



Friends of the Refuge

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newsletter



June 2016

Ridgefield First Saturday: Big Paddle Festival



Date: Saturday, June 4, 2016
Events starting from 7:00am- 3:00pm

Join the flotilla of kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddleboards for a two-hour interpretive tour or a relaxing recreational one-hour tour; celebrate the excitement of outdoor recreation on the waterfront with vendor booths, live music, beer garden, food trucks and live marimba music; challenge yourself with the amazing race style scavenger hunt or jump & climb your way through the obstacle course, or take a stroll on the paved path along the waterfront! End the day with a closing ceremony with a bonfire and s'mores.

For the full schedule, how to rent kayaks, where the food will be and when, and so much more, follow these links below!

In This Issue...

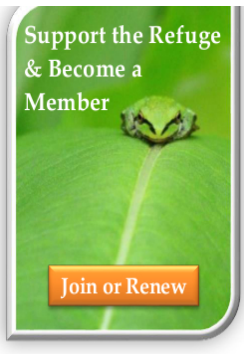
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Check out [the City of Ridgefield Page](#) [HERE](#)

Or the Facebook Event [HERE](#)
for more information!

Parking is free! No entrance fee! Activities are free! The ONLY cost is boat rental (if needed) and a \$5 registration fee for the two hour interpretive paddle. You can register online at Eventbrite or on the day of the event.

The image shows a registration form for the 'Interpretive Paddle' and a 'SCHEDULE OF EVENTS' for the 'Big Paddle Festival' on June 4, 2016. The registration form includes fields for name, address, phone, and email, and a section for 'Special and Note'. The schedule lists activities from 7:00 AM to 10:00 AM, including registration, paddle launch, and various paddling routes. A 'WATERFRONT' sign is also visible, indicating the location at the Point of Ridgefield.



Joining comes with great benefits including perks like 5% off at the Sportsman's Steakhouse & Saloon in Downtown Ridgefield just for being a member of the Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge! Check out the Benefits of Membership below to find out more.

Events

Volunteers Wanted!

Wednesday and Saturday volunteer crews are being put together to search out and pull Ricefield Bulrush (*Scirpus mucronatus*, an invasive species) from mid-June through early September.

Check out the Habitat and Restoration section of this newsletter for more info and who to contact to sign up.

Birding Hikes/Night Hikes:

A unique opportunity to see the Ridgefield Refuge at night! The following are led by our Education Specialist Aiden Forsi, start at 9pm, and last about two hours. Limit is 15 people per hike.

National Trails Day

June 4th is also National Trails Day!

June 4, 2016 is American Hiking Society's National Trails Day®, the country's largest celebration of trails. It "first began in 1993 to highlight the importance of the National Trails System, and to enhance its quality and accessibility for the general public. By encouraging partnerships with outdoor organizations, agencies, and trail groups, National Trails Day succeeds in uniting the larger trail community behind the common cause of demonstrating the tremendous value in America's trails. National Trails Day events will take place in every state across the country and will include hikes, biking and horseback rides, paddling trips, birdwatching, geocaching, gear demonstrations, stewardship projects and more."

So come on down to the Refuge (after attending some Big Paddle activities) and take a walk to show your support of our country's wonderful and beautiful trails!

For more information on what National Trails Day is about and how to get involved, check out the [National Trails Day Website](#)

Content credit courtesy

of: <http://nationaltrailsday.americanhiking.org/>

and <http://www.americanhiking.org/ntd/national-trails-day-part-of-something-bigger/>

7/19 - Oaks to Wetlands Trail

8/02 - Kiwa Trail

BirdFest & Bluegrass Planning Committee Seeks New Coordinator!

RSVP to Aiden_Forsi@fws.gov

[For the FWS official page click here](#)



Do you love attending our annual BirdFest celebration? Do you want to see it be successful in 2016? If so, than we need YOU to get involved in planning next years event.

Position: BirdFest and Bluegrass Event Coordinator
Date of Term: June-October 2016.
Part time- Independent Contractor.

Pay: \$1,000 a month

Direct duties will include working with the BFBG Committee and the President of the Friends Board in organizing the event, providing coordination of all of BFBG preparation and additional duties as assigned or needed. Including attending and running monthly Committee Meetings, coordinating subcommittee's, and overseeing the entire event planning.

