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## The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The latest updates | May, 2022



### Ridgefield Refuge Complex News & Events Gate times for both units 6:30 am - 8:00 pm

**All seasonal Trails re-open May 1st. \*NOTE: The Kiwa Trail will NOT open on May 1st, 2022 due to suspected Sandhill Crane nesting activity. Stay tuned for updates\***



#### **Kiwa Trail: VIP guests only this spring (AKA endangered Sandhill Cranes!)**

Do you know anyone whose hometown “claim to fame” is being part of an endangered species recovery story? Well, if you live in Ridgefield you’ve heard this once with the Columbian White-tailed Deer, who now thrive on the Refuge. Now we celebrate the return of a pair of Lesser Sandhill Cranes nesting again on our Kiwa Trail. This could be the beginning of a success story that everyone who loves this place can be proud of.

Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge has been working for decades to help protect cranes by providing a healthy place along their migration route to rest and recharge. Part of this is keeping pieces of the refuge closed to human disturbance, something

this species needs more than others. Refuge staff and partners also work hard to provide opportunities for the public to find healthy connections to nature and see these natural wonders. By opening areas that are less sensitive to repeat use, we can provide spaces for all of us to thrive.

Occasionally, use of these open areas needs to be adjusted, to keep a balance and accommodate the many changes that both wildlife and people go through. We thank our visitors for understanding and supporting the need to delay the opening of the Kiwa trail. If we give these cranes space, they can successfully increase their population. And we can return to our beloved trail when that colt (baby crane) is big enough to move around the refuge without danger from disturbance.

For more information about Lesser Sandhill Cranes: [Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Species Profile](#)

**-Josie Finley, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Manager**

image: Lesser Sandhill Crane family with the fully-fledged colt from summer 2021 by Randy Hill

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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 on all our Refuges in the Ridgefield Complex.

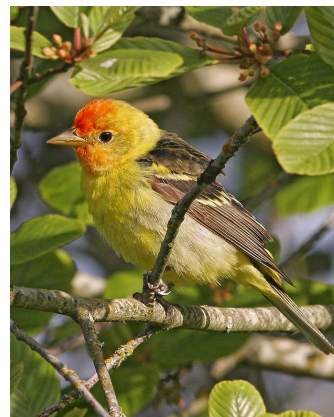
## Mother's Day Visitors

"I have marveled that my first Western Tanager of the spring in my yard is almost always Mother's Day Weekend.

Kind of how one gives flowers for a splash of color for Mother's Day, the tanagers give a pop of yellow and red in the backyard.

**My notes:** (there is a 5-year gap where I failed to note the arrival. But rest assured, I was listening on those Mother's Days and the trend holds pretty tight to a few days on either side of Mom's Day). (WETA = Western Tanager)

5/7/2010 WETA 1st at my house  
5/9/2009 WETA 1st at my house  
5/11/2011 WETA in the yard many in Ridgefield on 5/12  
5/5/2012 WETA In PDX also on the 6th at home  
5/9/2014 WETA mother's day Friday at house  
5/4/2015 WETA 1st of season calling at house.  
5/4/2016 WETA at work HQ  
5/9/2021 WETA Mother's Day weekend again.



**Here is to another year,"**

**-Eric Anderson, Deputy Refuge Project Leader**

image: Western Tanager by Roger Windemuth

## From the Contact Station

### How to Spot an Owl?

As part of the preparation for re-opening the contact station, we



image: Barred Owl by volunteer Virginia Scott

decided we needed to update some of the tools we have used to help people find and identify wildlife. Our photos that helped people locate owls are seriously out of date as the five Great-horned Owls we could see maybe four years ago have moved their day roosts and nests. So, in lieu of specifics such as "third tree on the right beyond post 6, 20 feet up with photos," we thought it would be useful to talk about How to Spot an Owl...keep reading...

-Susan Setterberg, Contact Station Volunteer



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 Spring-time Transitions

April is the transition month between the end of winter restoration plantings and the start of spring invasive species work for the Friend's habitat program. In between rain showers and snowfall, you might have seen us walking with backpack sprayers or hauling tank sprayers in a UTV staring intently at the ground. Some of you might also have seen someone with a two-wheel dolly and flaming torch cooking the ground around the Auto-Tour restroom or under shrubs on the Oaks to Wetland Trail.



The species that we focus on first, and ones you may see in your yards, are poison hemlock and shiny geranium. Poison Hemlock made the national news this year after someone ended up in the ICU after clearing it by hand, so don't do that or try to burn it out. Shiny geranium may have not killed Socrates, but it is causing me much heartburn. Please be sure and use the boot brushes found at Refuge entrances and trail access points. Shiny geranium seeds are spread in multiple fashions and are able to shoot their seeds several meters meaning there are seeds in areas where you might not see plants.



