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## The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The latest updates | July, 2020

### From the Friends

*"We are at the cusp of a turning point that embraces human diversity as joyfully as the diversity of feathered creatures." - Corina Newsom, [Audubon Magazine](#), June 16, 2020*

This month has seen a staggering amount of change against the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic, with closures and safety measures that are now stretching into 100-plus days. As I remain at home, preparing to venture cautiously and safely back into public spaces, I'm mindful of the ways in which the so-called "life before" was neither healthy nor safe.

The Friends does not exist outside of these seismic societal shifts, and we believe we have a part to play in dismantling systemic racism. The Friends began as a small group of Refuge enthusiasts who wanted to band together to support its programs. This means that we play an active role in welcoming people to this special place, as well as to outdoor spaces and conservation in general.

We take this role seriously, and we acknowledge the ways in which outdoor spaces have been unwelcoming or unsafe for people of color.

As a board, we have been thinking about how we can disrupt the patterns of environmental racism and we have proposed a number of actions to work on in the short and long term.

- We have formed a committee of board members, staff, and community members to talk about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion issues in our organization and our work
- We are convening a group to talk about what a [Land Acknowledgement](#) would look like for our organization
- We are looking for more ways to highlight BIPOC voices on conservation, recreation, and environmental issues (like [#BlackBirdersWeek](#) and [#BlackHikersWeek](#))
- We are looking for ways to make our events welcoming and inclusive, particularly to communities who are underrepresented in outdoor recreation and conservation

We are always looking for input from Friends members and the community in our work, and this is particularly true at this moment. We want to hear your ideas and concerns. Let's think about these issues as a community.

Anna Wilde and the FRNWR Board of Directors  
[president@ridgefieldfriends.org](mailto:president@ridgefieldfriends.org)

## From the Refuge

Meet the future Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Project Leader, Juliette Fernandez



As I gear up to head out to a place far rainier than the desert southwest, I am looking forward to meeting the Ridgefield NWR Complex team, the Friends, volunteers, local community and everyone that holds the refuges close to their heart.

As a child, I spent endless hours wandering desert washes, climbing hillsides and investigating every rock and creature along the way. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has helped me make a career of my childhood wanderings and I am very proud to be part of the National Wildlife Refuge System,

engaging the public in refuge lands and providing opportunities for future conservationists. I have always wanted to work in Washington. From chum salmon and pond turtles to dusky Canada geese and Colombia watercress, the biodiversity fascinates me and I am very eager to learn more.

Through my career, I have met lifelong friends. Coworkers and volunteers I met 15 years ago remain family to me. I hold the communities I've served close to my heart and I am fulfilled by the continued successes on the refuges I've long since left. I am excited to start this new chapter with all of you and look forward to exploring all that we can accomplish together.

I am excited to meet you, Friends! See you soon!

**Juliette Fernandez - Future Ridgefield Refuge Project Leader (As of August 2020)**



## Ridgefield Refuge Complex News & Events Refuge Access Update During Pandemic

### CARTY UNIT: (FROM BOTH MAIN AVE AND THE PORT ENTRANCE)

All Carty Unit trails are now OPEN- BUT public use facilities and access to those facilities (including parking lots, the Cathlapotle Plankhouse, restrooms, and the Refuge Office) are NOT available to the public. The end of the Oaks to Wetland will be posted as a one-way loop. Please follow all posted signs. The trail will be closed every Thurs at the old oak.

### AUTO TOUR ROUTE:

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Auto Tour Route on the River 'S' Unit re-opened May 5th, 2020 to vehicle traffic ONLY. 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.

**Current gate times are: 5:30 AM - 9:00 PM.**

**The Refuge is fee free at this time.**

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. 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. Find out more about one segment, [#TakeaWalkTuesday, from The Columbian here.](#)*



## From the Contact Station:



-Photos: Pied-billed Grebe baby, and Savannah Sparrow from the River 'S' Unit, by Susan Setterberg, Contact Station Volunteer



## Cathlapotle Plankhouse Updates & Events

Across the Pacific Northwest we are welcoming summer in. For me personally, it is quite a relief from the unusual spring we have had. I hope everyone is able to be outside, in one form or another, and enjoy this glorious weather.

I would like to begin with thanking everyone who has reached out to support the Refuge, Friends, and the Plankhouse at this time. Your messages of encouragement and offers of help have been amazing. In the near future hopefully we will be able to gather again in person.

