Turnbull Wildlife Refuge

Friends' Newsletter

Friends of Turnbull

Fall 2026

President's Annual Report

by Lorna Kropp

October 2025—December 2025

October 2025 Government Shut-down: Find Your Wild, annual meeting, and tree planting all cancelled.

Donation of $15,200 from AgWest to Friends for projects.

Presentation from Tim Lower, EWU Psychology Department. Project to analyze Refuge Annual Report Archives to identify themes from last 50 years. Introduction of Oral History Project proposed by EWU Archivist, Steven Bingo. [https://dc.ewu.edu/archives/]

Contract continues with local educator to create seven lessons for fieldtrip curriculum to be led by classroom teachers at the refuge.

January 2026—March 2026

Quarterly meeting with Jason to learn about his position, and to learn about procurement and financial management of the refuge.

Ads were purchased in the Cheney Free Press Neighbors & Visitor Guide

Announcements of the 2026 FOT/Rabe Research Grant were sent to area university/colleges biology/environmental science departments.

Turnbull staff participated in the annual Big Horn Show with the Friends groups of the Inland NW Complex: Turnbull, Little Pend Orielle, and Kootenai Refuges.

Planning begins for renovating the Pine Lake Overlook to improve ADA accessibility; a bench will be added and the broken viewing scopes removed.

Pine Lake Overlook

April 2026—June 2026

Met with Darold Hagadorn for staff quarterly report, and learned about his job in maintenance for the refuge.

Sent letter of support for Washington State Parks Columbia Plateau Trail 1B development which will improve the surface of the trail through the refuge. Friends and refuge staff have pledged restoration help for the section within

April 2026—June 2026 (continued)

Community Clean-up of Cheney-Plaza Road with neighbor Sean Larson.

New Black Horse Lake Connector Trail construction project contract was signed with Washington Trails Association. Friends paid $6,000 for work which was completed in April/May.

Contract with local educator for EE lessons was terminated since the product was still not complete after 18 months. New contractor, Brianna Amingwa of Deeply Rooted, was hired to create the seven lessons for $10,500. The first set of lessons for lower elementary school children was completed by the end of June.

Earth Day Potting event was held in cooperation with The Lands Council. Friends provided lunch of hot dog with trimmings for all participants. Jack Nisbet made a presentation about the historic use of fire for habitat management by tribes; he then signed/sold books in the Nature Store.

May Fest in downtown Cheney included a booth shared between the Refuge and Friends. Displays included a touch table with furs and skulls, and a matching game using duck wings, beaks, and feet.

Songbirds and Strings was a concert by the Spokane Symphony BeethoVAN at Turnbull NWR near headquarters pond. It was proceeded by a bird walk led by a member of the Spokane Audubon Society. This was a magical evening with birds joining the symphony in song. Friends supported the event with $1,800.

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Art Show by LR Montgomery with his paintings of "Our Amazing NW Natural Areas" was held at the Museum of Arts and Culture. His Turnbull painting (4' by 5') sold, and Friends received a portion of the proceeds ($2,100).

Nature Store had very strong sales during spring weekends.

Community Clean-up of Cheney-Plaza Road with coordination by neighbor Sean Larson.

July 2026—September 2026

July quarterly meeting included a fieldtrip to visit the McKinley restoration project which was completed two years ago. The wetlands are holding water well, and wetland plants have emerged from the seedbank on the property. The wetlands are used by birds and animals.

Friends participated in the Inlander August Giving Guide with a ½-page ad.

Mike Borysewicz, board member, attended the Friends Academy at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia.

July 2026—September 2026 (continued)

EE fieldtrip lessons completed by Brianna Amingwa in cooperation with Friends and the Spokane Tribe. Friends will be taking more responsibility for implementation and fieldtrip coordination in the future since the refuge will no longer have a Visitor's Service Director on staff. Teacher workshops are being planned. Friends' board will be hiring a part-time coordinator for EE fieldtrips at the refuge.

The Blue Goose Flies quilt, created by Molly Z, is currently at auction using the fundraising site Zeffy Auction. Bids are open until 12pm October 17, 2026 [https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/friends-of-turnbull-nwr-the-blue-goose-flies-quilt]

Bat walk was led by Christen Long one September evening. Christen is a Friends member and Nature Store volunteer, as well as a member of Bat Conservation International. During the evening three different species of bats were discovered near Windmill Pond.

Friends supported a grant application for Brian Walker, Private Lands Biologist with Partners for Fish and Wildlife. If he is awarded the grant, Brian will be working with landowners affected by the Spokane Complex Fires. The goal is to help restore the fire zone (primarily the wetland and riparian areas) by sharing technical advice, seed, plants, and other resources. The Board completed the application for a $16,000 grant for the project scheduled 2026-2029.

Long-time board member John Barber resigned and moved to Mojave Desert, California. We miss his participation with the Pollinator Garden, the Nature Store Management Team, and all Friends activities.

