

[View as Webpage](#)

Please add [contact@ridgefieldfriends.org](mailto:contact@ridgefieldfriends.org) to your address book or safe senders list.

You are receiving this email because you are either a member or signed up for our mailing list.



# The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The latest updates | March, 2021

## From the Friends



Thank you to everyone who joined us at the end of January for our annual meeting! It was great to see all of you on Zoom, and share stories about how the Refuge has sustained us over this past year.

It certainly has been an extraordinary year, with many unexpected challenges, but these challenges have also given us opportunities to stop, take a step back, and look at the big picture of the organization. Our self-reflection, combined with new leadership at the Refuge, has given all of us new energy to take into 2021. We're excited to continue working closely with Fish and Wildlife this year.

Additionally, through this reflection, the board identified a real need to have day-to-day executive leadership that goes beyond what the board can provide. We've asked Anna Wilde to step in as Interim Executive Director at the Friends starting in February and continuing through October. Unfortunately, this does mean that we lose one more board member since she had to step down in order to take on this new role. We currently have a number of vacancies on the board and would love to hear from you if you are interested in joining us!

Anna will be using her experience as board president, along with her education in public administration, to continue the work we've done this year to move the organization forward.

We're really excited about this new step, and you'll continue to hear from her in this newsletter so watch for updates over the next few months!

-Drew Smith-Sahnow, Board Preside and the Friends of Ridgefield NWR Board of Directors  
[Contact the board](#)



## Ridgefield Refuge Complex News & Events Refuge Updates

Current gate times for both units: 7:00 AM -  
6:00 PM.

**The previously postponed fee program will be restored on March 1st, 2021. See information below on the fee structure and valid passes.**

The Refuge is not able to sell passes out of the office. For more information about National Access passes and how to acquire those please visit [store.USGS.gov/recreational-passes](https://store.USGS.gov/recreational-passes). A list of passes you can use at this site are also linked below. Or [Become a Member](#) of the Friends and chose any level over \$60 to receive a pass as part of your membership (optional, please check the box)!

*NOTE: The Washington State Discover Pass is not valid on Federally managed public lands, including National Wildlife Refuges.*

### Daily Fee

The daily entrance fee to the Refuge is \$3.00.

Entrance fee and all valid passes admit everyone in a privately owned vehicle OR up to four adults on foot.

Seasonal restrictions for pedestrian access on Auto Tour Route are in effect Oct-May.

**Cash and check only - No debit/credit cards. Please bring exact change.**

To understand how to pay your fee while onsite [see this flier \(also posted at payment kiosk\)](#). During the pandemic, the cost of entrance should not be a barrier to enjoying the Refuge. [This list of passes](#) may help you figure out if there is a free or reduced-price option. If you are still unable to pay due to financial hardship, please check the box on the bottom of the green entrance pass as detailed in the instructions posted on-site.

### Mask Requirement

While entering or remaining upon a National Wildlife Refuge, all visitors over the age of 2 years\* must wear masks, except when actively eating or drinking, in the following locations:

1. All common areas and shared workspaces in buildings owned, rented, or leased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including, but not limited to, visitor centers, administrative offices, and gift shops.

Ridgefield NWR at this time does not have large enough facilities to safely allow public visitation. All offices remain closed to the public with limited staff working inside at any given time. Please call the office at 360-887-4106 to get in touch with Refuge staff.

2. The following outdoor areas, when others are present and physical distancing (staying at least 6



feet apart) cannot reasonably be maintained:

- Outdoor areas adjacent to visitor centers or administrative office entry areas.
- Parking lots or pull-off viewing areas when outside of an enclosed motor vehicle.
- Trailheads, trails, rest areas, fishing piers, boat ramps, and close proximity hunting areas.

Masks must cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face. Masks with ventilation valves and face shields do not meet the mask requirement.

Don't forget to continue to check the Refuge2020.info website for project updates, like 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.*

## From the Refuge Fee program to be Reinstated March 1st



Last March when the pandemic became very real for Clark County the refuge system started shutting down facilities and fee programs to keep people safe in the face of this health threat we really didn't yet understand. Now one year later we know so much more. We as a community are well-practiced in keeping our distance, waiting our turn while we allow others to use common areas, and understanding the importance of masks and hand washing. We are also seeing higher than ever visitation as people discover the Refuge as a place to

safely explore and enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of being outdoors and observing nature. Providing public opportunities even without special event programming does create a need for resources to maintain roads and facilities. However, we don't want the entrance fee to be a barrier to enjoying the Refuge during this pandemic that is leaving so many under extra financial hardship. As we bring back the fee program to ensure we have the sustainability to keep our public areas safe and enjoyable, we are also working to highlight the many free and reduced pass options available to the public. Seniors, active duty military members, and their dependents, Veterans and their dependents, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, and those permanently disabled have national programs that not only allow you to visit this Refuge but also federally managed lands throughout the nation.