The Friends are committed to supporting Fish and Wildlife staff as they follow state and federal guidelines to reopen our Refuge programs and resources. During this time, all of us here at the Refuge appreciate your patience and support while we work together to bring you the RNWR.

Please stay tuned for future updates, including when we get to begin the refurbishment of the Cathlapotle Plankhouse floor, our new partnership with ReWild Portland, and more!

hayu masi,  
**Juliet McGraw, Community & Cultural Education Director**



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

Welcome Emily Lane - Habitat Restoration Technician

My name is Emily Lane and I am a recent WSU Vancouver Alumni. I graduated in May with my Bachelor's degree in Earth and Environmental Sciences along with a double minor in Anthropology and Zoology. In order to complete my degree, it was required that I have at least 135 hours of field experience, so I reached out to Keith in the spring of my Junior year and I have been volunteering at the Refuge ever since. Having that background and forging those relationships prior to my hiring here has been immensely helpful





with getting oriented and learning the ropes. My passions include wildlife conservation and habitat restoration, and the tasks I have been completing thus far at the refuge have been leaving me happy and fulfilled. I come to work everyday with so much excitement for the day's work, and I am so thankful for the opportunity I have been given to live out my passions in the work that I do here on the refuge. I am so looking forward to what this next year has in store!

*As of right now, new 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 to prevent losing ground we have made in work like invasive species prevention. If you are a current volunteer, check your email for updates. Stay safe out there!*



## Volunteering with the Friends



To all volunteers, community members, and friends. I have collected some ideas to help you nurture and tend to your personal refuge while you are stuck at home.

### Backyard projects:

Summer has officially begun! Now is a great time to think about how you can invite wildlife into your yard. There are many diy options for creating beautiful and safe stopping points for wildlife to come by and refuel. Some ideas include bird feeders, bird baths, and gardening. You can create a mini wildlife refuge in your backyard by planting native plants like bulbs, shrubs, and trees. Oregon State University created a lengthy article with native plants [here](#) with all the info you could possibly want! Make sure to check your plant hardiness zone before buying. Here in Ridgefield we are able to grow plants that like zones 7-8. This is another nice [website](#) with pictures

of PNW native plants for your garden. Even if you only have a balcony, you can still create sitting or hanging pots to help out your pollinator friends. We would love to see what you have been up to. Send us your at home habitat projects, plant tips or recommendations, and photos to [me here!](#)

### Mental Health projects:

Things have been stressful in the world, and it is important to take some time to look after and care for the lovely refuge inside your head called the brain! I would personally like to recommend a book to you all that I have found to be very helpful right now. The book is called Radical Compassion by Tara Brach. One of our habitat volunteers told me about this author and another other book called Radical Acceptance. I have been listening to the audiobook version for free on Amazon during my 30 day trial. It gets a bit spendy after the 30 days so be sure to mark your calendars so you can cancel before they start charging you. This book has guided mindfulness and meditation practices to help with stress and healing. Who doesn't want to learn how to be kinder and more loving toward themselves and others? I hope you check it out and find it as helpful as I do.

-Elena Tinoco, Volunteer Coordinator

## Birding Enthusiasts

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

## Ridgefield First Saturdays: 4th of July Celebration July 4th, 2020



Ridgefield celebrates the Fourth of July each year with patriotism and small town charm. In 2020, we are adapting the event to keep our community safe and healthy. Please check the event details to learn



how to participate!  
[Full Schedule HERE](#)

## Species Spotlight

### Sandhill Crane

*Antigone canadensis*



Many of you who follow our E-newsletter might be a little confused. Usually we highlight the Sandhill Crane in the fall, when their migratory routes bring them back for some rest in Ridgefield, and we celebrate that return with the BirdFest & Bluegrass festival. Well this year is apparently one for many changes and new beginnings, and Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is not exempt from that...

#### Keep Reading...

By *Samantha Zeiner, Administrative Coordinator* -  
Photo: *Gary Davenport*

## 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](#)

## Friends Board Meetings

Join the Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Board for their monthly meeting. Meetings start at 5pm every second Monday of the month and will be on Zoom until further notice, [contact us](#) to join in!

July 13th, August 10th, September 14th, October 19th, November 9th, December 14th, 2020



## 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.



You shop. Amazon gives.

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

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Header Photo Credit: Oca Hoeflein, 2018 2nd Place Landscape Category, Refuge Photo Contest

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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.