Spring also brings garter snakes out into the open so please watch for them sunning themselves in the road while driving the Auto-Tour, as well as goose goslings as they are moved from one side of the road to the other. The Auto-Tour opens to walkers in May so drive accordingly and remember slow speeds reduce dust clouds which is a benefit to everyone who breathes on the Refuge. We are planning on opening the volunteer program to new folks starting in May so if interested you can find sign-up information for volunteering on both the Friend's and Refuge websites. So, in the words of one of my favorite writers,

"Down with empire, Up with Spring"-EA

-Keith Rutz, Friends of RNWR Habitat Restoration Coordinator

Photos: top right: Shiny Geranium, bottom left: Garter Snake on the River 'S' Unit, a distance shot of the snake on the route, and then a close up of the snake.

### Refuge Volunteering

## Volunteer Happenings

During our first volunteer training in April, we had the pleasure of reuniting with past Refuge Ambassadors! We have not seen our volunteers since 2020 and it was a wonderful occasion! This training would not have been possible without the support of US Fish & Wildlife staff, Deviant Compassion Consulting, The Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards, and Friends combined! It also would not have been possible without the community support through donations to help feed volunteers during the long training day.



This month you can look forward to seeing and meeting our Refuge Ambassadors on the Auto Tour route in Ridgefield WA! If you visit Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge after its grand re-opening, you will see the friendly faces of volunteers as well!

Refuge Ambassadors is the umbrella title for our Trail Stewards, Contact Station, Tabling, and Board volunteers. These volunteers are excited to engage with community members and answer any questions visitors may have about the refuge, wildlife identification, history, and even where to find a good place to eat after your trip! Please come and say hi, I guarantee you will learn something new to love about the refuge!

### **New Volunteers:**

We are not currently training or onboarding new volunteers at this time. We are actively planning for possibilities this summer and fall! If you are interested in volunteering you can reach out to the [Volunteer Coordinator here](#) to get more information about upcoming opportunities!

**-Elena Tinoco, FRNWR Volunteer Coordinator**

image description: Contact Station on the River 'S' Unit of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

## Update for the Gorge Refuge Stewards

**Celebrate a great conservation story and the reopening of Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge - May 7<sup>th</sup>, 12-4 PM**

**Steigerwald  
Lake National  
Wildlife Refuge  
reopens to the  
public on  
May 1, 2022**



While the refuge officially opens on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, staff and partners ask the community to come celebrate with us on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Walk the new trail, participate in family friendly activities, talk to Volunteer Refuge Ambassadors about what the refuge has to offer, and chat with us about how you like to engage with nature. This is not just an opportunity to take a walk and learn about this amazing restoration along the Columbia River, it is also the beginning of this Refuge growing up with the community. We want to learn from you and understand how we might work with partners to break down barriers you face to enjoying the outdoors.

### **Shuttle Access Only until 5 pm**

To accommodate a larger than usual crowd, the Refuge parking lot will be closed, and access will be by a shuttle leaving regularly from the Pendleton Mill Store at 2 Pendleton Way, Washougal WA. The shuttle will be mask friendly and wheelchair accessible. If you have questions about this or need alternate accommodations, please call Park Ranger Josie Finley at 360-608-2059.

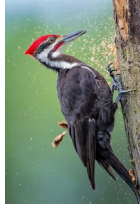
The refuge can also be accessed from 6 am to 8 pm via a trail connection from William Clark Park at

South Index Street at South 32nd Street, Washougal, WA. The parking lot will reopen at 5 pm for regular visitation and the automatic gate closes at 8 pm.

Stay tuned for more information about what to expect (including access and trails) and visitor services offered (amenities and public engagement) closer to the reopening in May. [Bookmark the USFWS website](#) to find that info as it becomes available.

image: Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge reopens to the public on May 1, 2022 - followed by the Steigerwald Reconnection Project logo

## Birding Enthusiasts



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

## Ridgefield First Saturdays - Spring Festival May 7, 2022

Celebrate the anniversary of Ridgefield First Saturdays at the annual celebration of spring!

[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](#)



**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 BirdFair & Bluegrass;
- 3,000 attendees at Flankhouse events;
- 1,200 monthly newsletter readers;
- 1,500 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 invested in your community by becoming a part of our Business Alliance today!

Photo credit: Steigerwald Lake, King Vaght, On Road, Inc. Photo credit: Steigerwald Lake, King Vaght, On Road, Inc.

Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

Join our Business Alliance!

Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge  
PO Box 6222  
Ridgefield, WA 98642  
www.ridgefieldfriends.org

501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization  
Please make checks payable to Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge



## Board Seeking New Members Or, Join a Committee

The Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is a non-profit dedicated to promoting, 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 5 PM every *third* Monday of the month and will be *on Zoom until further*

**notice, contact us to join in!**

2022: 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

## Benefits of Membership

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: 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.

