

Introduction

The Community Asset Committee is a joint committee of the US Fish & Wildlife Service’s Urban Wildlife Conservation Program (UWCP), the Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (FRNWR), the Gorge Refuge Stewards (GRS), and the Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Complex (FTRNWRC). The committee exists to answer the following questions with our community partners: *What can we do as an asset to get nature into your communities’ lives, and how can we be a part of that?* Our charter can be found [here](#).

Through a cooperative agreement between the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, this committee has funds to invest in and supplement the activities that support the above objectives.

The following is a report on activities and outcomes, including fund expenditures, for Fiscal Year 2023.

Projects

The following projects took place between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023. Total funds expended were **\$20,439.66**

Cash-on-hand- approx. \$900.00

EVENTS:

2022 Creatures of the Night—Tualatin River NWR

Amount: \$903.98

Goals. Looking for financial support for our return to public programming at the Refuge after 2 years. *Creatures of the Night* is a family fun nature-oriented event that connects the wonder of what the Refuge is like at night with families that do not traditionally visit our Refuge. We have provided both Spanish and English flyers to the community- including outreach at Greenway Elementary School during Back to School Night and we will promote the event at el Tigre on Oct 15th, the City of Tigard Hispanic Heritage Festival.

Creatures of the Night is an evening-based event at the Refuge that will include bi-lingual night walks, cookie decorating, owl pellet dissections, interpretive tables, and much more. It is a free- family-focused event- and will be a great “first” return to public programming event!

Activities. Face Painting, Night Walks, Cookie decorating, Owl Pellets, Pelts & Skulls table, Arts & Crafts, Candy, and cider. We engaged Spanish-speaking helpers by paying them a small travel stipend.

Outcomes. Limited access or invitation to nature. We hope to provide a family-friendly free event that appeals to communities that might not be able to attend programs during the day or may not know about the National Wildlife Refuge. By focusing on two main outreach events to engage with the public, Greenway Back to School Night and the Tigard el Tigre event, we believe we can engage with communities that might not know about the public programs we offer.

Future Plans and Opportunities. The plan is to have this as an annual community-centered event.

Additional Materials.



Consulting and Coaching for Friends Participation in Urban Wildlife Conservation Program

Amount: \$1,347.96

Goals. The goal will assist with determining explicit actions and functions of the Friends group members of the committee to serve the goals of the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program at a higher level through guided discussions and presentations as well as providing insights and analysis.

Activities. Aryn LaBrake—former ED of Friends of Valle de Oro and consultant provided services to the Community Assets Committee (Committee) supporting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Urban Wildlife Conservation Program (UWCP) in Portland-Vancouver. Several meetings were held and a report was provided with a framework and notes to help CAC move forward.

Outcomes. The group was provided with a huge variety of resources to use in engaging our boards, but more than anything, we were given a place to discuss the issues we were having and feel seen and heard, and sometimes even be able to discuss a solution to a current problem. A couple of semi-

formal discussion sessions ended up being exactly what we needed to keep going and be re-inspired in our work.

Most notably, because of our work with Aryn, we were encouraged to, and able to attend, the Public Lands Alliance conference. Through this, we gained connections, resources, and ideas for more engaging online and in-person content. This conference, in turn, resulted in our committee all attending the Friends conference at NCTC in May, where we made even more connections, and, for the first time in a while, really felt supported by the federal staff that work with refuges. We all learned something there that made us feel more in control of our boards, just like we planned with Aryn.

Future Plans and Opportunities. Right now, we have put the resources to use in smaller ways, planning in the future to make larger pushes for support and engagement of board members.

Additional Materials. The group was provided with an assortment of resources, with the plan to use them in the coming year.

Public Lands Alliance—Friends and Youth Employee Participation

Amount: \$4,785.94

Goals. PLA's Annual Convention and Trade Show is the premier gathering of leaders in the public lands sector. Public lands nonprofits, land management agencies, and businesses come to network, gain tools to help advance their agency and organization missions, and shop the trade show that features products that educate and appeal to public lands visitors.

Activities. The Community Asset Committee, up to one additional Friends member, and youth employee Typhanie Shepherd, attended the conference. (Urban Team and Regional Visitor Services Team also attended with other funds).