Application and Cover Letter are due by June 3rd

For more information about the position and how to apply [CLICK HERE](#), and share with a friend!

First Leg of Town to Refuge Trail will be completed in July

We are happy to report that the Refuge portion of the new trail system connecting downtown Ridgefield to the Carty Unit of the Refuge will be complete in June! The segment that will run along side Main Ave, over Gee Creek, and connect to the Refuge is slated to begin construction in 2018. We want to extend a huge thank you to the Washington Conservation Corps Team Members for their hard work building the trail!

Help Represent the Friends and the Refuge at Community Outreach events!

We are looking for a few dedicated volunteers who love the refuge and would like to help others discover what makes this place special. Outreach volunteers are needed to help staff Friends and Refuge booths at events in our community from Ridgefield to Portland. Outreach volunteers work alongside Refuge and Friends staff to answer questions about the Refuge, provide information about what visitors can do at this Refuge, and act as ambassadors for one of our region's best kept secrets. Interested in learning how to get involved? Contact Park Ranger Josie Finley at Josie_Finley@fws.gov or call [\(360\) 887-4106](tel:(360)887-4106).

It's May! Which means the seasonal section of the Gibbons Creek Art Trail at Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge is now open!



The Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards have had some really interesting sightings lately, including a bobcat along the Dike trail between the Seasonal spur and the main branch of the trail.

From the River 'S' Contact Station

Additionally, western tanagers, bullocks orioles, western kingbirds, painted turtles, and garter snakes have recently been spotted along the trail. So



By late April, there is a palpable buildup of energy and excitement on the River 'S' unit of the refuge. People are eager to get out of their cars and explore along the road and on the Kiwa Trail. The resident wildlife and new migrants begin gearing up to find mates and settle into newly made nests. We had a beautiful day on opening day May 1st this year. By 7:30am, the parking area at the Kiwa trail entrance was already filled. One of the first visitors on the trail, later reported to the contact station volunteer, had seen a recently elusive Great Horned Owl. "He looked very nervous," reported a birder from Seattle. The owl wasn't there long as he had moved away when the Vancouver Audubon Group walked through the area. There were two birding groups eager to be out first thing on the opening day. Ron Escano lead a FWS birding tour also. He will be doing several birding trips, listed on the refuge website, both at Ridgefield and Steigerwald this spring and summer for those who might want a good introduction to birds of the refuges.

All around the refuge the birds have been in full song. Since you can get out of your car on the road, it is much easier to hear their calls and songs if you spend a few minutes standing quietly. With the water levels being rather high this year, the often sought American Bitterns have been calling from many sections of the auto tour. They were frequently reported on the Kiwa trail and have been calling around the blind overlooking rest lake. The deep, resonant ooooohnk-A-doonk call is always a thrill to hear. Soras and Virginia Rails appear to be plentiful and can be heard calling from many sections of the refuge. If you stand on the first wetlands bridge to the left on the Kiwa Trail, you can be surrounded by them. And yet, you may never see them. But it is fun to try and spot one passing under the bridge.

Mother's Day, May 8th, was a very, very busy day. Well-dressed High Schooler's brought their mom's to the refuge. One 4th grader brought his mom and four siblings for the day using his Everykidinapark Pass. If you have a fourth grader in your family, you can get a pass good until August 31st for free entrance to all national parks and refuges. Google it online for more information about this great program. Several Moms came for a walk on the refuge, including walking the whole auto route, as it was THEIR day. A few left the kids at home! There were people coming in their Sunday best who were changing in the rest rooms. One woman brought her 99-year-old mother with her to see the beautiful refuge. In six hours, we tallied 415 visitors to the River 'S' unit. It was such a beautiful day and everyone was enjoying the outdoors.

Visitors have reported a few lingering Sandhill cranes seen from the Kiwa Trail. Last year, we had a crane stay through the summer, so if we are lucky, a few might be around for good viewing. In the shadows of the forested area as you first walk into the Kiwa Trail, you might spot the albino Nutria munching grass. Later reports indicate there may be baby albino Nutria too. Keep a sharp eye out for this all white animal. They show up periodically in the population. It has been known to bump into people as it appears it

come out and enjoy the flurry of wildlife activity that Spring brings to Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge!

