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## The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The latest updates | October, 2020

### BirdFest & Bluegrass 2020 at Home Edition

Join us Saturday, October 3rd for BirdFest & Bluegrass fun, right from your own home! You can pick up craft kits in town at the City of Ridgefield offices (230 Pioneer St) on Friday starting at 10am while supplies last, these packets include all sorts of fun goodies, including buttons! Make sure to sign up for Refuge Trivia on Friday, October 2nd, and tune in for shopping, music, education and fun all day long on October 3rd, on the BirdFest & Bluegrass Facebook page! You don't have to have Facebook to view our content, just head to the page below for links to see videos about bird language, craft tutorials, birding photography, Refuge plants, Sandhill Cranes, the Cathlapotle Plankhouse, and more!



**BIRDER'S MARKETPLACE AVAILABLE ALL DAY**  
[HTTP://BIT.LY/VIRTUALEVENTSATURDAY](http://bit.ly/virtualeventsaturday)  
BLUEGRASS MUSIC AT INTERVALS BETWEEN ACTIVITIES

**EVENT SCHEDULE**  
**FRIDAY OCTOBER 2ND**  
TRIVIA NIGHT 7:00 PM

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 3RD**  
SANDHILL CRANES AT SUNRISE 7:00 AM  
"WELCOME HOME" VIDEO TRIBUTE 7:20 AM  
BIRDING PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS 8:00 AM  
PHOTO CONTEST WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT 8:10 AM  
CATHLAPOTLE VILLAGE WALK 10:30 AM  
CATHLAPOTLE, A NATIVE HOME 10:45 AM  
WATERCOLOR TUTORIAL 11:45 AM  
THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF BIRDS 1:30 PM  
FAMILY NATURE CRAFTS 3:00 PM  
VIRTUAL BIRD SHOW 4:30 PM  
NATURE AND INDIGENOUS MUSIC OF THE AMERICAS 6:00 PM  
FESTIVAL CLOSING 6:55 PM  
SANDHILL CRANES AT SUNSET 7:00 PM

**WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/RIDGEFIELDBIRDFEST**



**Stay tuned here!**

[Shop the Birder's Marketplace and more at the City's page here!](#)

## BirdFest & Bluegrass Trivia Night



Register your team for Refuge Trivia Night, Friday, October 2nd, to kick off BirdFest & Bluegrass 2020! Grab your favorite beverage, get a comfy chair, and hang out on Zoom with us and friends who you may not get to see very often! We will cover Refuge facts, birding identification, BirdFest & Bluegrass history, and more about wildlife and Ridgefield.

This is a great opportunity to invite friends from far away to hang out with you for some fun, birding, and facts! Registration caps at 9 people per team, but you can register more if you need to by starting a second registration. [Find Out More!](#)

## BirdFest & Bluegrass Commemorative Buttons!

Find the 2020 BirdFest & Bluegrass commemorative buttons featuring the Bird of the Year, the White-breasted Nuthatch, for sale at [Season's Coffee](#), [Backyard Bird Shop](#), and [Ridgefield Hardware](#)! You have to keep building your bluegrass band if you have gotten buttons in the past, right?

Just \$5.00

There will be a limited number of buttons this year, so get yours before they're gone!

[Find Out More](#)



## From the Friends



On behalf of the board and staff here at the Friends, we want to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated during the Give More 24 fundraiser on September 24! We couldn't do this work without you, and we are so grateful for your support. We achieved our goal, and beat it, with a total of \$5,796.00 donated!

Now, we are so excited to invite you to the 2020 BirdFest and Bluegrass: Home Edition, which begins Friday, October 2 and extends through Saturday with opportunities to learn, laugh, listen to music, and enjoy

the natural beauty of the Refuge. See you online!

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

## From the Refuge

## River 'S' Auto Tour Route Notice

1) The Auto Tour Route will be **closed on Tuesday and Wednesday, 10/6 & 10/7/2020** for road grading the tour route and entrance road.



Seasonal transitions in this area are a truly magical experience to me. Our local natural spaces bring our senses alive as summer turns into fall. Many of us pause in moments of joy and feelings of home when we see the leaves turn, hear geese overhead, and feel that relief of a cool breeze and the first real rain storms. How perfect that BirdFest this year has that same “Home” theme.