Please see our website or [store.usgs.gov](https://store.usgs.gov) for more information on how to receive those passes while so many offices remain closed. If you do not fall into one of these categories and the \$3 daily fee is beyond your ability at this time, please visit us anyway and follow the instructions posted at the kiosk to gain access during the pandemic.

As a public servant charged with sharing all that we do to protect and conserve wildlife, this increased interest fills me with hope in a time that tests my own extreme optimism. I now am forced to telework and being away from the refuge for the first time in over a decade is harder than I can explain. When I visit and see people masked up stretching their legs on the trail, or stretching their necks behind a car window on the auto tour route, it reaffirms my now isolated work at home to support these opportunities. I look forward to being able to once again greet you on-site and learn with you how we can all ensure these resources are available to our communities well beyond our time here.

For more information about fees and mask requirements please see our [website](#).

-Josie Finley, Ridgefield Refuge Visitor Services Manager

## From the Contact Station

### Water Everywhere and Counting Birds for Christmas



After putting up the feeder next to the Contact Station in June of 2018, I was planning to make it a focal point for the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBYBC) in Mid-February. Being a weekend volunteer, I could monitor the feeder during my shift and get the River S contact station on the map. That worked in 2019, then I was out of town last year (as Covid started to unfold) and this year, well we all know how that went. I was going to grab the feeder, clean it, dry it, fill it and do a one-day couple-hour sit Saturday or Sunday of the BYBC weekend to capture our usual visitors. But the refuge was to be closed all week for road work, WDFW was issuing 'take down your feeder' guidance and it really, really snowed. Darn... [Keep Reading...](#)

-Susan Setterberg, Contact Station Volunteer

- Photos by Susan Setterberg

## Cathlapotle Plankhouse Updates & Events

### Do You Like Sweets???

Do you like SweetTARTS? I do. I really, really do. Anyone who knows me well is more than aware of my ever-present sweet tooth. And SweetTARTS are one of my absolute favorite candies. For me, they are the epitome of a flavorful treat. I love the crunchy punch of sour cutting through the almost too sweet sugariness.



© Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

This craving for the combined sensations of sweet and bitter is not new, not by a long shot. Cross-culturally humans have combined these seemingly opposing flavors for a pleasing treat worldwide. While traveling abroad have you enjoyed a particularly refreshing gelato or a uniquely indulgent custard fruit tart? No matter where I travel, I seek out this tangy combo. Central America? I want to find a bag of quenepas ASAP. Italy? Tangy gelatos please! Raiding my daughter's Halloween stash? Sprees, Nerds, and the pinnacle SweetTARTS

are all mine. Keep your sticky milk chocolate, kid.

However, here at home nothing really beats Cranberries for a sweet-sour treat. Except, perhaps, the small and humble fruit of the Oregon grape... [Keep Reading...](#)

atqui,

-Juliet McGraw, Friends of RNWR 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



## February 2021 Habitat Recap



Planting season has officially picked back up for our Habitat Program. While the week of snow that we had last month created a small pause for field work, the rest of February was full of planting activity. The Turtle Lake Project is progressing beautifully, and at the end of February, we reached over 3,000 trees planted (the halfway point of our end goal of 6,000 willows)! Our Restoration crew also managed to plant a variety of native trees and shrubs at the Oaks to Wetlands trail area, and around the high tunnel. The plants at the Oaks

to Wetlands area will aid in restoring native diversity to the trail surroundings, and the plants at the high tunnel are going to serve as native plant stock. Once they mature and become established, the plants around the high tunnel will be utilized to take cuttings and propagate from. The variety of native plants includes Cascara, Pacific Dogwood, Bitter Cherry, and Oceanspray, and there are 350 of these plants remaining, to be planted up at Pierce NWR in early March. With Spring and the invasive season right around the corner, March is going to be packed full of planting so that we can clear up our schedules for Bulrush and other important invasive management activities.

- Emily Lane, Friends of RNWR Habitat Restoration Technician
- Photo by Mesha Wood

## Volunteering for the Refuge and the Friends Salutations!

I recently watched the 1973 Charlotte's Web and rediscovered a terrific array of vocabulary! I hope you all stayed safe at home during this month's snowstorm! Surely the animals at the refuge enjoyed some peace! If you would like to see some photos of a snowy refuge be sure to check out [Emily's Habitat Updates here](#).

### Volunteering?

We are still hard at work typing up volunteer documents for when we can bring you back to the refuge. Documents include volunteer manuals, position descriptions, training materials, and other resources to build a strong platform for our programs.