The Gibbons Creek Wildlife Art Trail is a flat graveled path connecting with the Columbia River dike trail along the southern boundary of the Refuge for a total of 2.75 miles. Along the way, enjoy the wildlife of riparian woodlands, fields, wetlands, creeks, and lakes.

- For more from the Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards [Click HERE](#)
- For the Steigerwald Lake NWR FWS page [Click HERE](#)

Kiwa Trail Now Open!



The Kiwa Trail on the River 'S' Unit can be reached by following the Auto Tour Route past the observation blind. The Kiwa Trail is open from May 1 to September 30 during daylight hours. The trail offers a generally level grade and is constructed of compacted gravel and boardwalks. The trail is well suited for wheelchairs, wheeled walkers, and baby strollers.

News from Our Volunteers

Michelle Maani is a Ridgefield NWR volunteer who leads school groups on nature hikes on the refuge. She described a recent experience to her friends:

doesn't see well. Watch your fingers though, this is not an animal to pet. They can be aggressive. As with all wildlife on the refuge, it is best to watch and observe, but not touch. We need to be good guests in their refuge home.

When you visit the refuge do stop and talk to the volunteer at the contact station. The volunteer crew staffs the contact station for a few hours almost every day. We are looking for more volunteers for this rewarding activity so we can expand our hours of operation. Everyone comes with their own expertise and it varies widely. It is our goal to assist you in having a great experience on the refuge. We enjoy learning from our visitors also. It is an amazing place.

Reporting from the River 'S' Contact Station- Susan Setterberg, Volunteer

Photo By: Virginia Scott

Ridgefield Refuge Complex

News & Events



Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

Naturalist Led Hikes

The following listings are for Steigerwald Lake, Pierce, and Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuges. Limited space is available. Sign up by calling (360) 887-4106 or emailing Josie_Finley@fws.gov.

Other groups that may be offering guided hikes are; Backyard Birdshop, Vancouver Audubon, Portland Audubon, and the Friends of the Columbia River Gorge.

Birding the Kiwa Trail at Ridgefield NWR

Leader: Ron Escano
• Saturday June 11th

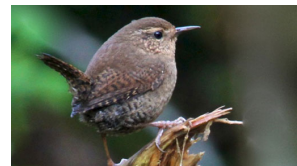
All walks meet at the trail head at 8:00 am and last about 3 hours. The Kiwa trail is half way around the Auto Tour Route so please allow yourself an extra 15 minutes to pay your entrance fee and make your way to the trail head.

"Yesterday I was with first graders. What a delight they are! When they saw a man walk by who had a rather massive white beard, they stared and whispered "I think that's Santa!" What does Santa do in the off season? He visits wildlife refuges. When I asked them who was the oldest person they knew, one little boy said: You! One little girl was obviously cold and not complaining. I was thinking of getting her one of the raincoats we had brought in case of bad weather, so I asked her if she was cold. She nodded. Immediately another little girl took off her coat and handed it to her! And you can't underestimate how much they know. Why are trees important? They give off oxygen so we can breathe! They provide habitat for animals and birds (yes, they said habitat). They fall on your house during storms!"

Species Spotlight

Pacific Wren

Troglodytes pacificus



What bird has the most complicated song here in our Northwest woods? My vote goes to the little Pacific Wren, whose notes pour out in a long and fast stream. The Pacific Wren was once lumped into the larger grouping of Winter Wrens, but was singled out as a separate species in 2010 after researchers confirmed the two wrens did not interbreed.

This is another of those challenging small brown birds that is often easier to "spot" by its song rather than by eye. The

There is no charge for this walk, however the Refuge does have an entrance fee of \$3 per vehicle or the use of an applicable federal lands pass. For more information about the fee program, and what passes are eligible, see our [Entrance Fee and Passes](#) page.

Birding the Gibbons Creek Wildlife Art Trail at Steigerwald Lake NWR

Leader: Ron Escano

- Saturday June 4th

All walks meet at the trail head at 8:00 am and last about 3 hours. There is no entrance fee at Steigerwald Lake NWR.

[Learn More](#)

Thank you for visiting the refuge and supporting conservation. If you have any questions regarding activities and regulations on the refuge, call the office Monday through Friday 7:30am to 3:30 pm at 360-887-4106.

