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The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The latest updates | July, 2021

From the Friends It Takes All of Us

The Friends have taken some time this spring to start planning for next year, thinking about how best to further our mission of connecting the community with the refuge. Planning is difficult right now, as so many things are still subject to change as we navigate the transition into a post-pandemic world.

However, one thing that is clear to all of us is just how many many great partners we are able to share this work with - virtually or not! Some have stuck with us for years and all through this challenging time, while others have started to work with us more recently. We are grateful for you all: The US Fish & Wildlife Service's [Refuge Complex](#) staff, [Cultural Resources](#), and [Urban Refuge Program](#); the [City of Ridgefield](#); and our regional counterparts at the [Gorge Refuge Stewards](#), [Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge](#), and [Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge](#).



We have also received support this year from the [Cowitz Tribe Education and Arts Fund](#), the [Washington Native Plant Society](#), our [Business Alliance](#) members, and all of our individual members*.

There's just not enough space to list all of the wonderful organizations we work with and everyone who has supported us throughout the years, not to mention everyone who has given their time through volunteer work and by spreading the word about the refuge. We appreciate you all!

*You can find a full list of business alliance members, partners, and sponsors on our [website](#)!

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

From the Refuge

Looking Back to Look Ahead



As I write this article we are at the end of June, a month that celebrates so much. Pride month, Juneteenth, Father's Day, the end of school and beginning of summer, graduations, decreasing Covid numbers... This is not an exhaustive list of all that June has brought us together around. There also continues to be uncertainty and tragedy in our communities. All of this has Refuge, Friends, and partner staff listening, learning, and brainstorming. How can we use these celebrations *and* struggles to better understand how to be an asset to our communities?

We look ahead at our programming and future plans to bring back volunteers, school visits, naturalist walks, and events on and offsite. We want to interact with our

visitors in a way that is supportive, equitable, and understanding of their needs, passions, and struggles. We are planning for future facilities improvements throughout the Refuge Complex, on our trails, and in a future Community Nature Center in Ridgefield. We look to make these spaces accessible for all unique styles of interaction, comfort levels in nature, and history with these spaces. How can we showcase and celebrate the rich stories and unique ways people are already participating in conservation throughout our neighborhoods, in small and big ways?

I have to say it is incredibly empowering and so much fun to engage with the community to understand meaningful ways we can create enriching experiences in the outdoors, not only within our facilities and program structure but also in how we engage as people. We are working with community members to better understand these needs, with partners to see where we can create a network of support, and with local experts that know how to take what we do and make it accessible for anyone interested in using nature connections to enhance their daily lives. Thank you for engaging in this journey with us and stay tuned for opportunities to learn more and participate in new and improved experiences at your local Refuges.

-Josie Finley, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Manager



Ridgefield Refuge Complex News & Events

Gate times for both units: 6:00 AM - 9:00 PM



SEASONAL TRAIL UPDATES:

The Carty Lake Carty Unit Entrance trail opens May 1st. Don't forget that the Oaks-to-Wetlands Trail, within the Oak Restoration area, is closed Thursdays for trail maintenance.

The Kiwa Trail opening is postponed until further notice due to Sandhill Cranes nesting - a colt (or baby crane) was spotted with the adults! **Check out the "From the Contact Station" article below for an update.** So for now the trail will remain closed. We will share all updates on our social media accounts as well as in this monthly newsletter.

FEES:

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 is also [linked here](#). Or [Become a Member](#) of the Friends and choose 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.

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 of this newsletter.

2021 BirdFest & Bluegrass & Refuge Photo Contest

Keep an eye out in your email and on our website and social media channels for the launch of the 2021 Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Photo Contest, which will last through September 10th & updates on our 2021 BirdFest & Bluegrass celebration.



Find out the Photo Contest winners during BirdFest & Bluegrass "Back to the Refuge" 2021, Saturday, October 2nd! Tune in for tons of content for everyone in the family, on the [event Facebook Page here.](#)

If you know anyone who would be interested or able to enter this contest (photos taken at Ridgefield only) share it with them, or have them sign up for our newsletter on our website, to get the info themselves!

From the Contact Station Summer and a Crane Update



Summer certainly is here. If you have been down on the River 'S' lately, you can see how very, very dry the grasses are already. All the spring rains made for an abundance of fast-growing grasses, but the extremely hot days of late June have turned much of the area golden. Usually, the refuge waits until mid-July to start the haying. That gives extra time for the young animals to be safer from predators and to move out of the way during the cutting process. But this year is so dry, you will see some of the fields being cut earlier. When this happens, look for the Vultures to hang out around the cut

fields. There is always some loss of field critters and the vultures do take advantage. We should see the Kestrels begin to... [Keep Reading...](#)

- Susan Setterberg, Contact Station Volunteer
- Photo by Anne Myers, of the 2021 Sandhill Crane Colt with a parent

Cathlapotle Plankhouse Updates & Events Virtual Second Sunday Series, July 11th, 2021 "Becoming Birds" with Dr. Teresa Wicks



11 AM: Join the Friends and Staff of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Sunday, July 11th, at 11 AM virtually for "Becoming Birds," an engaging birding excursion with Dr. Teresa Wicks, Eastern Oregon Field Coordinator for Portland Audubon, and her wife Janelle Wicks, Executive Director of the Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Not everyone birds the same, and Dr. Wick's research emphasizes how indigenous viewpoints can change how we see our interactions as part of the natural world.

