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The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The latest updates | May, 2020

From the Friends

All of us here at the Friends hope that you are well and able to safely enjoy nature wherever you happen to be during this unprecedented and challenging time.

Shortly before the Refuge auto tour closed, I was able to go for a drive with my family on one of the first warm, sunny days of the year. We saw geese, egrets, deer, and even an otter - and of course many, many birds. My young kids and I listened to the tour narrative as we drove along, a recording that was done years ago by previous board members and is still benefiting visitors today.

As the board of directors, we are tasked with taking the long view of the Friends and its work, thinking about how to serve Refuge visitors now as well as years from now. We are fortunate because all we have to do is look to the land itself when we need to think long-term. When stay-at-home orders are lifted and the gates open, the Refuge will still be there. The species and habitats that we have worked together to care for will still be there too.

And, with your help, the Friends will be there. As a nonprofit, much of the work we do is funded through the support of our members and supporters. From now through May 5, we invite you to participate in [#GivingTuesdayNow](#) and support the [Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge](#).

We need you now more than ever. Our work doesn't stop, even when the gates are closed. Your generous donations keep our projects moving forward - projects that support the wildlife habitat that we all hold so dear.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Anna Wilde and the Board of Directors

[Giving Tuesday Now](#)

[Add this date to my Google Calendar](#)

From the Refuge

Refuge staff would like to extend their admiration to the surrounding community and our regular visitors. Having much of our usual outdoor recreation space and activity unavailable has no doubt had an impact as we have relied on these for our self-care routines. When we regularly experience a space it becomes part of us, and when we are disconnected from it, it feels like we are missing an important part of our lives. Knowing what a tree species looks like is a different experience than knowing specific oak and ash trees. Understanding the life cycles of local wildlife is nowhere near the same as getting to know the individual species that use our favorite spaces. We can learn the facts anywhere, but when we are a regular visitor to a home rich with wildlife, we get to know those individuals personally. Their story becomes part of ours.

Some people dislike the idea of “anthropomorphizing” animals, or giving them human characteristics. I ask, “How can we help it?” We see the deer playing in the field before the Refuge closes and they remind us of our own carefree children. We watch the otter play in the slough and it looks like they are having so much fun! We see the birds teaching their young and our human instincts to care for each other help us connect with those animals. That is how humans come to care about other living things outside of their immediate communities. The beautiful thing is that these spaces and wildlife, just like the friends and family we miss so much, will be there when we return. It will be like connecting to that lifetime friend after an absence - as if time never lapsed. We will pick up the conversation right where we left off.

Until then, let me share with you my own surprising realization; With my unexpected time at home I am finding new ways to learn the personalities of the wildlife outside of my own windows. It never before occurred to me that I know the wildlife at the refuge more than I know what is around my own home. So my daughter and I are starting over. We are identifying every bird that comes to the closest tree and learning about its life-cycle, even if we have seen it a thousand times at the refuge. We are brainstorming where wildlife might live around us and if there are small things that we could do to help make their habitats healthier. We are walking around our yard identifying plants, those we think we know and those we may not have noticed before. What stories are behind these species? How are their behaviors similar and different from what we see at the Refuge? We are learning the story of the wildlife that occupy our spaces and in that, we are feeling more at home than ever.

So again, I want to say thank you for your immense patience. Thank you for doing what is best for the health of yourself, your family, and your community both immediate and extended. Thank you for respecting the changes that have been so hard to make around your favorite outdoor spaces. The health of volunteers, visitors and neighboring communities have depended on everyone’s collective sacrifice. We are in this stressful and often scary situation together. Staff continue the important work of serving you by improving the Refuge and its programs, in a safe and healthy, and temporarily distanced way. We so look forward to seeing your healthy and happy faces in the future.

-Josie Flinley, Visitor Services Manager, RNWR



REFUGE STATUS

**Auto Tour Route on River 'S' Unit:
VEHICLE ACCESS ONLY**

Visitors must remain in their vehicle at all times along the Auto Tour Route to uphold necessary social distancing guidelines during the pandemic.