Cathlapotle Plankhouse

Update & Events



Second Sunday Event:

Climate and Native Wisdom Documentary Film Series "People of the Whale" Film screening and talk

Join us for a film screening and presentation by Rose High Bear (Deg Hit'an Dine, or Alaskan Athabascan), Executive Director at Wisdom of the Elders, Inc. At 1:00pm Rose will discuss her

perky snort tail does make visual identification easier and you can often pick them out of the background by their quick movements through forest underbrush and on the lower sections of tree trunks. They are hunting for insects, spiders, larvae, and other high-protein snacks as they forage.

Pacific Wrens like cozy nests and often line an unused woodpecker hole with soft materials like moss and feathers. They may also build their own dome-shaped nest out of twigs, bits of tree bark, hair, and moss or excavate into a river bank. There they will lay anywhere from a single egg to as many as nine or ten eggs. At adulthood, the birds are from 3" to 4 1/2" in length and weigh only 8 to 12 grams.

The Pacific Wren is often associated with old-growth forests, although it may be seen and heard in most of our local forests and areas with stands of conifers. That complex song pattern is another signal of the changing of the seasons, as you normally begin to hear them here in the Northwest along forest trails as winter fades and spring arrives. Pacific Wrens range from California to Alaska and eastward as far as the Dakotas.

Did you know: Pacific Wrens' scientific name, *Troglodytes*, reflects its penchant for foraging and nesting in holes.

Photo by Dr. Madeline Kalbach

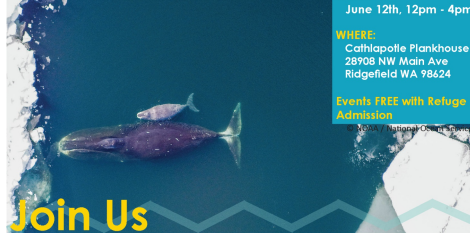


Birding

Wisdom of the Elders, and at 1:00pm Rose will discuss her organization's Climate and Native Wisdom Documentary Film Series, and screen the short documentary "People of the Whale". At 3:00 a Refuge Naturalist will lead an ethnobotany hike looking at the relationship that the Cathlapotle People had to their landscape, how the environment influences culture and culture influences the environment.

The Plankhouse will be open for visitors from 12pm-4pm, and there will be activities for kids as well.

Cathlapotle Plankhouse Second Sunday Series at the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge



1:00pm
FILM SCREENING & TALK "People Of The Whale"
 Presented by Rose High Bear, Executive Director at Wisdom of the Elders
 Rose High Bear (Deg Hit'an Dine, or Alaskan Athabascan), will discuss her organization's Climate and Native Wisdom documentary series and screen "People of the Whale", a short documentary featuring the Inupiat peoples. This film will share Inupiat perspectives on unprecedented climate issues being experienced in Alaska along with their rich cultural arts. Rose will also provide an update on two new documentary films being produced as part of the series focusing on treasured Native American elders, scientists and cultural leaders from the Pacific Coast and other parts of Oregon.

2:30pm
ETHNOBOTANY HIKE
 Join a Refuge Naturalist looking at the relationship that the Cathlapotle People had to their landscape, and the relationship between environment and culture.
(Hikes meet in front of the Plankhouse, approximately 1 mile hike on uneven terrain)
Plankhouse Tours & Kid's Activities Ongoing During Event.

For more info about the Plankhouse visit: <http://ridgefieldfriends.org>

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to this event for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodations needs to Sarah Hill, 503-837-4106, Sarah.Hill@fws.gov. TTY 800-877-8339 with your request by close of business one week before the event.

(Click this poster for a link to our website)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to this event for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodations needs to Juliet McGraw, 360- 887-4106, Plankhouse@gmail.com. TTY 800-877-8339 with your request by close of business one week before the event.

Upcoming Events and Exhibitions:

Archaeology Roadshow

Saturday June 4th

10am - 3pm

1 block from the PSU Farmers Market

FREE

Enthusiasts



See what is being seen at the refuge this week at our Weekly [Sightings](#) page, or get a summary of the year's sightings so far on the [2016 Sightings](#) page.

The Benefits of Membership

In addition to receiving the monthly E-News with Refuge updates, upcoming events and wildlife news, members enjoy member- and volunteer-only events. Also, with any \$50 membership, you will receive an annual Refuge Pass, which covers entrance fees.

Don't forget to glance at the [Refuge calendar](#), your one-stop shop for fun activities and volunteer opportunities!