10 AM: Check-in with us at 10 AM for family activity demos and Trail Tips with the Fish & Wildlife Service! Family activity bags will be available to pick up ahead of time, during First Saturdays (this Saturday, July 3rd), at Seasons Coffee in the Old Liberty Theater, while supplies last!

Family activity kits for July will include the items you need for an ear trumpet activity, all inside a Color-it-Yourself canvas tote bag while supplies last! Ear trumpets work for birding, and listening to nature, because a funnel collects and amplifies sound in the hearing process. That's why many animals have large funnel-shaped ears, like deer.

Seasons Coffee Shop at the Old Liberty Theater is located in Historic Downtown Ridgefield. Stop by to get your activity bags, and pick up a coffee, or pastries and gifts! Gifts for sale inside the coffee shop are all local artists and authors, shop and support within our area!

EVENT: Sunday, July 11th, 2021, @ 10 & 11 AM, online!

Second Sundays in 2021 will be virtual and can be viewed on and after the event dates on the Friends Facebook and Youtube Channels.

Find out more about the event, speaker bios, and craft info, on our website here!

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-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 June 2021 Habitat Recap

June has been an insanely busy month for our Habitat Restoration Program. Towards the end of May, we found the first Ricefield Bulrush plants of the season, and at the beginning of this month, we started volunteer search parties twice a week in the infested wetlands. Our protocol for bulrush control has become intense this year, and we are planning to have a helicopter spray the infested wetlands for the second summer in a row with an aquatic approved herbicide here in the next week or two. We have made it a focus to count the number of bulrush

plants (using pin flags) in the infested wetlands and get them mapped into our ArcGIS system before the helicopter comes in to spray. Our brush blade volunteer crew has been working hard up at Pierce NWR and the Oak Release Site near Steigerwald NWR to aid in the removal of Himalayan Blackberry on Mondays. We have also been working hard to ensure that the high tunnel plants stay watered and taken care of during the hot weather spells that we have been experiencing. Thursday closures at the Oaks to Wetlands Trail at the Carty Unit are still underway, and it has allowed us to devote time for herbicide applications on the invasive plants that have taken over in that area.

For detailed updates on these projects and more, visit [RNWR: Emily's Habitat Updates!](#)

- Emily Lane, Friends of RNWR Habitat Restoration Technician
Picture caption - putting out pin flags to mark bulrush plants

Volunteering at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Thank you, Volunteers!!!

This month I got the privilege to join our mighty bulrush spotters in the wetlands of the River S Unit. Volunteers have been searching for the class A invasive species Ricefield Bulrush that has tried to take over wetland habitat. I am so thankful for their persistence and support over this past year, ready to leap into action when duty called. In the picture, you can see two volunteers marking bulrush plants with pin flags so that our Habitat Technician Emily Lane can go back and GPS the patterns of growth and number of plants. We are not currently accepting new volunteers. If you would like to join a work party in the future or want to learn more about our volunteer programs send me an [email to our volunteer mailbox](#) and I will add you to our email list.



Reflections and a Call to Action

Black History Month in February and Pride in June made the issues faced by millions front and center in our lives. More time spent at home and on screens offers unlimited resources to learn about social injustice and allyship. As Pride month comes to an end it is important to know that the work and education never stops. Over the past year, the Friends have been able to team up with DEI consultants, send staff to DEI training, and team up with partner organizations to learn how to confront biases and create safe spaces. I hope that you have also been able to find ways to dive into these important movements and causes. Everything you need to start learning is likely right at your fingertips whether that be your smart phone or computer.

-Elena Tinoco, Friends of RNWR Volunteer Coordinator

Birding Enthusiasts

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



Ridgefield First Saturdays - Red, White & Blue July 3, 2021

Kick-off Independence Day celebrations a day early with music, a sweet treat, lawn games, and patriotic kid's crafts alongside the Ridgefield community at Overlook Park!

Explore Ridgefield and add Miles to your log in the [100 Miles in 100 Days Challenge](#). Take a walk around downtown or the Ridgefield waterfront and add to your mileage log.

[Full details and more, here](#)



Species Spotlight Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena*

A delightful summer sight to see over here in the western part of



the state is the Lazuli Bunting. The Lazuli Bunting is mostly an eastern Washington bird but can be found locally west of the Cascades at Fort Lewis (Pierce County), in the Vancouver area (Clark County), along the Skagit and Cowlitz Rivers, and in south King County on the Muckleshoot Prairies around Enumclaw.

Male Lazuli Buntings are conspicuous in summer, singing in the open, but the plainer brown females are far more elusive as they tend their nests in the thick bushes. When trying to identify this bird, you will find that breeding males are unmistakable...**Keep**

Reading...

-Samantha Zeiner, Friends of RNWR Administrative Coordinator
-Photo by Susan Setterberg

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 commits you with:

- 200,000+ visitors annually;
- 1,000 students participating in field trips and educational programs;
- 4,000 visitors to BirdFall & Bluegrass;
- 3,000 attendees at Planthouse 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 Burning on Nature study released in 2015 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 invested in your community by becoming a part of our Business Alliance today!

Photograph Credit: Douglas Hall, Angie Vogel, Oia Hordley, Steve Hansen.

Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

Join our **Business Alliance!**

100% Recycled Post-Consumer Content, Printed Chlorine Free and FSC 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!

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.



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 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:

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.

