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## The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The latest updates | November, 2020

### From the Friends

Thank You From The Board!



It's November, the season of gratitude, and we at the Friends have so much to be grateful for. Even though we had to revise our plans for BirdFest to make it safe and socially distant this year, we were still able to celebrate - virtually - everything that makes the Refuge special.

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to BirdFest: Home Edition this year. To all of the people who spent time recording videos, sharing their knowledge, and putting everything

together - thank you! For a full list of people who made this event possible, check out [this video](#), and if you missed any of the fun you can access all of the [BirdFest: Home Edition videos here](#). Finally, a special thank you to everyone who watched, liked, and shared! We were able to reach 3,678 people total with our posts on October 3rd!

You may have noticed that the Friends didn't hold any other events along with BirdFest this fall. Last year we had a wonderful 20th Anniversary Celebration at ilani and we hope to gather in person with you all again. In the meantime, there are still opportunities to support the Friends from a distance, including Giving Tuesday on December 1. Keep watching our Facebook and Instagram for more

information, and thank you!

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

## From the Refuge

### Where have all the Rangers gone?!

What do Park Rangers and Friends employees do from home when their careers have been built on community engagement and relationship building? This question may have puzzled me in the not-so-distant past, but now I am very aware of how much work and support can be done from home in 2020. In just 7 months we have engaged in amazing projects, led conversations to grow and strengthen partnerships, and have started to move forward ideas that we may not have found the space for before.



Here are a few highlights that I personally am most proud of when I see this team's hard work and long hours from their home offices. This of course barely scratches the surface of what all is being done while people navigate this stressful time.

- **BirdFest: Home Edition** was not just a replacement for what could not be done in person. It was groundbreaking in understanding engaging ways to supplement future programming and bring what we do to the communities that cannot make it to us. Through the Friends hard work in trying this new (for us) way of doing things, we have started conversations on how this kind of engagement can take our education programs throughout the county and beyond, how we may help people experience wildlife and habitat projects that are far out of view, and how we might help more people engage in the rich experience of understanding local Culture both past and present. Virtual programming does not replace in-person interactions but is a way to continue the conversation and reach more of our community.

- **Our volunteer program** was just given the boost we had been dreaming of with the addition of Elena Tinoco as the Friends Volunteer Coordinator. What an interesting way to start a job just to have your entire program changed within the first month. Elena has taken that opportunity and made more than just lemonade with it. By working with staff and partners, include the Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards, she has been helping to refine and enhance the foundations of this program so that when we reengage, it will be a richer and more rewarding experience to a wider audience. However, none of that is waiting for the pandemic to lift to be put into action. Engagement of our current volunteer community while we are separated is well under way and we are all learning together and supporting one another.

- **Understanding the wider community**, how people are engaging with nature and conversation, and how we can be an asset to that work around Clark County is a large part of our work. Staff of the Service and Friends have been engaging in brainstorming and strategic planning sessions to map current programs and partnerships and understand better where we want to go in the future. By searching out change agents among the many diverse communities in our county we are working to really understand the needs beyond our Refuge borders and current visitor base.

Of course we are not ALL at home. The business of wildlife conservation continues at the Refuge according to our regular seasonal rotations of mowing, planting, invasive removal, etc. As always the Friends play a critical role in that while helping to carry out our resource management goals and even lead few well trained volunteers while ensuring health and safety for all.

I was already in awe of this amazing team made up of public and private partners all working toward the same goals for our community. This situation has shown me another level of what we are capable of and how much each player intensely cares about not only their work, but the needs of each other and the success of the whole. Thank you reader, as you too are a part of this team as well, and your

support keeps us going in more ways that you may realize.

-Josie Finley, Visitor Services Manager Ridgefield NWR Complex

## GivingTuesday 2020



On December 1, 2020, people all around the world are coming together to tap into the power of human connection and strengthen communities and change our world. Will you be one of them?

The Friends will be participating in GivingTuesday and we need your help to reach our \$5,000 goal! By joining the GivingTuesday movement, you're proving that in times of uncertainty, generosity can bring the whole world together.

Here is how you can get ready to give:

1. Mark your calendar

2. **Give.** On December 1, go to [www.RidgefieldFriends.org](http://www.RidgefieldFriends.org) and donate. You can also support our organization in these ways On December 1, go to [www.ridgefieldfriends.org](http://www.ridgefieldfriends.org) and donate. You can also support our organization in these ways, like buying off our [Amazon Wishlist](#), checking in on the new [Habitat Restoration Blog](#), and more.

3. **Spread the word.** Encourage your friends and family to join you in creating real impact on December 1 by sharing what our mission means to you and why you support our organization, like your special trips to the Refuge with the family, a habitat project you've worked on, or special moment you will treasure forever.