This transition from hot and dry to wet and cool has been more of a relief than ever in these past couple of years with wildfires getting closer and more intense to our part of the region. This year is more chaotic than ever but the return of our most charismatic bird friends makes me feel like something is still working as it should, and gives me hope for healing on the land. I want to take these joyous times of reflection while listening and feeling the return of fall to thank all of you for your support. Through this chaotic summer you have continued to be champions for conservation through your time, your stories, and your dedication, coming in so many forms. While having to spend a lot more time and effort taking care of your human family’s basic needs, you have continued to pay attention and share the wonders of nature with those around you. The waterfowl returning, the many young animals spending their first winter on this earth, and the many people that find physical and mental respite on our local refuges thank you for being part of this community.

As we transition into our fall and winter season at Ridgefield you will see the same cyclical changes you have come to rely on, both in the plants and wildlife present, as well as infrastructure. Gates to some places will close like the Kiwa Trail on the River S Unit, the Carty Trail from the Port to the Plankhouse, and the Auto Tour will continue to be vehicles only. Now that I have spent record time at home, sharing spaces with my family like never before, I see these changes in a new light. Just as members of our families need their own spaces to be healthy, places to get away from the usual chaos to rest and grow, so do wildlife coming home this season. As we visit the refuge, driving or walking past these closed areas, I hope that we feel that “home and family” feeling knowing that the wildlife that bring us so much joy are getting their much needed rest and growth in their “bedrooms” because of your support. And just like the children in your family and neighborhood, they will not deny us the beautiful sounds of their play, even when out of sight.

-Josie Finley, Visitor Services Manager Ridgefield NWR Complex



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

### CARTY UNIT: (FROM MAIN AVE)

All Carty Unit trails are now OPEN- BUT public use facilities and access to those facilities (including 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.

Access from the Port Entrance ends on September 30th for seasonal trails. Please note: these trails will not be open BirdFest weekend as in the past.

### 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, and the viewing blind due to the inability to uphold necessary social distancing guidelines during the pandemic. **The Kiwa Trail closes September 30th for the season, NOTE- there will be no special access during BirdFest as in the past since the event is virtual this year.**

Please stay safe and physically distant from those outside of your household if you do visit the Refuge during BirdFest & Bluegrass weekend.

**Current gate times are: 7:00 AM - 7:00 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.

Don't forget to continue to check the [Refuge2020.info website](http://Refuge2020.info) for project updates, like the recent Prescribed Fire, the Steigerwald Lake reconnection project, Carty Unit Oaks-to-Wetlands Trail developments, and more!

*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.*

## Cathlapotle Plankhouse Updates & Events

### BirdFest & Bluegrass Blessing Song



I would like to extend a special thank you to Chinook Indian Nation Vice-Chairman (and Friends Board Member) Samuel Robinson, his wife Mildred, and their granddaughter, Destany Reeves-Robinson. On this gorgeous past Sunday, we were able to be in the Cathlapotle Plankhouse for a short while to record a Blessing Song for the opening of BirdFest & Bluegrass Home Edition 2020. Watch the opening of BirdFest & Bluegrass, around 7 am to view some peaceful Sandhill Cranes, and the blessing, on the [BirdFest & Bluegrass Facebook page here](#). You do not need a Facebook account to view our content!

From the Plankhouse to your house, we wish you a great fall season.

hayu masi,  
-Juliet McGraw, Friends 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

### September Habitat Season Recap

September was a great month for our habitat restoration program! The first part of the month brought us beautiful



late-summer weather conditions with very low levels of precipitation. This made it an opportune time for spraying herbicide to control invasive species of plants such as: reed canary grass, Himalayan blackberry, purple loosestrife, and common mullein. Making it a point to control these invasive species at the refuge is very important in order to ensure the survival of the native plant species that thrive here. A final wetland search of Middle Lake was also completed - in order to be sure that all bulrush and purple loosestrife plants were identified and eradicated.



Since all the other wetlands had been cleared of invasives earlier in the summer, our tractor operators have also been focusing on mowing and disking the wetlands that are over-run with reed canary grass, in order to get these habitats back under control.

The smoke that was brought about during mid-September did slow down our restoration progress a bit - as many of our habitat employees had to work from home for some time due to poor air quality. However, our employees were still very busy working on program development and relevant habitat research during this time. Late month rain showers showed up and cleared out the smoke just in time for us to get back at it. As fall has arrived, we will be turning our sights towards the high tunnel project. The hope is that we will be able to collect a wide variety of cuttings from native shrubs and trees - which we will then propagate in late fall/winter within our high tunnel.

