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## The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The latest updates | April, 2022



### From the Friends

#### A Message from Board President, Jim Maul:

I am writing today to notify you that Juliet McGraw has departed the Friends of Ridgefield NWR, effective Friday, March 11th, 2022. The Lifeways and Landscapes Program is being temporarily paused, and as a result, the Friends had to make the difficult decision to eliminate the Community and Cultural Education Director position. The Friends want to extend its appreciation to Juliet for her hard work and dedication to building this program over the last 6 years. The programs at the Plankhouse and on the Refuge have helped increase the appreciation for the deep cultural history preserved on the Refuge and the Friends appreciate Juliet's incredible contribution and wish her the best. We know Juliet will continue to do meaningful work in whatever her future holds and look forward to seeing her in our community and on the

Refuge.

**-Jim Maul, Board President, Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge**

[Contact the board](#)

## Daylight Savings and the Impact We Can Help Mitigate

Daylight savings, while the same general time year after year - ALWAYS catches me by surprise. And even as the saying goes, "fall back - spring forward," somehow I always mix the anecdotes and get confused if it is fall back or fall forward, as well, I've definitely fallen forward just as often as I have fallen backwards...



The switch takes a bit of time for me to adjust to, as is the case for many. As I sit at the Refuge I wonder - how does this alteration of time, affect wildlife?

There are many opinions about this for sure. I welcome you to read this article from [Discover Magazine](#) for some thoughts on the impact to animals. One thing this article reminded me of was that the hours many species of wildlife thrive- usually the darker ones when human activity is minimal- are very important. The relevancy here is that our closing times are adjusted per sunrise and sunset, to account for those wildlife needs. While the Refuge may seem like a great moonlight outing, our automatic gates close daily to help provide respite for the wildlife that call the Refuges their home. As days get longer, and Steigerwald Lake reopens, along with seasonal trails at Ridgefield, we ask again that when planning your visit please keep an eye on the clock, and exit before the posted closing time.

Check out our NEW official USFWS Refuge websites for closing times, and much more. **Note: While Ridgefield's website remains the same URL, Steigerwald Lake's has slightly changed.**

**-Mesha Wood, USFWS Park Ranger for the Refuge Complex**

image: Great Horned Owl, ©USFWS Southwest Region

Image Description: A close-up of a Great horned owl staring into the eyes of the view, with tufted ears pointing up and the yellow of their eyes very prominent.

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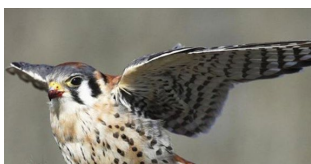
The Carty Unit Oaks-to-Wetlands Trail, within the Oak Restoration area, is generally closed Thursdays for trail maintenance, watch for signs.

*NOTE: The Washington State Discover Pass is not valid on Federally managed public lands, including National Wildlife Refuges. Find out more about [fees & passes here](#).*

Check the [Refuge2020.info](#) website for project updates, like the Steigerwald Lake reconnection project, Carty Unit Oaks-to-Wetlands Trail developments, and more!

## From the Contact Station

### Little Furry Things & Critter Spotlight: Townsend's Mole



I recently read an article in *Cool Green Science*, an e-publication by Nature Conservancy, by science writer Christine Peterson. She described the life of a Deer Mouse, North America's most abundant mammal. It is both predator and prey and widely adapts to many habitats. It got me thinking about seldom-seen critters on the Refuge. --- *Warning, before you proceed, this article has some icky factor to it.* --- Indeed, best viewings of these kinds of animals seem to be...**keep reading...**

**-Susan Setterberg, Contact Station Volunteer**

image: American Kestrel by Arman Werth



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

### March Planting Updates

Friend's staff and our regular volunteers spent much of February and March clearing blackberries and planting close to 400 trees and shrubs along the auto tour route. Tree species include Oregon ash and bitter cherry with an understory of red osier dogwood, ocean spray, snowberry, Oregon grape, and Douglas spiraea. These plants will provide both food and cover for our growing Columbia White-tailed deer population as well as future habitat for birds and pollinators.



The mesh tube protectors prevent early predation by rodents and deer grazing and will be replaced after two seasons with wire caging for 2-3 more seasons, to allow the plants to branch out before they're available for munching. In an effort to move away from repeated use of herbicide and still provide a good growing environment for plantings, we are using mulch and sowing native grasses to reduce competition with reed canary grass and blackberry regrowth.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers who helped with this effort. The last couple of years have been challenging for both volunteers and staff with constant covid threat assessments and shutdown/startup schedules. We would not accomplish all of the habitat the work we do on the Refuge without the community pitching in. We're hoping to open up the program to new volunteers in the very near future so if you would like to come help out, stay tuned.

