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The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The latest updates | March, 2020



Volunteer at the Refuge!

Volunteer Orientation: Save the Date!

Come out to learn the basics of who we are and what you can do to help your community be healthier through a connection to wildlife. New and returning volunteers are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Date: April 11th

Time: 10 am to 2 pm

Location: Vancouver (exact location to be announced)

This orientation will be offered three times a year at different locations and times of the week in order to catch those who have varied schedules. Stay tuned for updates on upcoming events in August and January.



For more information contact Josie Finley at 360-608-2059 or email Josie_Finley@fws.gov

Don't forget to check the [Washington Trails Association website](#) for opportunities to volunteer with WTA and help rebuild the Oaks-to-Wetlands Trail! Find events at Ridgefield on their calendar to sign up.

From the Refuge

Nature From Your Doorstep - Improved Access 50 years and Counting



As we celebrate the completion of two major and very impactful visitor access projects, and the good weather starts to make regular appearances, I see smiles in this community. Big smiles. Smiles when I say that the River S bridge is almost done and people can soon return to their beloved auto tour route months sooner than projected (March 2nd!). Smiles walking by my office window on the new Main Street sidewalk leading from town to the Carty Unit. Smiles when I say that May will see the rest of the seasonal trails open and provide access to a 4.8 mile walk through town and the Refuge. Smiles from brand new visitors that had no idea what they might find when they followed those brown signs and cannot wait to participate in Ridgefield First Saturdays and Cathlapotle Plankhouse Second Sundays. While an early spring worries the biologist in me, I know that a rush of visitors happy to be outside and eager to participate is always good for a community, and for the future of places like this. All of these smiles got me wondering about the

history of this refuge and what visitors looked forward to those 54 years ago... [Keep Reading...](#)

- Josie Finley, Visitor Services Manager, Ridgefield NWR

Photo: USFWS- 6th grade school group on a field trip around Rest Lake

Ridgefield Refuge Complex News & Events

River 'S' and Trail Closures

-- ****UPDATE:****

The River 'S' Unit Auto Tour is now officially open 7 days a week once again! Now that the new bridge is in place, we can safely enter the Ridgefield Refuge's River 'S' Unit on a two-lane bridge that takes you up and over the railroad tracks. Keep an eye out for a few more small closures as we clean up after this project and get things tidy once again. The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is open during daylight hours, check the Refuge website for current hours.



To learn about this project, and see it happen in real-time through videos, time-lapse, and blog posts, check out the [Refuge 20/20 website](#). Here, you can also learn about other in-progress and completed projects like the Oak-to-Wetlands Trail Oak Release, the Main Street Extension, the Steigerwald Lake Reconnection, and more!

Please contact the Refuge Office at (360) 887-4106 during regular business hours (M-F, 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM) for more information.

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 7:30 am to 3:30 pm at 360-887-4106.

From the Contact Station

More Days for Harrier and Owl Watching, Yes!



As I write, we are waiting for the announcement of the date for River 'S' Unit to be open during the week again. It's almost painful to wait. You will be seeing some of the contact station volunteers returning to the weekday duties. Some things to keep in mind when you visit. With the mild winter, we are already seeing snakes on the road, coming out of their dens to warm. Make sure the stick you are about to drive over isn't a snake. Also, the wildlife is used to having the Refuge to itself lately, so be aware the animals might not be as used to you anymore. Our habitat specialist said the deer born this last year are bouncing around like new puppies ...[Keep Reading...](#)

- Susan Setterberg, Contact Station Volunteer

- Photo: Kerry Wu, Adult Honorable Mention, 2016 Refuge Photo Contest



Cathlapotle Plankhouse Updates & Events

Cathlapotle Plankhouse 15th Birthday Celebration

The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge & The Chinook Indian Nation present:

MARCH 29,

2020, 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Join us in celebrating the Plankhouse's birthday!

RIDGEFIELD NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
CARTY UNIT, 28908 N MAIN AVE,

CATHLAPOTLE PLANKHOUSE 15TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

MARCH 29, 2020
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE
PLANKHOUSE'S BIRTHDAY!

RIDGEFIELD NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
CARTY UNIT, 28908 N MAIN AVE,
RIDGEFIELD, WA, 98642



RIDGEFIELD, WA, 98642

Stop by Sunday, March 29th, for Cathlapotle Plankhouse talks, kid's crafts and activities, and more birthday fun! Download the flyer and more, [here](#).

