

[View as Webpage](#)

Please add 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 | April, 2021

From the Friends



Here at the Friends, our mission is “to promote the educational programs of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, and protect and enhance its wildlife habitat.” In light of all of the changes the past year has presented to us, we decided to give that mission a little more attention.

At our last board meeting, we did an exercise called “Three Whys”. This exercise has been done by many different nonprofits, businesses, and other organizations, and involves looking at our mission and asking “why?” three times. The idea is that with each “why?”, we will get a layer deeper into what makes the Friends truly valuable to the community, and where we fit within a larger cause.

Each board member had a different set of answers, of course, but there were a lot of commonalities. Some examples of three-layer-

deep answers include:

- Future generations need a connection to history
- The community wants a deeper connection with the Refuge
- The community cares about conservation
- What is good for wildlife is good for people

Do you see your views reflected here? Is this how you feel about the Refuge, or about wildlife, history, or conservation?

Another question: why are you involved in the work of the Friends? Or, what are your three whys?

As I begin my time in this new role and we focus on how to further our mission in this new post-2020 reality, I would love to hear your answers to these questions.

Anna Wilde, Interim Executive Director
[Contact the board](#)



Ridgefield Refuge Complex News & Events

Refuge Updates

Current gate times for both units: 7:00 AM - 7:30 PM.

The previously postponed fee program was 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, but you can pay for them at the fee station. For more information about National Access passes and how to acquire those please visit 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 Oak Restoration Continues



Just two years ago the refuge underwent one of the largest and most visible changes of its history when removing Douglas fir trees to save a remnant piece of Oregon white oak habitat, an important yet rapidly disappearing ecosystem in the region. It seems ages ago that we watched those trees being removed while wondering what the trail might look like and how the community would respond. Since then we have partnered with Washington Trails Association to recreate a loop that works better with the landscape and the the way people recreate.

Countless volunteer hours have been spent ensuring that the freshly exposed ground can be reclaimed by native plants and not taken over by invasive species. And best of all we have celebrated such a beautifully performed harvest of trees taken to another restoration site by the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, to have another life helping salmon in Abernathy Creek.

The past year has helped us all understand just how important local trails like this one are for our health, especially during crisis. Record numbers of people are exploring this woodland in the first stages of this release and finding their own restoration and hope for better times with the coming spring. As we start to emerge from our isolated lives more and more, so do our core group of well trained volunteers as there is still much work to do, especially during the growing season. What you can expect and what we ask of you when you visit the Carty Unit...

- **Thursday closures will resume on the Oaks to Wetlands trail**, just beyond the end of the paved path, so that volunteers and staff can safely focus on restoration efforts. It's important to respect this closure for the safety and efficiency of this work.
- **The trail continues to be a loop with no side trails at this time.** If you see a trail leading off

this loop it is part of the old trail system being decommissioned. Walking these old side trails destroys fragile habitat we are trying to restore. Additions to the trail system will be added in the future when restoration stages and funding permits. We look forward to planning those additions in collaboration with the community.

- **Dogs are still not allowed on the refuge** in order to protect wildlife very sensitive to disturbance. Please take advantage of the many opportunities the City of Ridgefield has provided for recreation with dogs, and visit the Refuge without your beloved four-legged friend.
- **Please use the boot brushes** at both the main entrance and as you enter the oak release area. Using these before and after you walk the trail will keep you from introducing new weeds to either this home or your own.

Thank you all for continuing to support this project by supporting the Friends, enjoying the refuge with a leave no trace ethic, and teaching your loved ones how to do the same. Learn more about this project at Refuge20/20.info.

-Josie Finley, Ridgefield Refuge Visitor Services Manager

From the Contact Station

Homecoming for Spring



Roll down those car windows and start listening. Soon to return are the Yellow-headed Blackbirds with their mechanical call, Sora rails calling from the wetlands, Osprey moving up and down Lake River, and chattering Purple Martins flying overhead. Swallows are increasing in number as many of the ducks, geese, and swans head north for their nesting grounds. The Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers are looking particularly beautiful right now. Check out the small pond on the right side of the first leg of the tour, just before the first set of trees, for the Wood Ducks, and look in the canals or sloughs for the mergansers. We are hoping that the eagle pairs are sitting nests and we will have more... **Keep Reading...**

-Susan Setterberg, Contact Station Volunteer

- Photos by Susan Setterberg

Cathlapotle Plankhouse Updates & Events

Second Sunday Series starts Virtually in May "Contemporary Matriarchy on Canoe Journey"



On Sunday, May 9th, 2021, join us for an intimate conversation with women from the Chinook Indian Nation about skippering, leadership, and motherhood on the iyagatt imat (Columbia River). Start the day with a video posted at 10 am that includes trail tips and family activities. Activity kits will be available for pickup in advance. May's activity will be charcoal paint, inside of a Color Your Own canvas tote bag. Stay tuned for updates and more information!
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

March was a month full of planting for our Habitat Restoration Program. During the first week of the month, we made it out to Pierce NWR and planted over 350 native plants with the help of our Pierce Volunteer Crew (a combination of Cascara, Pacific Dogwood, Bitter Cherry, and Ocean Spray). The High Tunnel Project has also been in full swing, and we were able to transfer over 150 native propagated plants to the field in locations such as the Oaks to Wetlands Trail area, Kiwa Trail, and ash stands at Ridgefield NWR.



