

# FRIENDS OF MID-COLUMBIA RIVER WILDLIFE REFUGES

Volume 2 – Issue 2 – February 2003

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311 Lake Road, Burbank, Washington 99323

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## Message from the President

The Centennial Friends Conference in Washington DC, February 1-3! Where do I start? Four of our Friends attended along with Gary Hagedorn, Fish and Wildlife Service Project Manager for Mid-Columbia River NWR Complex. Our group was invited to do a presentation, “A Friends Story”, for the opening session. As a result of preparing the presentation, I traveled there with renewed appreciation for our Group and all that we accomplished! My awe just grew, as we received praise:

“your group has done so much, tell me more about your education programs, Second Saturday programs, inspiring, encouraging, great presentation!”

I wish you could hear this praise in person - this group is YOUR creation!!

The conference attendees love the Centennial Commemorative Blanket – as Naomi, Marjorie and Greg kept it up front and center the whole time. Just read the articles by Marjorie Gilmore and Greg Greger! Monday we went to the capitol to meet with Congressional staffers, finding well-informed staff and adding to their knowledge. I came back energized, eager to build on “the best of what is”, to envision “what could be” and then make it happen!

Come and join us! We have an exciting Centennial year ahead of us, and each

can do what we love to do. What might bring you “fun, learning, and a sense of contribution”? Is it introducing students to the wildlife and habitats on our refuge? See the article by Shannon Hays-Truex. Is it editing the newsletter? Doing the trail and facilities work to make our refuge even more inviting to the public? Creating the shrub-steppe demonstration site? Welcoming the public to our Second Saturday events? Welcoming new members, keeping the education center open to public, telling acquaintances about the refuges, becoming a Friends Member...each contribution is needed. The next meeting is March 13, 10 am to noon.

Welcome to John Gahr, the new manager of McNary NWR. Acting for Manager Rebecca Chuck, who left in August 2002, John held a dual role that included Outdoor Recreation Planner for the Refuges until now. He took over his permanent duties on February 1.

Thanks for the opportunity to work with you all! You are awesome!

-- Paula Clark

## **New Communication Tools**

We appreciate the support of Information Matters, LLC in developing the powerpoint presentation used at the Friends Conference. A special thanks to Dick Stone!

DeVary Communications and the Designer Q Graphic Services are designing our logo and hotel rack card. What a pleasure to work with them!

## **New Home for Songbirds**

The brushpile within range of the scopes and binoculars from the deck harbors songbirds the year around – a wonderful bird viewing opportunity. During the next phase of planting the brush pile will be moved. The chain link fence will be removed and a new brushpile will be made from the cherry tree making viewing better than ever.

## **Volunteer for the Center**

Each visitor to the McNary Refuge Education Center can be an opportunity to explain our Refuges, gain a helper, or sell a Centennial blanket. When days go by without someone to make that welcome, who knows what chances are lost? Visitors can pick up a blanket with a check or cash – no waiting or delivery charges. Volunteers can bring their favorite hobby – stamps, coins – your choice – and work on that while awaiting visitors. An office “sitter” is a critical part of the Center.

## **Friends Conference Report**

Greg Greger

As the weekend in DC went on, I was increasingly impressed with the arrangements. Schedules, maps, information and aids were available, making the conference most effective for each of us. The visual aids and sound systems were superb.

Getting to better know other attendees and especially those of our Region One was one of the best sessions for me. When the highlights of introduction comments made by each attendee are distributed to us, we will review the list to see what networking might be beneficial. As an example, “Teachers’ Resources for the Columbia NWR” may be useful in our future endeavors on our Refuges.

## **THANK YOU THANK YOU**

Thanks to those who help:

- greet Center visitors
- answer the office phone
- fill bird feeders
- advise on plant restoration
- prepare the ground
- lay the weed cloth
- procure plants
- plant 400 native plants
- write grants
- suggest contacts for events
- clean the Center floors
- bring cookies and donuts
- furnish coffee and tea

AND THE DOZENS OF OTHER THINGS THAT MAKE McNARY NWR ACTIVITIES A SUCCESS. FRIENDS COULD NOT FUNCTION WITHOUT YOU...

## Seal Beach NWR

March 26 marks the arrival of Seal Beach's caravan which is on the list of National Centennial Events. Friends of Mid-Columbia River Refuges will host the event with an appearance at a local school. The Blue Goose and an eagle will wander among the children after the presentation.