Outcomes. 5 friends attended a variety of sessions in four focal areas: Sustainable Business Practices, Equity and Access in Outdoor Recreation, Engaging Tribal Communities, and Investing in Visitor and Employee Infrastructure. Youth employee, Typhanie Shepherd also attended the conference. Typhanie, Jared Strawderman from the Gorge Stewards, Urban Team, and partner Access Recreation, did a presentation on accessibility information.

Reduce Barriers (for people living with disabilities); Inspire Issue Action (for conference attendees); Improve Excellence (development opportunities for youth employees).

Beth Marlin Lichter, a volunteer who attended the conference along with the Gorge Refuge Stewards, wrote an article afterwards for their newsletter; which includes her interviews with other attendees, more details, and photos:

<https://gorge-refuge-stewards.herokuapp.com/news>

Future Plans and Opportunities. NA



Additional Materials.

Presentation Summary:

People of all abilities like to hike and experience recreation opportunities. Having basic information on all trails allows people to decide for themselves if a trail is usable and will meet their desired recreational experience. Printed materials and online resources vary greatly in the information provided and are often offered with little understanding of what is most useful for people with different types of disabilities. Many trails could be used by people with disabilities if they were provided with basic information like surface, grade, cross slope, length, and potential obstacles on the trail or important amenities. It can be really frustrating to make the effort to visit a trail only to discover that it is unusable and perhaps for the most inconsequential reasons. Join Access Recreation, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards to explore actionable and practical recommendations that:

- *Encourages people of all abilities to enjoy the natural environment and not be hindered by a lack of information.*
- *Provides trail users with sufficient information (on all trails) so they can make their own decisions about trail suitability.*
- *Steers away from strict definitions such as “ADA accessible” and allows the user to determine whether a trail is suitable or not.*

**Wapato Lake NWR Opening Celebration for the Community
Wapato Lake Welcome Ceremony and Open House**

Amount: \$182.50

Goals. Provide an Open House and Welcome Ceremony to officially launch the opening of Wapato Lake NWR. The development of the event was to be community-led. Through working with existing community partners, the event was designed to share the work that Refuge partners accomplish, as well as demonstrate that the Refuge is a community asset for everyone.

Activities & Outcomes. On Saturday, March 18th, over 200 people consisting of community members and partners gathered to celebrate the opening of Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). A ceremony was held at Gaston Jr./Sr. High School, with remarks from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the City of Gaston, Friends of Tualatin River NWRC, and a congressional representative. Following the ceremony, visitors were invited to check out an open house featuring some of the Refuge’s community partners such as I’m Hooked, Access Recreation, the Oregon Chinese Coalition, and the Indigenous Traditional Ecological and Cultural Knowledge program at Portland State University, among many others. Finally, visitors made their way down to the Refuge itself and were able to walk on the trail to learn more about the wildlife and habitat at the Refuge. The focus of this event was on partners and showcasing what they bring to the community.

Future Plans and Opportunities. NA

Additional Materials.



Puddle Stompers

Amount: \$300.00

Goals. This funding offered additional opportunities for the community to participate in our puddle stompers program, specifically for the LatinX community, by offering the program in Spanish, and during a day/time different from our other program, to offer an alternative opportunity for families.

Activities & Outcomes. Ana worked to learn the lesson materials and translate them to Spanish, which included the story, activities, walk, song, and craft; additionally, she provided translations for the online event information and flyer. Ana was onsite for both events and was available to provide the program in both Spanish and English. This was a great opportunity for families to connect with the refuge, and be involved with a program that they might not be able to during its weekday time. While we aren't currently doing the weekend program time, these two sessions were a great start to continue this work in other aspects of our visitor services program and was a great example of the goals we have to expand opportunities in all of our onsite programming.

Future Plans and Opportunities.

Additional Materials.

Photographer for City of Vancouver Earth Day Sustainable Communities Fair and Dia de los Ninos Event at Ridgefield

Amount: \$300.00

Goals. To capture photos of two Daycation and FWS intersecting events

Activities. City of Vancouver Earth Day Sustainable Communities Fair and Dia de los Ninos Event at Ridgefield.

Outcomes. Photos were taken by Tyler Fung, a recent graduate of the Youth Employment Program. Tyler has developed an interest in photography and is now seeking to re-engage with FWS.

Future Plans and Opportunities.

Additional Materials.

Photos were provided to event leads. Included is one from each event; Dia de los Ninos (left) and Earth Day (Right)



Tualatin River Youth Climate Summit

Amount: \$169.10

Goals. This program is a student-led initiative to connect area High School and Middle School students with a summit to discuss the climate crisis and what they can do to effect change.

