounding answer yes for wildlife and yes for people!! We want our garden to be a springboard for education of visitors to show what works and how we can support pollinators in our environments, both at the Refuge and in our own yards. “Every little piece helps” in our greater goal. We would want our garden to be organized and have planting clusters that include plants which will span the seasons of blooms. We want to include identification labels along with a statement of the benefits, such as which insects/animals are attracted and get sustenance from the plant. We want organized clusters of plants, both several plants of one species, the way plants appear in native spaces, and groupings which include plants that bloom at different times of the season. We want places to walk through the entire space. We want a mix of low growing shrubs and flowers.

Timeline:

Year 1:

Goal is for weed control. We wish to try all natural methods first.

Fall Work party to Pull weeds in the potential garden space– October 29, 2022 = also last weekend of Nature Store.

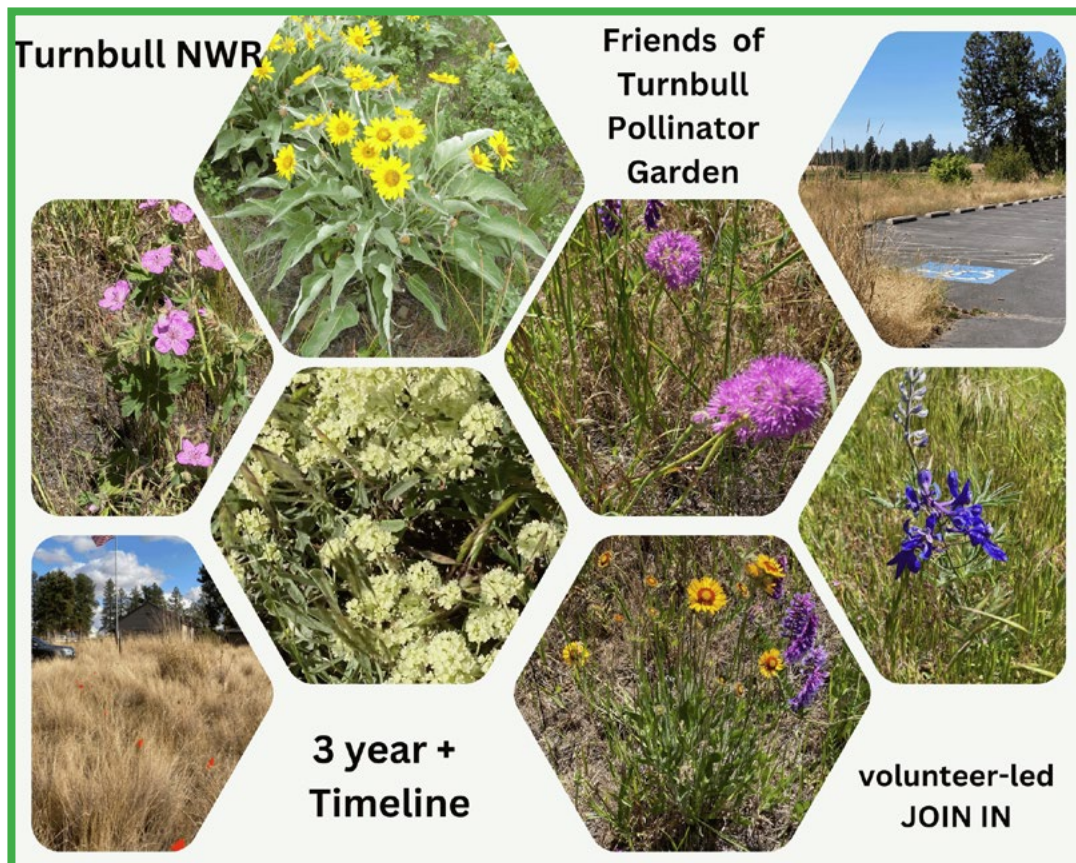
- Planning for Garden – over Winter/Spring/Summer 2023
- Develop a plant list and potential source of plants
- Work on Interpretation data and planning signage
- Develop a detailed planting layout for the plant clusters
- Develop a “trail” plan for walking through the space
- Develop plan for drip irrigation system; water source near flagpole.
- Monitor weed control progress; fill-in coverage of break-throughs

Year 2:

Fall planting can be organized (September/October 2023); Starting in the center and working west; leaving the native grasses in the east end.