### Second Saturday Every Month

Mark the months of 2003

- JANUARY 11, Taxidermy – We see what the experts are doing.
- FEBRUARY 8 – Coyote Trickster tells stories
- MARCH 8 – Centennial NWR celebration – Time capsule
- APRIL 12 – Wildflowers – Look, don't pick
- MAY 10 – Songbird migration – Sing a song of sixpence
- JUNE 14 – Bats – Mammals – NOT baseball
- JULY 12 – Fishing – are you carping?
- AUGUST 9 – Creepy crawlers and how we need them
- SEPTEMBER 13 – WaterWeeks – water is a non-renewable resource
- OCTOBER 11 – Refuge day – Earth, Land and Fire.
- NOVEMBER 8 – Lewis and Clark—bone weary from travel
- DECEMBER 13 – What inspired Velcro and other good stuff

PLEASE COME AND HELP WITH THE PLANNING OR EXECUTION OF ANY OR ALL OF THESE COMMUNITY EVENTS.

Friends of Mid-Columbia River Wildlife Refuges – Phone – 509-543-8322  
E-mail – [midcolumbia\\_friends@att.net](mailto:midcolumbia_friends@att.net)

NEXT MEETING OF FRIENDS—  
MARCH 13 at 10 am in McNary NWR  
Environmental Education Center

COME CELEBRATE WITH US THE  
**FIRST ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF  
CONSERVATION BY THE  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
SYSTEM**

Have you walked the trail lately? Or have you found a quiet moment on a bench along the trail? Or have you experienced a view of sunrise over the pond from our spacious deck? Or have you shared your enthusiasm with a friend or neighbor?

**TRY IT – YOU'LL LIKE IT!!**

### From Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuges Headquarters....

Activities continue through the winter in rain or shine. Biologists monitor insect activity and invasive species. Gathering of insects for biological control of Purple Loosestrife and Yellow Starthistle is scheduled for early spring. Restoration is complete on the Toppenish NWR, an intense project that allows visitors better access for birding and wetlands understanding. Umatilla NWR experiences the greatest auto traffic because of its self-guided wildlife trails on the Oregon portion. Curlew Day will not be held this year. McKay NWR and Cold Springs NWR continue to be favorite birding areas. McNary corn fields are mowed to allow feeding access to Canada geese and Mallard ducks.

The preparation and production of this newsletter are funded solely by Friends of Mid-Columbia River Wildlife Refuges with no funds from USFWS.

**If our active members** weren't having so much fun with nature, and involved in so many refuge projects, we would have a longer newsletter.

**If we had an editor we would have a better organized newsletter.**

**SECOND SATURDAY** in February was a wild treasure hunt by 80 youngsters and parents. Treasures were animal homes and food, tracks and seeds, insects and tall skinny things stuck in the water.

**Second Saturday** in March will give us a look at the Time Capsule and the contents to be buried. Coyote Trickster will make another appearance in a different form.

### **Stamp Collectors Take Note**

The official USFWS Centennial stamp has a special second day of issue at McNary National Wildlife Refuge Education Center on March 26 from 12:30 to 3 pm. A US postal worker will be on hand with a McNary station cancellation stamp.

The commemorative stamp is the head of a pelican, reminder of the first NWR set aside by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. The first day of issue occurs at the Pelican Island Refuge in Florida. We have an envelope for 'First Day Cover' called a cachet for collectors.

Tell your friends.

### **Grant Tracking**

REI awarded Friends with a grant for school class visits and we are still working with funds from National Wildlife Refuge Foundation for startup activities. Other funds and support came from Boise Paper, Battelle and private individuals. Our appreciation to them all.

### **Othello Sandhill Crane Festival**

March 21 – 23 marks the 6<sup>th</sup> annual crane festival prominent on the list of Centennial National Wildlife Refuge events. Field trips begin at noon on Friday and lectures begin at 7pm.

Visitors can take to the field to view cranes and owls, and off-the-refuge birding and geological formations. Lectures range from specific Refuges, to birds, habitats and partners for wildlife. Book signing features Karen Hollingsworth, photographer of NWRs, whose work appears in annual USFWS calendars and publications.

President Theodore Roosevelt appears in person of a local actor at the Saturday night banquet at 7pm. Call 1-866-726-3445 or 509-488-2802 ex 100 or find it all on <http://www.othello-wa.com>

John Cox treated us to a Coyote tale on Second Saturday

## **Calling All Volunteers!!**

If you like being in the great outdoors and spending time with elementary school students, consider being a volunteer at McNary NWR Environmental Education Center (MEECe). We offer environmental education programs that open young hearts and minds to nature. Volunteers introduce students to the diversity of life at the wildlife refuge and share in the students' awe of discovery. These programs run during school hours from September-October and March-May.

If you are interested in becoming an environmental education program volunteer, please join us for a special volunteer orientation.