*Here are some more ideas -*

1. Follow us on your favorite social media, whether that is Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter and share our posts with your personal Refuge stories.
2. Create your own Facebook Fundraiser for the Friends and tell people why our mission matters to you,
- Or, 3. Forward our emails to everyone you know- like that cursed email thread from the 90's!

Make sure to use hashtag #GivingTuesday and tag us on your own posts, so we can share!

Let's rally together to build stronger communities. [Learn more, and bookmark to come back and give, here!](#)



## Ridgefield Refuge Complex News & Events

### Refuge Access Update During Pandemic

#### CARTY UNIT: (FROM MAIN AVE)

The 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 ended on September 30th for seasonal trails.

#### 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 closed September 30th for the season.**

**Current gate times are (as of 11/2/2020): 7:30 AM - 6:00 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.*

## 2021 Refuge Photo Contest Calendars Available Now!



View the 2020 Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Photo Contest Winners in this stunning collection.

**\$18.00** - [Buy online HERE](#)

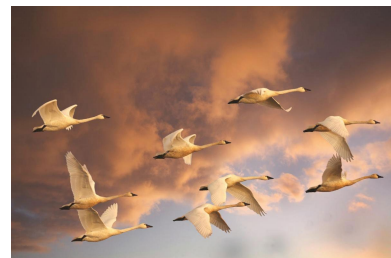
8.5x11 size, with bonus contest photos  
Highlights important Refuge dates and more!

XL size available  
Plus, [check out our other items](#), with more being added all the time!

## From the Contact Station

### Swans, Cranes, and Other Surprises

One of the most frequent Fall questions at the contact station, if not the whole year is, "Are the swans here yet?" There seems to be a special excitement about seeing these wonderful, lovely, elegant birds. Arrival time is around the last week of October with maybe a few sneaking in before that. They usually show up at Carty Lake first. You can see them at the overlook from the port (the trail is closed this time of year) or take a walk over the entry bridge into the Carty Unit and view the north end of Carty Lake from the top of the bridge (best to check on access on the [Refuge2020.info](http://Refuge2020.info) website due to the construction near the Carty Unit entrance). Eventually they will find their way to Rest Lake on River 'S' or the lake just beyond the hunt gate to the right, which you can see as you turn to left on the auto tour. It depends in part on how quickly the River 'S' lakes fill with water and knock down the vegetation that has grown up during the summer. In winter... [Keep Reading...](#)



-Susan Setterberg, Contact Station Volunteer  
Photo: Rick Browne, 2015 Refuge Photo Contest

## Cathlapotle Plankhouse Updates & Events



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

### October Habitat Season Recap

October was packed full of habitat work that needed to be completed in a timely fashion - before the first heavy rains/frost of the year. This included blackberry removal and spraying in order to clear out certain areas under habitat restoration. At the Pierce Wildlife Refuge, our volunteers took out a significant amount of blackberries surrounding the

Western Pond Turtle Habitat, which was completed in order to clear out the area that these turtles will use for nesting and overwintering. This fall/winter, we are hoping to reseed and replant these areas with native grasses, trees, and shrubs - which will provide great cover and nesting areas for these turtles.



At the Carty Unit we will also be shifting our focus from invasive plant removal to planting site preparation for this winter. With fall & winter being right around the corner, this also gives us an opportunity to direct a larger portion of our attention to the High Tunnel Project. Our goal is to propagate a variety of native plants this winter - and to also experiment with different rooting hormones and techniques in order to determine which ones work best for us! If you would like to learn a bit more about the current work being done for our habitat restoration program you can [visit our new blog](#) created by our

Habitat Technician about the work she does on the refuge!

-Emily Lane, Habitat Technician

## Volunteering with the Friends

As we head into November, levels of anxiety and uncertainty may be high, so it is important to take some time to focus on mindfulness and gentleness with yourself and others. Spending time outdoors is a great way to take some deep breaths, stretch your legs, and boost your mood! We are starting

to get our first frosts so you may want to bring a warm coat and drink! Head out to your backyard, local trails, and Wildlife Refuges. Our Carty unit has one trail loop open that takes you past the Cathlapotle Plankhouse and through our tall oak trees! Among changes to the trail route our staff has added safety features on the trail that guides people on a one-way walking loop so you can avoid contact with other hikers! If you are looking for a no-walking wildlife experience head over to the auto tour route on our River S unit! This is a great way to experience nature from the comfort of your vehicle. Just roll down your windows and listen to the wide variety of waterfowl and songbirds.



Our tiny but mighty volunteer crews at Ridgefield and Pierce NWRs have been stress busting pros by channeling their energy into nature. They have been working hard to protect the local lands from invasive plant species like himalayan blackberry and common mullein! A huge thank you to our Ridgefield crew - Tom, Grace, Jon, and Tia, and our Pierce crew - Dave, Chip, Curt, George, Jim, Steve, and Rick!