Year 3+:

More planting; Maintenance and plant fill-ins, more weed control as necessary



Turnbull Family Descendants

Touring Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

In August of 2022, Refuge Manager Lisa Wilson, Donna Phillips and I had the honor of giving a tour to descendants of Cyrus Turnbull. Turnbull was an early pioneer that built a cabin on the north end of what became his namesake, Turnbull Slough (Lake).

A descendant of Cyrus contacted the Refuge to find out why the place had been named after him. Lisa Wilson referred the lady to me and I told her what I knew of the time the family had lived here near Cheney. I asked Lisa if I could offer the family a tour of the area in which their ancestor had lived.

Cyrus Turnbull never had a homestead here but he did build a cabin and start a family here. We took the family members that came (16 as I remember from various areas of the Northwest and even Germany) on a tour to where Cyrus Turnbull and his wife Mary Williams built their cabin. We did find an old basalt rock foundation buried in the sod and what remains of an old root cellar. The family had the chance to walk around the area and get a feel for their ancestor's cabin site.

Then we drove down Upper Turnbull Lake to another homestead that directly looked over what remains of the lake today and they got to see old foundations of structures from that site and get a good look at the lake named after their great-great grandfather.

Cyrus did some small farming while he was here but he mostly was a game hunter. He and others like him provided fresh meat to folks in Cheney and for the workers that built the railroads in the area. The family was only in our area for about 6 years before moving up to Sagle, Idaho where some of his descendants still live today.

Donna Phillips, a genealogist, worked up a family tree for the Turnbull's and presented it to the family. The family originally hailed out of Scotland, then Iowa, California, Oregon then into Washington State. In those pioneer days up to 60 family homesteads were established in the Turnbull area.

Because of the numerous wetlands the area was difficult to traverse and tame. The early pioneers drained the wetlands to farm mostly for hay in the meadows established by drainage. The peat that originally allowed them to farm eventually petered out and many farmers gave up trying to grow hay.

The Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1937 and the ditches that provided those early farmers a livelihood were plugged with water control structures to re-establish the original wetlands.



All photos by Nancy Curry



Red-breasted Nuthatch

American Bird Conservancy



Red-breasted Nuthatch
© Blair Dudeck

Tiny Tin Trumpet

Although the Red-breasted Nuthatch is normally resident in most of its range, it may withdraw from the northernmost areas in response to severe weather and/or food scarcity.

Its breeding range covers much of the conifer forest belt that stretches from Alaska to Newfoundland and Labrador, south through the Great Lakes region, northern New England, and also in the higher elevations of the Appalachians to eastern Tennessee and North Carolina. In the West, it occurs in coniferous forests south to California and Arizona.

The call of the Red-breasted Nuthatch is a nasal, tinny yank-yank, higher-pitched than the White-breasted Nuthatch. The “tin horn” quality of this call is reminiscent of a much larger bird — the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, sadly now extinct.