NO PUBLIC ACCESS to bathrooms, informational kiosks, parking lots, trails or the viewing blind. The Refuge is fee free at this time.



Updates will be posted to the refuge website, www.fws.gov/refuge/Ridgefield

AUTO TOUR ROUTE

In response to the recent adjustments to state recreation access in Washington during the pandemic, the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Auto Tour Route on the River S Unit will re-open May 5th, 2020 to vehicle traffic ONLY. No bikes or pedestrian access at this time.

There will be no public access to bathrooms, informational kiosks, parking lots, trails and the viewing blind due to the inability to uphold necessary social distancing guidelines during the pandemic. The Refuge is fee free at this time.

Gate Time -

Current gates times for the Auto Tour Route on the River 'S' Unit are: 6:00 AM - 8:30 PM. Note that gates close automatically. Vehicles must exit before gate closes and there is no entry before or after hours. Please expect increased traffic and long waiting times to navigate around the tour and plan accordingly.

CARTY UNIT (from both Main Ave and the Port entrance)

All Carty Unit public use facilities and access to those facilities (including all trails, parking lots, the Plankhouse, restrooms, and the Refuge Office) are **NOT** available to the public.

By following these temporary adjustments to access you ensure the safety and health of yourself, other visitors, the Ridgefield community and our staff. We look forward to continuing to serve you by providing safe and healthy wildlife dependent recreation into the future.

To feel more connected to nature and the Refuge while staying home, stay tuned to the Friends Social Media streams on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram - we are working to share activities, videos of nature on and off the Refuge, and more. Social links can be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

From the Contact Station:

The Refuge in the time of Coronavirus

I wrote this article a month ago when we were still able to do the River 'S' Auto Tour. Things have changed with the closure and we are all missing our refuge. And, a rewrite was required. I imagine, in our absence, the deer are dancing in the fields, otters are happily fishing, American Bitterns are "oooohnk-A-Doonking" and the Great Horned Owls are maybe watching their owlets make their way out on a limb. Party down critters! The Yellow-headed Blackbirds should be here, and our Wilson's Snipe are winnowing with their mating display...

Keep Reading...

-Susan Setterberg, Contact Station Volunteer





Cathlapotle Plankhouse Updates & Events

The Friends are working as hard as they can behind the scenes to keep up as much as possible with the Education and Cultural programs that happen on the Refuge. As of right now, volunteer programs are on hold until further notice. Keep an eye out for updates as we learn more and as things change. Stay safe out there!



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. [RNWR Page here](#) .

Habitat Restoration Updates & Events

The Friends are working as hard as they can behind the scenes to keep up as much as possible with the habitat restoration needed on the Refuge. As of right now, volunteer programs are on hold until further notice - but we are working on ways for our current volunteers to help out on the Refuge safely. Keep an eye out for updates as we learn more and as things change. Stay safe out there!



Birding Enthusiasts

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



Ridgefield First Saturdays: May Day Spring Festival May 2nd, 2020



Transformed to VIRTUAL EVENT due to COVID-19. Details will be available soon.

It is the Fifth Anniversary of First Saturday!

[Full Schedule HERE](#)

Species Spotlight

Pacific or Western Trillium
Trillium ovatum



Walking in northwestern woods in the springtime feels a little like entering Jurassic Park – giant horsetails, brackens, ferns, devil’s club and other prehistoric-looking plants are bursting into leaf and bloom all along the trails. Among the riot of green this time of year you’ll also find the simple yet elegant trillium with its repeating motif of threes; leaves, petals, and sepals...

Keep Reading...

Article & Photo by Trink Schurian

Become a Business Alliance Member!

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 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, and [contact us here](#)

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!



Would you like to enjoy a cup of coffee from Ridgefield's Seasons Coffee 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.

Benefits of Membership



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.

Sponsors

Business Alliance Members:

In-Kind Support:



BirdFest & Bluegrass:



Granting Organizations & Partners:



Header Photo Credit: Sandra Michaelis, 2nd Place Plants Category 2018 Refuge Photo Contest

FRIENDS OF RIDGEFIELD NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

[Contact Us](#) | [Website](#)

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.