-Elena Tinoco, Volunteer Coordinator

## Birding Enthusiasts

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



## Ridgefield First Saturdays: Make a Difference Day November 7, 2020



Kick off the season of giving by learning about community organizations and non-profits in Ridgefield.

**[Schedule and more here!](#)**

## Species Spotlight

### Western Gull

*Larus occidentalis*



#### Gulls Part 3:

“Kicking in chairs and knocking down tables  
In a restaurant in a West end town  
Call the police there's a mad man around  
Running down underground  
To a dive bar in a West end town  
In a West end town a dead end world  
The East end boys and Western Gulls” ... Ok that isn't really

how the Pet Shop Boys song goes, but you know you have all heard it that way!

Western Gulls are probably even more tricky to ID than Glaucous-winged Gulls, because they hybridize so much with Glaucous-winged Gulls, and their hybrids are one of the most common gulls

seen in Washington State. That being said, Western Gulls don't stray far from the ocean - so when you catch that rare gull or two in the parking lot of some desert town, you can be assured it isn't a Western Gull. Their range extends along the coast up into British Columbia and down through Baja California- staying in those extremes only during non-breeding seasons...[Keep Reading...](#)

*-Samantha Zeiner, Administrative Coordinator*

## Steigerwald Reconnection Project Updates

Last week was the first time I was on site since the project began and what a joy it was (even if I was there to clean out a bathroom closet.) Entering a closed parking lot, lined with heavy equipment, was quite the difference from the usual parking lot full of Refuge enthusiasts like yourselves. While visitors seen focusing their binoculars and families gathering their children for a walk were absent, what wasn't was signs of fall and wildlife. As I removed items from the closet the fallen leaves crunched under my boots, my seasonal allergies were no longer fighting the cottonwoods and birds fluttered above, likely enjoying a quiet fall day.



Additionally, with the removal of the vault toilet, signage was unearthed and installations from the old sections of the Gibbons Creek Art trail lined the edge of the old Bus/RV parking spot, like a mini gallery (to be salvaged for the new trail). The "Adaptation Battle", a stone with a Rough-skinned newt and Common garter snake facing off was one I pondered for a while, which used to be hidden among the first overlook. As newts are seen among leaf litter and snakes slither away as the temperatures drop - I reflected on seeing both recently on a local outing - and the wonder they bring. I hope with the interior trails of the Refuge closed until the project is complete, that you too are finding other local trails to explore that remind you of the Refuge.

While project work will be less visible to the community over the new few months, it will continue. Planning the new parking lot kiosks and wayfinding and what the user experience will be like along the trail are the exciting collaborative projects that I look forward to working on in the coming year, in addition to continuing to share the story of this incredible project and the partners both on the ground and supporting it from a far.

But with that causes a pause - that may feel even longer than ever now, until we can once again meander the trail. My patience on waiting for this was renewed after being on site. I am happy to say, you too can get on site by volunteering with LCEP this fall to do some plantings on the north side of Gibbons Creek (I promise you'll have more fun with them than I did cleaning the closet out). Visit their [website](#) to learn more about these events and to register (though free, registration is required).

For a more detailed look at what work has already been completed, don't forget to check out the [Refuge 2020 website](#) and follow the [Gorge Refuge Stewards](#) and [Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership](#) on Facebook.

*-Mesha Wood, USFWS Park Ranger*

## 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](#)

**Supporting the Ridgefield NWR**  
As a member of the Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Business Alliance, you invest in one of our nation's most unique and diverse natural and cultural resources.

Your annual Business Alliance Membership connects you with:

- 200,000+ visitors annually;
- 1,000 students participating in field trips and educational programs;
- 4,000 visitors to BirdFest & Bioguesic;
- 3,000 attendees at Planthouse events;
- 1,200 monthly newsletter readers;
- 1,500 monthly website visits;
- and 350 community volunteers who provide more than 10,000 hours of work.

The Banking on Nature study released in 2013 reports that an average of \$4.87 is returned to local communities for every dollar Congress provides in funding to run the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Your partnership with the Friends helps ensure the future and success of this breathtaking natural resource. Invest in your community by becoming a part of our Business Alliance today!

Photograph Credit: Douglas Bahl, Eagle Vista, Co. Herndon, VA, America.

**Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge**  
Rt. Box 1022  
Ridgefield, NH 03342  
[www.ridgefieldnwrf.org](http://www.ridgefieldnwrf.org)

Join our **Business Alliance!**

501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization  
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Proceeds Charitable Free and POC certified.

## 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!

November 9th, December 14th, 2020



## Support While You Shop



Welcome to **amazon smile**  
You shop. Amazon gives.



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](http://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

## Benefits of Membership



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.

## Sponsors

Business Alliance Members:

In-Kind Support:



BirdFest & Bluegrass:



Granting Organizations & Partners:



Header Photo Credit: Gary Grossman, 2018 1st Place Landscape Category, Refuge Photo Contest



[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.