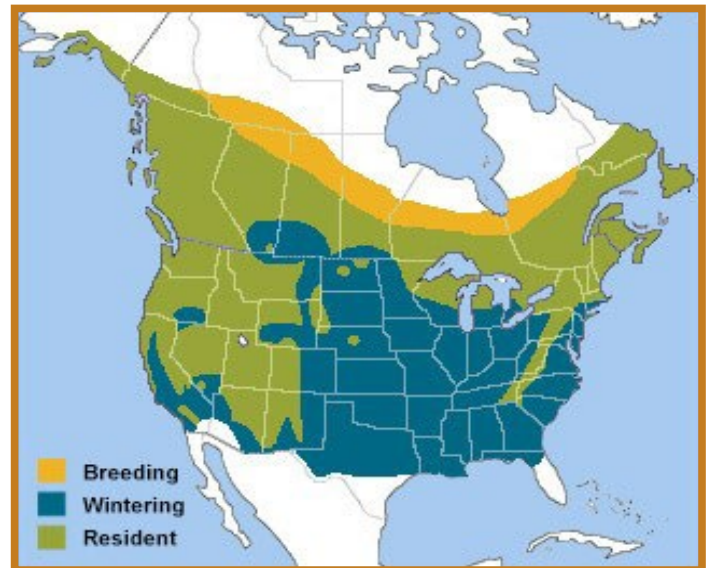
A Switch in Diet

The Red-breasted Nuthatch forages by gleaning its way up and down tree trunks and branches. During the spring and summer, this bird seeks insects and spiders and their larvae and eggs; in the winter, the diet switches to conifer seeds and nuts. These latter food items can be tough to break apart, but the resource-

ful nuthatch overcomes that challenge by wedging a tough seed or nut into a bark crevice, then hacking it into smaller pieces with its strong, slightly upturned bill. This distinctive habit, called “hatching,” gives the birds in this avian family the name “nuthatch.”

This scrappy little nuthatch readily visits backyard feeders for nuts, seeds, and suet, holding its own against larger feeder visitors such as the Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, and Blue Jay.

Like other winter residents such as the Black-capped Chickadee, the Red-breasted Nuthatch caches extra food under bark and in tree crevices and holes. These hidden stores help these birds survive food shortages during harsh weather.



A Sappy Entrance

The Red-breasted Nuthatch is monogamous during its breeding season, and pairs may remain together on their territory through the following winter. The male courts his mate in a swaying and singing display with raised head, drooping wings, and fluffed-out back feathers. He also brings food to the female during courtship.

One interesting facet of Red-breasted Nuthatch biology is that mated pairs prefer to excavate their own nest cavities, rarely using existing cavities or nest boxes. Both male and female work to excavate a nest hole, usually in dead or decaying wood, then collect sticky pine resin to smear around the entrance. Similarly, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker takes advantage of sticky sap around its nest cavity entrance, presumably to deter nest predators.

Both members of the Red-breasted Nuthatch pair also construct their nest, a cup of twigs and grass lined with softer material. The female lays a clutch of five to six eggs, and both parents work together to raise the young.



Red-breasted Nuthatch Nestlings
Lesley Earle



Red-breasted Nuthatch - Female
Simon Boivin

OTHELLO CRANE FESTIVAL MARCH 24-26

The Othello Sandhill Crane Festival announced the 2023 theme as “Silver Anniversary, Celebrating Our Annual Visitors.” The 25th annual festival will be held March 24-26, 2023 in Othello Washington. We are excited to be celebrating our 25th year!

The festival will be in the same locations as last year. The lectures will be held at the Othello Nazarene Church, 835 S 10th Ave, Othello, WA. The Church is next door to McFarland Middle School where we will have the children’s art projects, vendors, a photo booth, the Rotary breakfast, and art contest display.

Online registration opens on February 6, 2023 and will be available on the website.

Cathy Nowak will be one of the featured speakers on Saturday, March 25, at 7:30pm. Cathy will be speaking about “Sandhill Crane Nests - Experience Matters.” Dr. Kaeli Swift will be the other featured speaker on Friday, March 24, at 7:30 pm. Swift will explore commonly asked questions about cranes. Masks will be required at this lecture. Other lectures on Saturday, March 25, will address cranes, birds, Ice Age Floods, the Drumheller Channels, and much more.

We are planning tours by bus, bike, boat, car, and foot. Guided crane viewing tours will be back, with self-guided tours as an option as well.

The Children’s Art Activities will have fun projects for kids such as binoculars made of toilet paper rolls to use for “birding” adventures. Origami folded crane mobiles, mask making, and many other activities will be offered.

With the celebration of the spring migration of the Sandhill Cranes, the festival offers a variety of events for the whole family to enjoy and learn.

Visit the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival website for more information on the events at Website: [othellosandhillcranefestival.org](https://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org). Follow us for updates on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Othello-Sandhill-Crane-Festival



SANDHILL
CRANE
Festival

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