Thanks!!

**-Keith Rutz, Friends of RNWR Habitat Restoration Coordinator**

Photos by Justine Casebolt, Tree Planting at Ridgefield NWR



## Refuge Volunteering

### Volunteer Happenings



**Current Volunteers:** Keep your eyes open for an email from me later this month for a volunteer orientation and training invite! We are on track to have Contact Station volunteers back on the River 'S' Unit, in May!

**Future Volunteers:** We are not ready to bring on new volunteers at this time. Stay tuned for future newsletters with information about volunteer opportunities this summer!

**-Elena Tinoco, FRNWR Volunteer Coordinator**

image description: Tree planting and ground clearing, March 2022

## Update for the Gorge Refuge Stewards

### Steigerwald Lake NWR - Refuge Re-opening to the Public May 1st, 2022

While there is still plenty of work to be done, we look forward to having the community home with us again this coming May. While some of the amenities, artwork, and even part of the trail won't be completed for opening day, we hope that those that return to experience it for the first time since March 2020 will enjoy the chance to take in the scenery, wildlife, and growing vegetation.



Stay tuned for more information to follow ([bookmark our USFWS website](#)) about what to expect (including access and trails) and visitor services offered (amenities and public engagement) closer to the reopening in May.

image: Visitor at SLNWR Overlook, ©USFWS

Image description: Stasia Honnold of Washington Trails Association stops at the first overlook at SLNWR on the west levee to take a picture of Mt. Hood which appears in the far distance, rising above Steigerwald Lake.

**Question of the month. Which of the following species might you see in the water at one of our Refuges?**

- A) River Otter
- B) Wood Duck
- C) Garter Snake
- D) Alligators
- E) All of the Above
- F) All but D



**That is right, it is F.** While we don't have alligators at our Refuges (phew!) we do have River Otters, Wood Ducks, and Garter Snakes, that, if you are lucky, you might just see swimming.

While watching Wood Ducks seems a regular treat, I do see the occasional otter family splashing around. However, the other weekend, I watched a garter snake slither from the bank right into the water, and was amazed. I stepped back and watched it for a bit, moving around in the water just fine, until it circled back toward land and went along its way. While I have seen rattlesnakes in eastern Oregon in the water, I hadn't really thought about a garter snake as a swimmer, until this day (sorry no picture as I didn't have my phone or a camera on myself). It was a good reminder that wildlife and nature can reveal some pretty fun and new things to us, and even surprise us.

On your next visit, I encourage you to stop to think about what might be under the surface, emerging or visible on the water - as there is always more than the eye sees. This time of year, egg masses of various amphibians fill our shallower wetlands, and macroinvertebrates that start their life as aquatic species are tucked away in the water till warmer days. Dragonflies, damselflies, mayflies, stoneflies, and mosquitos ALL start their life cycles in the water. Watch for them hovering in the wetlands later, as temperatures increase.

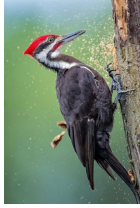
**-Mesha Wood, USFWS Park Ranger for the Refuge Complex**

image: Dragonfly, ©Mesha Wood, USFWS

image description: A Red and orange-colored adult dragonfly sits on the gravel road with wings spread.

**Birding Enthusiasts**

**Ridgefield First  
Saturdays -  
Ridgefield Whodunnits  
April 2, 2022**



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



Put your detective skills to the test with a family-friendly mystery game in Downtown Ridgefield!

[Details and more...](#)

## Species Spotlight

Check out the "From the Contact Station" section above for species spotlights!

## 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 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 *third* Monday of the month and will be *on Zoom until further notice*, [contact us](#) to join in!

2022: March 31\*, April 18, May 16, June 21\*, July 18, August 15, September 19, October 17, November 21, December 19  
(\*moved due to federal holiday or conflict)



## 2022 Merch



Check out our NEW store items, with more being added all the time! We have mugs that change colors, tote bags, sweatshirts, and more, all featuring our 2019, 2020, AND 2021 Refuge Photo Contest winning photos, 2021 Spring Break Youth Art Contest art, *as well as* the 2021 BirdFest & Bluegrass button image, and the "Back to the Refuge" logo!

### **START SHOPPING!**

Get your friends and family (or yourself!) a gift that will remind them of nature's beauty and support a wonderful cause!

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.



## 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.

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:

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BirdFest & Bluegrass:



Granting Organizations & Partners:



Header Photo Credit: Sandra Michaelis, 2018, 2nd place Plant Category, 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.