**When:** 10 am – noon on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Where:** MEECe, 311 Lake Road, Burbank, WA.

Please **contact** Shannon Hays-Truex at 509-946-4813 or [spirit@3-cities.com](mailto:spirit@3-cities.com) if you plan to attend the orientation, or for more information.

## **Many Hands Make Dreams Happen**

Several members of the Friends of Mid-Columbia River Wildlife Refuges (FRIENDS) dreamed of planting native shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers adjacent to McNary NWR Education Center. Now that dream is a reality!

In September 2002, FRIENDS proposed a plan to develop a shrub-steppe demonstration site that would introduce visitors to native plant communities, serve to educate the general public and students about shrub-steppe ecology, and demonstrate the value of habitat restoration. The plan, approved by the

USFWS, Pasco office, will span three years. Each year, one section of the approximately one acre site will be prepared and planted with native shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers.

On the weekend following Thanksgiving, volunteers came to McNary NWR to help prepare and plant the first section of the site. Over the weekend, 19 volunteers participated in this special event. Nearly 400 seedlings were planted.

The FRIENDS group is grateful for the support and assistance of USFWS personnel, the investment of time and advice by local experts on native plants and habitat restoration, the generous donation of seeds, plants, and materials, and the tireless devotion of volunteers from the Native Plant Society and the community at large.

This project is volunteer-driven and will require year round volunteers for weed management and care. To be a special volunteer for maintaining the shrub-steppe demonstration site or participating in future planting parties, please contact Shannon Hays-Truex at 509-946-4813 or [spirit@3-cities.com](mailto:spirit@3-cities.com)

## **Thanks for the Help!**

Thanks to National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for making this newsletter possible through the startup grant to our FRIENDS group!

## FRIENDS Conference Report Marjorie Gilmore

During the Centennial Refuge Friends Conference, it was interesting to learn how other Friends groups evolved and grew and the methods that they used. The two workshops I found to be most helpful were '101 Ways of Getting the Word Out' given by Muriel Smith, an award winning newspaper editor, and the one presented by the Friends of Black Bayou from Monroe, Louisiana.

The Friends of Black Bayou pointed out that they use food, food, food for their theme. Interestingly they had few 'takers' for their first public meal at the Refuge, offered at a most reasonable cost, but found out that by advertising a 'free' meal at the Refuge and displaying a contribution bucket, they collected much, much more. They carried on this tradition with great success. Their enthusiasm and great humor permeated their presentation. Certainly having enthusiastic member is a great plus.

Talking with other participants, sharing ideas, and displaying our blanket for sale kept us busy. All in all a very rewarding experience.

Marjorie Gilmore

## FRIENDS showcased in Washington DC

Friends of Mid-Columbia River Wildlife Refuges were asked to present our 'Friends Story' at the opening session of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Friends Conference in Washington DC on February 1. With photo highlights, Paula Clark, our Friends president, told the joys and toils of our group from receipt of the 501 (c)3 non-profit status to the development of a native plant restoration site:

- Establishing an effective Friends of Mid-Columbia River Refuges group.
- Expanding the 'Out of Doors' education program to encompass total nature.
- Assisting teachers with science curriculms.
- Completing a Wanapum Indian style tule mat teepee by 8<sup>th</sup> graders and adults.
- Developing a monthly 'Second Saturday' event to bring the community out in nature.
- Encouraging volunteer activities for fun.

Paula added her own poignant anecdotes which brought her praise from all.

Future biologist explores a Blue-winged Teal

## Commemorative Blanket

Our exclusive Pendleton blankets can be purchased by check for immediate pickup from Friends while the present supply lasts. Credit cards accepted. A new order will go out in April for more with the artist's signature. Those are limited so order yours now.

A Pendleton work of art, our trade blanket is 64 by 80 inches in rich hues and vivid colors. View it on <http://www.nwr.mcnary.wa.us> Download the order form and order yours today.

## NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

The newsletter committee is formed. Margaret Greger, Chris Simonen, Greg Greger, and Naomi Sherer are working on the newsletter updates. An editor who would assign and track articles is needed most. This is work that could be done from home. A different person could input the material on the office computer. Others can help fold and mail.

## Count me as a Friend!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date of registration \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to  
Friends of Mid-Columbia  
River Wildlife Refuges  
(FMCRWR)

311 Lake Road, Burbank, WA 99323  
Phone 509-543-8322

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\$ 5...Student

\$15...Individual

\$30...Family

Volunteer work at the Refuge can count in lieu of payment to receive FRIENDS benefits.

**I'd like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

*All contributions qualify as tax deductible.*

***FRIENDS OF  
MID-COLUMBIA RIVER WILDLIFE  
REFUGES***