Activities.

The Oregon Youth Climate Summit is a one-day event that is free to all middle and high school students in Oregon but mostly focused on the larger Portland Metro area. In 2022, students from Next Gen Innovators approached the Friends about wanting to put on a summit for local students. Cheryl Hart, President of the Friends, and myself have met with the students weekly over the past seven months. Cheryl and I are there to help guide the students and use whatever resources we have to help them put this event together. We have connected them with speakers, helped secure the location of the Tualatin River NWR, and connected them with various exhibitors. The students have been doing outreach and working on finding sponsors or grants for the event. We plan to host this event annually or every other year. The summit will address two main topics- careers in conservation /what you can do to make a difference and using nature to help with “Climate Grief” and COVID-19 isolation. The event was on April 15th from 1-5 PM.

The students expressed their needs to us- they need a forum to talk about the future and to help them cope with the present. Hosting this summit is truly a community asset.

Outcomes. Funds were used to provide snacks for the students attending the summit and also for supplies for some of the Green Team and Climate Clubs. An outstanding exchange of ideas and concerns by the students. Valuable information on careers in conservation was shared by the guest speakers. Enthusiasm for planning another event in 2024.

Future Plans and Opportunities. The students desire to offer this as an annual event because there are very few opportunities for students from the area to come together and discuss the most critical issue they face- the ever-changing climate. More outreach is planned for the 2024 summit, increasing the exchange between students while reducing the number of speakers offered.

Additional Materials.



Greenway Elementary Youth Changemaker Project

Amount: \$516.94

Goals. Looking at ways to incorporate the Refuge and the surrounding neighborhood (Fanno Creek) in the lesson plans that utilize the resources provided. Using Chicken Creek as a model for the work that could be done on Fanno Creek as the students focus on “Nature as Engineers” Once again bring the students back to the Refuge to tie all of the learning objectives together. Focusing on reducing the barriers that the students and teachers face when working towards more frequency and familiarity with nature, we hope to see an increase as a result of our contributions. Our other focus will be centered on increasing the trust that is needed between the school (students and teachers) and the Refuge program.

Activities. Each class in the school (Pre-K-5th) will take on an advocacy project as a change-maker. See below for a link to each of these amazing projects.

Outcomes.

[2023 Changemaker Projects](#)

Here are a few examples

The Playground Problem: Why is there so much trash?

PreK

Ms. Katie's Class

The Pre-K classes noticed a lot of trash on our undercover playground space every day. We kept picking up trash every time we went outside, so we decided to make signs to let other kids know to put their trash in the garbage cans so we could keep our playground a safe and clean place to play!

The Trouble with Trash!

Kinder

Mrs. Janssen's Class

The kids started noticing trash in the bathrooms and on the playground. Angie came to talk with us on ways we could help solve the problem. We are going to be little trash collectors and help others learn about the trouble with trash. One example was we could ask people their favorite animal and then teach them how trash harms that animal.

Worms Are Helpers, Too!

Kinder
Mrs. M's Class

Our class became very interested in worms when we kept finding them stranded on the sidewalk. We observed them and read books about them. We decided we wanted to write a book for other kids, so they know they can help save worms. They aren't gross! We think they are cute! They are also very helpful. Come to our classroom to read our book and find out why worms are worth saving!

Give Bees a Chance

1st grade
Mrs. Lewis and Ms. Griswold's Class

Our idea is to plant a bee friendly garden in front of our classroom. We planted bee friendly flowers and plants and also painted rocks to put in the garden. We are also doing activities within our room learning all about bees.

Playground Issue Affects All

2nd grade
Ms. Bettis and Ms. Tera's Class

Students discovered that we have an issue that affects all students and our building. Our playground has areas of erosion. During wet weather this creates mud which students fall in. Students also track mud inside the building which makes a mess on floors and carpets. Students have designed a way to prevent this from happening.

Everyone is Welcome Mural

3rd grade
Mrs. Hariss's Class

Our third-grade class went on a walk around Greenway taking notes on all the things we love about our school. As we talked, we realized we love how welcoming Greenway is and we wanted to find a way to celebrate this strength. We worked with local artist Wendy Doss and created a mural that shows how welcoming we can be at Greenway! We hope it reminds kids and grown-ups who visit Greenway, that they too can help make Greenway a special place!