Stay safe out there!  
-Emily Lane, Bulrush Coordinator

## Volunteering with the Friends

Our small team of volunteers continues to work hard at removing invasive plant species from the refuge. Volunteers will be on the Carty unit every Thursday. Spooky season is upon us so as you take a stroll through the orange and yellow leaves don't be startled if you see someone in the bushes. Our crew loves to search for pesky plants that hide out of reach from the trail. We will have plenty of signs up to remind you when a crew is at work and any guidelines we ask you to follow. Due to covid we want to limit any interactions with the public so please respect volunteers with the same rules that we have for wildlife. You can observe and admire who they are and what they do but refrain from approaching them. Thank you!



If you are looking for volunteer opportunities in the Vancouver area I highly recommend that you visit the [Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership](#) for Thursday and Saturday habitat restoration work parties. Pre-registration (click link) and masks required and groups are limited to 25 people. What a great opportunity to put on a pair of boots and take in the fresh air!

-Elena Tinoco, Volunteer Coordinator

## Steigerwald Lake Reconnection Project Update

As summer winds down so do some milestones for the Steigerwald Reconnection Project. If you have driven by Steigerwald Lake NWR over the last few months, you were likely to notice a few changes, including one that brought you to a stop along State Route 14 (SR-14). Single-lane closures for the duration of the summer imposed a wait along the highway for those traveling through the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. During this span however, crews were able to safely work on raising about a quarter mile of the road in the project's area to the 500 year flood elevation; protecting the neighboring community from potential future flooding while allowing the restoration of over 900 acres of floodplain habitat.



Crews will continue to be visible from the highway working to pave and restripe the Refuge's new entrance; which will be located west of the old entrance near 45<sup>th</sup> street. While Refuge staff are working on plans for the new visitor entrance, it will not reopen until the project is complete in 2022.

As we anxiously await our return to the Refuge - we are hopeful the fish salvaged during the realignment of Gibbons Creek are already happily at home. The majority of the new channel north of SR-14 is complete. This will be the new passage for salmonids making their

way to the Columbia River. To aide in their survival, woody debris (similar to what was placed last fall along the Gibbons Creek Art Trail) and rocky bars were installed. In the process, over 5,000 fish (including juvenile Coho Salmon, Cutthroat Trout and Lamprey) and other aquatic species were salvaged. The Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership has created video to further explain this remarkable feat that is available on the [Refuge2020.info](http://Refuge2020.info) website.

Crews additionally worked this summer on setback levee construction, maintenance around the newly planted trees and shrubs in the alluvial fan and in restoring wetland habitat. While little activity in the coming rainy months may be visible, we look forward to sharing other planning and work in progress to help you stay connected - as we reconnect the creek to the river and enhance the Refuge experience for all.

-Mesha Wood, Park Ranger, Steigerwald Lake NWR

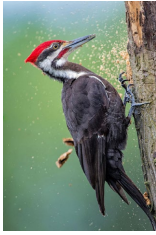
[Refuge 2020.info](http://Refuge2020.info): Steigerwald Blog

### Birding Enthusiasts

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

### Ridgefield First Saturdays: BirdFest & Bluegrass October 3, 2020





Enjoy the annual Friends of the Refuge festival from the comfort of your home with a collection of videos, classes, take home crafts, and virtual activities.

Connect for a full day of BirdFest & Bluegrass 2020 videos on the [Facebook Page for the event](#).

Find bluegrass performances & history, online vendor fair, craft videos, and more on the [Virtual First Saturday webpage](#).

## Species Spotlight

### White-breasted Nuthatch

*Sitta carolinensis*



The 2020 Bird of the Year for our annual BirdFest & Bluegrass celebration is the White-breasted Nuthatch! White-breasted Nuthatches are common feeder birds, but even more commonly seen perched upside-down on tree trunks. They don't always face downward, but this pose is what makes them recognizable, with their head craned up and back to reach a horizontal position. They move up, down, and around tree trunks while clinging to the bark. Beyond the recognizable pose, White-breasted Nuthatches can be identified by their compact size... **Keep Reading at**

**the bottom of the BirdFest page here...**

*By Samantha Zeiner, Administrative Coordinator*

## 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!



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.



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:



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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.