Last but not least, we reached 6,000 willow trees planted out at Turtle Lake by the end of March!

Now that planting season is winding down a bit, we are beginning to shift our focus to invasive species control. Herbicide treatments and invasive species surveys will be picking up here soon. To stay updated on the Habitat Restoration Program and all the amazing things we do, feel free to visit <https://habitatupdates.blogspot.com/> for project details.

- Emily Lane, Friends of RNWR Habitat Restoration Technician

Volunteering for the Refuge and the Friends

Volunteering

In-person volunteer projects are still on hold, but keep an eye open for Virtual/Remote volunteer opportunities! Thank you to those who have reached out with your interest in virtual volunteering! Our mission is to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive volunteer program that represents and welcomes our community members. If you would like to help strengthen the way the refuge complex engages with community members this would be a great fit for you. We would appreciate your help with document review and editing suggestions. To start, our goal is to update manuals, web pages, and online community calendars, training materials, and outreach flyers. If you would like more information or sign-up info please contact Elena Tinoco at volunteers@ridgefieldfriends.org.



Spring Gardening!

If you want to add some pizzazz to your spring garden I would highly recommend you take a look at your native plant nursery. Some of my favorite blooms with a habitat enhancing benefit are red-flowering currant, Oregon grape, red osier dogwood, and osoberry. (photo above!)

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

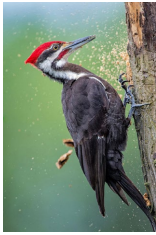
Birding Enthusiasts

Ridgefield First Saturdays - Ridgefield Whodunnits

April, 2021

"Ridgefield is growing, and we want

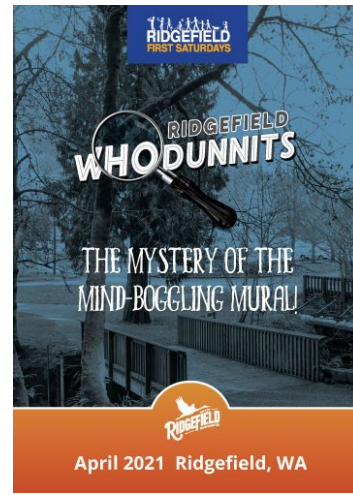
Check out what species are being seen on the Refuge [here](#).



to help you get to know your community and neighbors. So, we've created this family-friendly mystery game to get you going.

If you enjoyed our previous Whodunnit challenges, the Mystery of the Missing Mascot and The Case of the Captured Key, you won't want to miss our third mystery game: The Mystery of the Mind-Boggling Mural!"

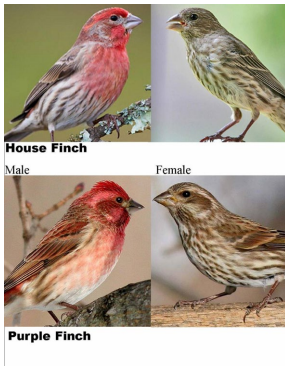
[Full details and more, here!](#)



Species Spotlight

House v Purple Finch

Haemorhous mexicanus v *Haemorhous purpureus*



This time of year, beginning birders excitedly ask for ID help with the brightly colored finches around our homes and out in nature. Both House and Purple Finches are not really purple, they're more of an old-rose hue. Male House and Purple finches display a wide variety of plumage coloration, ranging from gray to bright crimson. The coloration comes from carotenoid pigments found in some wild foods (birds can't make bright red or yellow colors directly). The more pigment present in the foods eaten when they are molting new feathers, the redder the male. This is why people sometimes see orange or yellowish male House Finches. Females prefer to mate with the reddest male they can find, perhaps raising...[Keep Reading...](#)

-Samantha Zeiner, Friends of RNWR Administrative Coordinator

- Photos by Lyn Topinka & Creative Commons

Steigerwald Lake Updates & More

It is hard to believe, but our Visitor and Volunteer Program has been suspended for over a year now. As we shift into springtime, warmer weather, and with the hope of expanding offerings in the year to come, I can't help thinking about the Steigerwald Reconnection Project. I know many of us will truly feel reconnected once we are able to visit the Refuge again next spring.

Between now and then a lot of work needs to be done, including the creation of new signs to welcome our visitors back to the Refuge. The new parking lot, located west of the old lot will provide travelers the opportunity to grow alongside new native plantings and to plan their visit of the newly designed trail system.

Wildlife-dependent recreational uses along the Gibbons Creek Art Trail will be taken to new heights (literally) and as we work hard to also share the story of the Refuge to those who also enjoy it from along the stretches of the Columbia River trail. Osprey and Purple Martins surely await your use of this trail, which will close within the month (weather dependent) for the duration of the project further east, (near the old barns) to provide safe access for the use of heavy equipment.



Want to keep up to date on the project? Make sure to keep www.Refuge2020.info bookmarked for upcoming stories about this and other refuge access and habitat projects throughout the Complex.

Photo: Aerial photo of the new Steigerwald Lake NWR parking lot. (c)Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership
- Mesha Wood, Park Ranger USFWS

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**



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!

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 Shovel & Thumb 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:

ROSAUERS

SUPERMARKETS

Graticle
Design

shovel&thumb

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.