Discounts at Local Businesses for New and Renewing Members:



Would you like to enjoy a cup of coffee from Ridgefield's Seasons after a morning hike on the Refuge? Or perhaps breakfast before you head out on the auto tour route at Pioneer Street Cafe? Lunch at Vinnie's Pizza in-between the River 'S' and Carty Units? Dinner and drinks at the Historic Sportsman's Restaurant and Lounge after a busy day of wildlife viewing? Or maybe you would like to get

We are gearing up for the next Archaeology Roadshow, set for Saturday, June 4th, 2016 at Hoffman Hall Portland State University Campus, 1833 SW 11th Ave.

This year's theme is the 'Archaeology of Dwellings'. Through interactive exhibits, displays and demonstrations we will explore our heritage as seen through the lens of "dwellings". Presentations will be hosted by archaeologists and other professionals and community members with local and traditional knowledge from universities, federal and state agencies, tribes, archaeology companies, and non-profit organizations. We will showcase heritage of dwellings in all its forms--drawing on archaeology, knowledge of historic buildings and places, oral traditions and historic documents. Besides our interactive exhibits, a panel of experts in archaeology, paleontology and geology will be on hand to identify the personal artifacts visitors bring. Stone, bone, woven, plant and historical items are welcome.

Questions? Contact Sarah at Sarah.Hill@fws.gov

or call (360) 887-4106

Habitat Restoration Updates & Events

Spring has sprung on the refuge. Red Elderberries (*Sambucus racemosa*) are heavy with fruit, rose bushes (*Rosa nutkana*) are full of blooms, and the cottonwoods (*Populus balsamifera*) are shedding their tiny tufts. Meanwhile staff and volunteers continue to search for invaders while the biomowers (cows) are busy prepping and fertilizing the ground for next year's crop of waterfowl.

If you haven't had the chance yet, now is a good time to take a stroll around the River 'S' and the Kiwa Trail, and if you're lucky you might happen to see one or two members of the new generation recently born on the refuge.

As we heat up and somewhat dry out, it is also time to start thinking about bulrush. June marks the start of the bulrush removal season. We are starting to put together Wednesday and Saturday volunteer crews to search out and pull Ricefield Bulrush (*Scirpus mucronatus*) from mid-June through early September.

For more information or to sign up please contact: keith.rutz@fws.gov

Online Store Now Open!

a discount on some supplies at Shorty's or Backyard Bird Shop?

[Become a Friend or renew your membership today](#), and receive a member card with great discounts at these wonderful local businesses! Feel free to [contact us](#) for any questions or inquiries.

Donate



Our Sponsors



The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge are proud to announce the opening of a new webstore! Now you can order our 50th Anniversary Gear- including the Pelican Brewing Company 50th Anniversary T-shirt and Pint Glass, as well as our Chinookan Steller's Jay T-shirt, all online!



Check out our [Shop](#) for links to the store and more info, or click [HERE](#) to go directly to the store!

Proceeds help support our unique education and restoration programs at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge!

Follow the Friends on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

Want regular updates on Refuge events and happenings? Follow the Friends on your favorite social media by clicking the logos below to stay connected even when you are off the Refuge.



Help the Friends and the Refuge When You Shop Online



When you link your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to the Friends, you help us earn donations from Fred Meyer Community Rewards. It doesn't change your regular personal shopping and fuel rewards, but

it does make a meaningful contribution to our work on the Refuge.

It's easy to sign up. Just go to www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards. You can search for us by our name, Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, or by our non-profit number, 89824. Then, every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping the Friends earn a donation to support the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. If you do not have a Rewards Card, they are available at the Customer Service desk of any Fred Meyer store.

You Can Also Shop and Give Online at AmazonSmile.com

Log on to smile.amazon.com, shop as you usually would and .5% of your purchase will be donated directly to the Friends. Use the special link, smile.amazon.com, with your existing user name and password.

To set up your AmazonSmile account, click [this](#)



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To set up your AmazonSmile account, click this link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/91-2018749>. When prompted to select a charity, choose the **Friends of Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge**. Begin shopping as you normally would and the Friends will receive 0.5% of eligible purchases.

Thanks for being an EcoShopper and helping the Refuge!

Header Photo Credit: Javier Urquiza 2007 Photo Contest Honorable Mention

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