If we made a remote/virtual volunteer position to assist with this project, would anyone have the time or interest to help out? If so, [send me an email here](#).

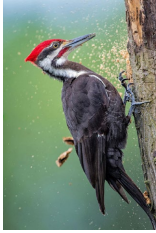
-Elena Tinoco, Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Coordinator

## Birding Enthusiasts

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

## Ridgefield First Saturdays - Arts Quarter Block Party March, 2021

Encourage a lifetime of creativity! Celebrate Youth Arts Month with online activities, take-home activity bags, and an Arts Quarter scavenger hunt. 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.



## Species Spotlight

### Ruddy Duck

#### *Oxyura jamaicensis*



Many of you know that wintertime is the time to see the “weird ducks,” and while there are many examples of strange-looking ducks on our Refuge and beyond in the wintertime, we thought we would focus on the brilliantly colored Ruddy Duck. Arriving in the fall and leaving in the spring, even known to nest here- the Ruddy Duck is a compact, thick-necked waterfowl with what looks like an oversized tail that is habitually held upright. Breeding males feature their sky-blue bill...[Keep Reading...](#)

-Samantha Zeiner, Friends of RNWR Administrative Coordinator

- Photos by Lyn Topinka

## Steigerwald Lake Updates & More

While it may have felt as if as winter hit, that the Steigerwald Reconnection Project also was tucked into a deep slumber, staff have been hard at work both on the ground and in planning future work. Additionally, signs of work completed this last summer and fall are showing how the site is already embracing a new way of life. Plantings took root and the new curving creek bed of Gibbons Creek almost seems as if it is smiling back at us. (Just as we hope the aquatic species that call it home now are too).

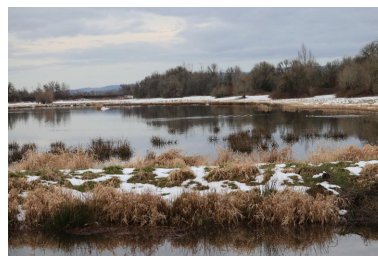


For those catching a glimpse of the Refuge from the Columbia River Dike Trail, you may have noticed some Mylar flashing in the wind. To help encourage the great blue herons to nest outside the project area this year, flashing has been placed near their usual nesting area in the cottonwood stand. You can learn more on this topic from our Refuge Complex biologist on the [20/20 Blog](#).

If you miss seeing the herons, Ridgefield NWR is short of none, even as snow blanketed the Refuge recently. I was fortunate enough to safely be able to be on-site at Ridgefield NWR during our recent inclement weather.

While snow and eventual ice kept the River ‘S’ Unit of the

Refuge closed to the public, as I continued to work, it was refreshing to see the stories via meandering tracks, of critters exploring and enjoying the tranquility the winter storm brought. I know I enjoyed the time (even after a brief power outage) to reflect on the seasonal changes that take place at the Refuge that I often forget to acknowledge. Slowing down to look closer for signs of wildlife, as they too navigate these changing times reminded me how resilient we are. As rounds of robins poke the defrosting ground in search of a treat, I took look forward to springtime and warmer weather. I also realize that winter has brought me many new perspectives that I am grateful for, as is my hope for you as well.



- Mesha Wood, Park Ranger USFWS
- All photos by Mesha Wood, taken on the River 'S' Unit of Ridgefield NWR

## Friends Photo Contest Merchandise



**Check out our store items**, with more being added all the time! We have mugs that change colors, tote bags, sweatshirts, and more, all featuring our 2019 and 2020 Refuge Photo Contest winning photos. Get your friends and family (or yourself!) a gift that will remind them of nature's beauty and support a wonderful cause!

**Let us know** if there is something you'd like to see!

If there isn't something you like, you can always **donate**, or **buy a membership to the Friends** in someone's name - an annual gift program that supports wildlife, habitat,

volunteers, education, and more.

## 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 urban metropolitan area's most unique and diverse natural and cultural resources.

Your annual Business Alliance Membership connects you with:

- 200,000+ visitors annually;
- 5,000 students participating in field trips and educational programs;
- 4,000 visitors to Birdfest & Bluegrass;
- 3,000 attendees at Plant/Flower events;
- 1,200 monthly newsletter readers;
- 1,000 monthly website visits;
- and 250 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 Smith, High View/Old Harts, Fall, Indiana.

**Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge**  
P.O. Box 6222  
Ridgefield, NH 08842  
www.ridgefieldnwr.org

**Join our Business Alliance!**

501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization  
Please Print Name and POC carefully.



## 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!

March 8th, April 12th, May 10th, June 14th, July 12th, August 9th, September 13th, October 18th (moved for Indigenous Peoples Day), November 8th, December 13th



## 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: Raul Moreno, 2017, 2nd Place, 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.