Event free with \$3.00 per vehicle Refuge admission

THE PLANKHOUSE IS ALSO OPEN
SATURDAY & SUNDAY,
MAY 2ND- OCTOBER 4TH, 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM
(click flyer to view larger or download)



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WWW.RIDGEFIELDFRIENDS.ORG

EVENT PARTNERS ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING ACCESS TO THIS EVENT FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS. PLEASE DIRECT ALL REQUESTS FOR SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING SERVICES, CLOSED CAPTIONING, OR OTHER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS TO JULIE MCCRAW AT JULIE.MCCRAW@FWS.GOV, 360-524-5910 TTY 800-877-8339 WITH YOUR REQUEST, BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS ONE WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT.



Greg Robinson was the Project Foreman for the building of the Cathlapotle Plankhouse, and this year while we celebrate 15 years of the House being open, we are featuring Greg Robinson's art on items in the Friends Merch Shop. [Stop by the Friends merch shop here](#) and grab a tshirt or sweatshirt, mug or tote bag, all featuring Greg Robinson's Chinookan Stellers Jay art.



Preserve America is a national initiative in cooperation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; the U.S. Departments of Defense, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Education; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities; and the President's Council on Environmental Quality.

Habitat Restoration Updates & Events

Oso berry, Camas, and Daffodils, Oh My!!!



The first signs of spring are popping up around town and within the refuge. Oso berry (Indian Plum) is a native shrub that indicates the coming of spring. It is the only shrub in bloom right now on the refuge. You can recognize it by the clusters of vibrant green leaves and little droopy white flowers. The shrub is anywhere between 2 inches - 10 feet in height! In the summer it will form small plum-like berries that are yellow, red, and purple. Come walk our trails and see them while you can.

Another flower is starting to grow in one of our planting sites along the Oaks to Wetlands trail on the Carty unit. You may

have noticed an area near the Cathlapotle Plankhouse with white pin flags under an oak tree. This plot of land is a restoration site for common camas, a star shaped purple/blue flower that stands around 4 inches tall. The bulb of this plant was a key resource for food and trade to the native peoples that lived in this area. There used to be fields of this plant that were so large and dense that they created illusions of lakes or smaller bodies of water. If you come visit between April and May you should start to see them bloom. Please take all the photos you want, and you will do the flowers a great favor by not picking them or walking on the grass. By doing this you will help promote future generations of this beautiful plant and protect them from being overrun by invasive plants that may cling to your shoes.

High Tunnel

Our high tunnel project is quickly wrapping up! Within the last few days we have started to put up the plastic walls. We are excited to start building planting beds and collecting plant cuttings. We plan to take branches from shrubs like red osier dogwood, willow, and indian plum that are on the refuge.



Habitat Volunteer Work Parties:

Wednesdays & 2nd Saturday of the month
9:00 am - 12:30 pm

The weather has been holding up perfectly for work parties. It is cool and crisp in the morning and cheerfully bright. Volunteers have been working hard at removing Himalayan blackberry and common mullein from the Oak Release restoration site on the Carty Unit. They have also been planting native grass seed to help cover up bare spots and keep invasive plants from growing back. You can join or find out more information from keith_rutz@fws.gov.

Species Spotlight

Bald Eagle

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

For those experienced birders and frequent Refuge visitors, late winter through the early summer is an exciting time on the Refuge for a variety of reasons. Of course, as spring comes around, things are in bloom, but more importantly, it's breeding season for many species of bird and mammal on the Refuge.

Raptors, in particular, have been putting on mating displays, building nests, and defending territory. Bald Eagles have been spotted bringing nesting material to their nest to the north... Keep Reading...

-Samantha Zeiner, Administrative Coordinator

Photo: Dennis Davenport, Adult Honorable Mention 2016 Refuge Photo Contest



Seeking Business Alliance Members

As a member of the Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Business Alliance, you invest in one of our urban metropolitan area's most unique and diverse natural and cultural resources. Click here to find out more

Board Seeking New Board Members

Or, Join a Committee

The Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is a non-profit dedicated to promoting educational and cultural programs of the Ridgefield NWR, and protecting and enhancing its wildlife habitat. We are currently seeking candidates to serve on our board of directors. We are recruiting candidates with diverse backgrounds and skills for several open board positions, in addition to candidates interested in serving on a committee (board membership not required).



Find out more about the Friends, and [contact us here](#)

Calling All Volunteers!

Save the date for new quarterly volunteer orientations! The first one is April 11th, 2020.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Habitat Restoration

Volunteers get to see the most beautiful places on the Refuge while helping to ensure that native wildlife have food and shelter. Summer work is focused on maintaining winter plantings and controlling invasive plants that threaten to take over habitat. Crews meet on most Wednesday and Saturday mornings. Contact Keith Rutz at Keith_rutz@fws.gov or 360-887-3883 x 14.