Food Justice For All

3rd grade
Mrs. Jackson's Class

Everyone has the right to fuel their bodies appropriately, or at least it should be a right! Unfortunately, not everyone has this privilege. Our Taking Action projects are inspired by our Food Justice unit where we researched three barriers to Food Justice For All: 1. Food Insecurity 2. Food Waste 3. Food Deserts. Come check out what our 3rd grade changemakers are doing about it!

Protecting Salmon and Our Waterways

4th grade
Mrs. Griffin and Ms. Thurston's Class

We are learning about the importance of salmon and clean waterways and creating salmon plaques for our school fence to beautify the school and remind our community of our connection to salmon and water and that we need to protect them.

The Amazing Beaver: Master Engineers

5th grade
Mrs. Barringer's Class

Beavers, and their engineering of dams, benefit the ecosystem in many ways. We researched how they protect the land during droughts and wildfires, and how they contribute to the biodiversity of an

environment. With inspiration from artist, Steph Littlebird, we have created colorful works of art to celebrate and inform others how beavers help the world.

Advocating for Oregon's Beavers

5th grade

Mr. Cartwright's Class

Our class wrote letters to the Governor of Oregon to advocate for the protections of beavers and their habitat. We want to protect the beavers' lives and homes!!

Future Plans and Opportunities. We are looking to continue to build a relationship with the school that includes their assistance in helping us develop a robust environmental education program at TRNWRC. The principal and teaching staff are committed to growing and engaging in this relationship and program.

Additional Materials.

2023 Event Pictures



PSU ITECK Student Engagement and Other Culturally-Specific Events

Amount: \$211.65

Goals. Funds are being requested to provide healthy snacks for activities and engagement with students of the Portland State University Indigenous Nations Studies Program, local Indigenous

community leaders, and other events supporting culturally-specific events hosted by the Urban Team and refuge staffs.

Activities. Healthy snacks were provided for several small field events, including ITECK students, the inaugural group of students.

Outcomes. Barriers to participation were reduced. The mere gesture of providing snacks honors ITECK student and instructor knowledge and time. Snacks provided for the Tualatin River NWR Pride Event were noted as generous and aligned with health and environmentally conscious values.

Future Plans and Opportunities. Continued on-refuge engagement. The team will continue to secure food for future events—in particular stewardship events like Wapato planting with students and tribal members.

Additional Materials.

On July 22nd, Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge was the site for “Pride in the Wild,” one of the first fully-fledged Pride events in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Pacific Region. The event was organized and hosted by the USFWS Pride Employee Resources Group. Open to all, “Pride in the Wild” was designed to welcome the local LGBTQIA+ community to the refuge for a day of fun and learning. The morning started with the raising of the Pride flag while one of the resident bald eagles watched from their favorite perch. New friends from Feminist Bird Club and Queer Flockers led a bird walk out to the Chicken Creek restoration area, where the black swan (lovingly dubbed Natalie) was a huge hit. Park ranger, Natalie Balkam (no relation), led a plant walk to the river overlook where attendees chatted about native and invasive plants. The afternoon had us sharing food and stories, and even some Salsa and Bachata dancing, led by USFWS Visual Information Specialist, Karen Ceballos. It was a fantastic day of nature and community with about 50 people participating throughout the event.



Students from the Indigenous Leadership for Sustainable Futures; First Foods of the PNW and Tribal Internships classes, along with Refuge System staff, tended the land and planted wet meadow prairie at Tualatin River NWR.



Greenway Elementary—Field Trip to Horning’s Hideout

Amount: \$453.60

Goals. Engage youth in a nature-based activity to learn skills, grow confidence, and get outdoors

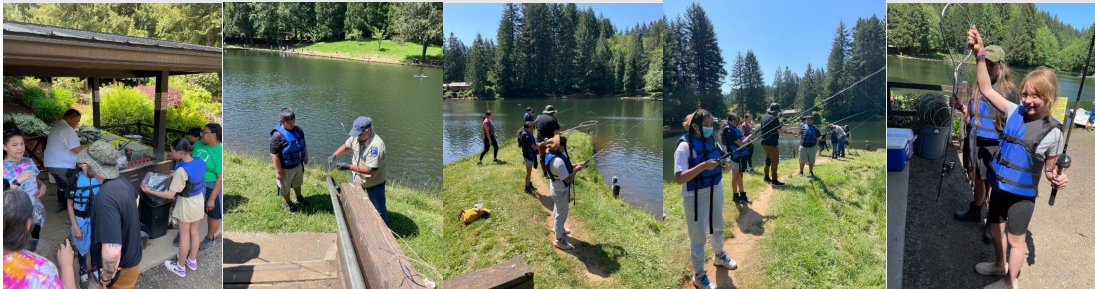
Activities. Fishing, physical fitness, fish anatomy