To avoid a potential Government shutdown affecting fall plans around Refuge Week in October, plans were made to hold the Find Your Wild Event and FOT Annual Meeting at end of September. Board needs to replace three members who have resigned during this past year: Joyce Alonso, Denise Buck and John Barber.

Community Tree Planting

by Oscar Alvarez Costope

On National Public Lands Day during National Wildlife Refuge Week, Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge welcomed nearly 50 volunteers for a Community Tree Planting Day—and what a day it was!

Volunteers came together to help restore native habitat at the refuge. Together, we planted 350 native trees, including aspen, red-osier dogwood, cottonwood, golden currant, black hawthorn, woods rose, chokecherry, and serviceberry.

These trees are part of the ongoing restoration of the Jolly Jack Wetland, where refuge staff are working to improve wetland habitat, retain water longer, increase native vegetation, and provide food and shelter for wildlife. The new plantings will eventually provide valuable cover and habitat for birds, mammals, macro-invertebrates, and other wildlife that depend on this unique area.

Most importantly, the day showed what can happen when community comes together to care for public lands. Thank you to everyone who showed up, got their hands dirty, and helped give these trees a new home.

And this isn't the last planting! Next spring, we'll be hosting a spring potting event to help prepare trees for planting next fall. We hope you'll join us again—and bring a friend! There is always more work to do, and plenty of opportunities to get involved at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge.

Fall at Turnbull NWR

by Carlene Hardt

One mid-September morning while walking the Pine Lake Loop, I noticed this Cabbage White Butterfly with black tips on the forewings drinking flower nectar. Since it had just **one** black spot in the center of each upper forewing this one was a male. A female would have had **two** black spots. Their wingspan ranges from 1.25 to 2 inches and adult butterflies will live from 5 days to 3 weeks. It is called a "cabbage butterfly" because its caterpillars love to eat plants in the cabbage family, such as kale, broccoli, and cauliflower (and cabbage).

Farther down the path was an American Goldfinch that was molting into its *muted autumn colors* (who knew!). Both the males and females will look very similar through winter helping them to blend into dry, weedy fields and evade predators when snow and bare branches dominate the landscape. They are the only type of finch that molt their feathers *twice* a year - once in late winter and again in late summer. They may migrate south *only* if it gets below 30 degrees and there *isn't* an abundant supply of seeds.

On Winslow Pool were two male Mallard ducks with just a random smattering of bright green head feathers that showed they were molting! In late summer, the males go through what they call an "Eclipse" molt. They lose their bright green head feathers and look more camouflaged like females, with mottled brown

heads and bodies. This drab look helps them hide from predators while they are flightless for their surprisingly long 30 to 45 days during the molt. Their signature glossy green head feathers grow back in autumn (the "Nuptial" Molt) in preparation for the winter breeding and pairing season.

Soon after I began the Pine Creek Auto tour, I saw cars pulled over and people with cameras looking up to a ridge. It took me a few minutes to see through the trees but there were a cow moose and her young calf grazing on the tasty leaves. After about 10 minutes we all spotted another healthy bull moose with large antlers moving through the forest towards them. Well, that was thrilling to see too! Soon thereafter they left the ridge and disappeared into the trees.

An interesting fact is that a prime adult bull can grow a massive rack spanning up to five feet across and weighting up to 40 or 50 pounds! Hard to believe that they drop their heavy antlers *every* winter and grow a new set in the spring. The wide, flat, shovel-like part of the antler is called the *palm* and the sharp, finger-like spikes sticking out along the outer edge are called *tines* or *points*.

EE Field Trip Curriculum

by Lorna Kropp

The Friends' board is pleased to announce that the project to create a classroom field trip curriculum covering grades k-12 with seven lessons has been completed this September. The field trip lessons will enable teacher-led class engagement with topics and questions for students to do scientific inquiry, gather data at the refuge and take their work back to the classroom for more analysis and further research. All the lessons are aligned to Washington State standards, US Fish & Wildlife Service priorities, and Turnbull's interpretive themes.

The field trip lessons have been developed in cooperation with the Spokane Tribe, and integrate traditional ecological knowledge with student inquiry which will support Turnbull's long-term goal of fostering environmental stewardship through education and community connection.

The seven lessons were written by Brianna Aminagwa of Deeply Rooted Outdoor Education. She formerly worked with USF&W for 13 years, ending as National Coordinator of Youth Employment and Environmental Education, and now consults with groups nationwide to help with EE Programs.

The curriculum will be introduced to area teachers, district science leaders, and other interested groups during two days of open house on November 16 and 17 from 3-6 pm. The lessons and their resources will be available to look through, and visitors can join a sample lesson led by a volunteer teacher during the open house session. There will be additional workshops for teachers in early spring 2027.

Spread the word that EE Field Trips are back, and for those interested in EE at the Refuge … more opportunities for volunteer service as well!

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 _____

Phone _____

Email _____

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 NWR
PO Box 294
Cheney, WA 99004

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The Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge is a nonprofit organization which supports the mandate of the refuge to protect and enhance wildlife and their habitats through education, research, habitat preservation and restoration.