Refuge and Trail Greeters

Over 120,000 visitors flock to the Refuge annually to enjoy nature through participation in wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, cultural interpretation, hunting, and fishing. Volunteers help to make their experiences meaningful. Share your enthusiasm for nature and make the Refuge a welcoming place for people walking our trails, stopping at the Visitor Contact Station and driving the AutoTour.

Volunteer naturalists needed to walk trails and teach people about what they can see and enjoy at the Refuge this summer!

If you are interested, email Josie_Finley@fws.gov to be put on the update list.

Cathlapotle Plankhouse

The Cathlapotle Plankhouse draws thousands of visitors to the Refuge each year. Help share the legacy of the Indigenous people who have tended to this place since time immemorial as a Plankhouse Docent or Cultural Educator. Field trips take place during the weekdays. Docents staff the house on weekends from April - September.

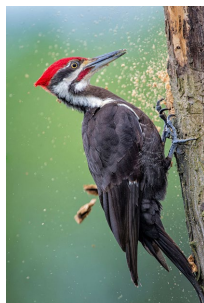
If you are interested, email Josie_Finley@fws.gov to be put on the update list.

Support the Friends

Help us inspire people to support the Refuge! Whether you help us out during BirdFest & Bluegrass in October by giving directions or helping set up, or by providing outreach for what the Friends do, or joining the board or a committee, every little bit helps.

[Learn more about volunteering at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge here](#)

Birding Enthusiasts

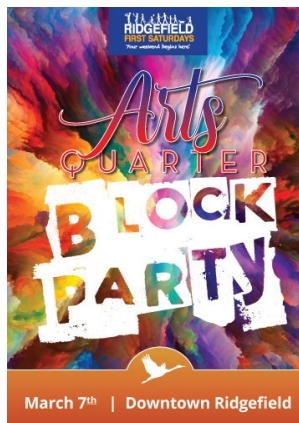


Check out what species are being seen on the Refuge [here](#).

Ridgefield First Saturday:

Arts Quarter Block Party

March 7, 2020

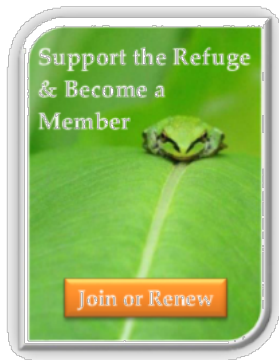


Encourage a lifetime of creativity! Explore the downtown Arts Quarter, see performing arts, take an arts class, visit the kids arts & crafts activity center and help kick-off Ridgefield Youth Arts Month. Youth Arts Month represents a partnership between Ridgefield School District and the

Ridgefield Art Association encouraging young people to take part in artistic endeavors including literary, visual, musical, and performing arts.

Youth Arts Month happens throughout the month of March with events taking place at all four district schools as well as at community businesses and organizations.

Benefits of Membership



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? 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 (5% off a meal with member card!)? Or maybe you would like to get a discount on some supplies at Shorty's or Backyard Bird Shop? How about a night out at Ilani? Find out more, 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.

The Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge promote the enjoyment, understanding, and protection of native and endangered birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. We focus on our local community and the Pacific Northwest. Visit us on the web at www.ridgefieldfriends.org

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.



Support While You Shop



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 click here](#). You can search for us by our name, Friends of Ridgefield NWR, or by our non-profit number, PK822.

Then, every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping earn a donation to support the Friends and Ridgefield NWR. If you do not have a Rewards Card, ask at the Customer Service desk of any FM store.



Log on to smile.amazon.com and shop as you usually would - .5% of your purchase will be donated directly to the Friends! Use the link with your existing user name and password. When prompted to select a charity, choose the Friends of Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge.



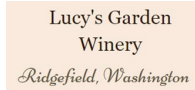
Giving Assistant makes it easy to donate to Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge! Simply shop online, earn cash back, and donate as much as 30% of your purchase price - Giving Assistant facilitates the whole process. Now, you can help change the world for free while saving money at over 3,000 popular online retailers like Home Depot, ULTA, and Macy's! [Start HERE!](#) Thanks for being an EcoShopper and helping the Refuge!

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Business Alliance Members:



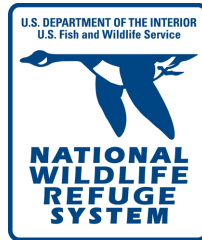
In-kind Support:



BirdFest & Bluegrass:



Granting Organizations & Partners:



Header Photo Credit: Raul Moreno, 2nd Place 2017 Refuge Photo Contest

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