Outcomes. As a Title One School, Greenway has very limited access to funding to provide this additional field trip for the two fifth-grade classrooms. When the two teachers were asked what they really wished they could provide to their students- the answer was unanimous- a fishing trip. Combining our relationship with Wil Warren from I’m Hooked and the desire of these teachers, we put together this extraordinary day for the students. Funds were used to pay for the bus to transport the students to Horning’s Hideout and I’m Hooked took care of everything the school needed. The teachers and students have ALL said this was the best field trip they had ever been on. One of these teachers has been doing this for over 30 years- so that is saying something. When I visited the classrooms after the trip, the students could hardly contain themselves about everything they got to do. Every student caught at least one fish and the teachers included a cooking lesson that almost every student participated in. The school reported that the office had never received so many positive calls from parents and gradians about how much their students enjoyed and learned from this experience.

It also provided another great opportunity for the USFWS Park Rangers to connect with the Greenway students.

Future Plans and Opportunities. Plan to offer this as part of the regular 5th-grade curriculum if funding remains available.

Additional Materials.



Welcoming Washougal - Addy Street Event

Amount: \$985.23

Goals. This event is intended to be a first step in establishing a relationship with these nearby neighbors and continue to be a positive presence in the community. Conversations were had about how to get further connected locally, with several great ideas shared by participants. Our next connection with this community will be August 19th, 2023, when we’ll return with activities as part of their Movie Night series.

Activities. In the spirit of meeting people where they are, USFWS staff and the Gorge Refuge Stewards created a compact and fun-filled event at Washougal’s Hamllik Park on Saturday, July 29th.

The park and the surrounding Addy Street neighborhood are right next door to Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

This simple “get-to-know-you” event drew about 40 kids and adults from the surrounding neighborhood, which includes two apartment complexes and a mobile home park. Activities included the NW Family Daycation Big Red Tent, the Backyard Bass fishing game, tote bag coloring, and pelts and skulls exploration. Bellies were filled with burritos, horchata, and Jamaica thanks to support from the PVURP Community Asset Committee.

Outcomes. The community had the opportunity to get to know the FWS staff and have conversations that would lead to refuge visitation and future interactions. Building trust with the community is a huge part of being a great community asset and this event is the first step in that.

Future Plans and Opportunities. Movie Nights in Washougal

Additional Materials.



Greenway July Field Trip

Amount: \$1,510.65

Goals. Provide transportation funding for an end-of-year site trip to TRNWR for the entire student body of Greenway ES in Beaverton, Oregon. This school has spent the past year engaged in the Refuge-led TREE program (Tualatin River Environmental Education) – throughout the whole school year. This field trip to the Refuge helps solidify the lessons the student learned and helps connect the learning with place. It also allows for parents to accompany their students- this leads to more conversations at home about nature and conservation.

Activities & Outcomes. In June of 2023, over 3 days, the Refuge staff, Refuge volunteer naturalist, and Friends staff host every student from Greenway Elementary School. The school was divided into 2 grade levels per day, to accommodate smaller group sizes out on the trails to provide a better opportunity to ask questions. Every student came prepared with an understanding of what a wildlife refuge is and what plant life and animals/ birds they may encounter.

So many wonderful learning opportunities occurred and each walk was designed to allow for the best experience by grade level. All of the students spent the year learning about “Nature’s Engineers” and so there was incredible interest and fascination in seeing the beaver dens and dams on the Refuge.

Future Plans and Opportunities. We plan to continue to offer this activity to every student. The staff and parents (along with the students) have indicated how much this trip to the Refuge helps make the

connection to what they have learned from the Park Rangers and has deepened their understanding of their role in conservation.

Additional Materials.



2023 Creatures of the Night

Amount: \$771.00

Goals. The goal of this event was to engage the community with the Refuge in a different way. This event took place during the early evening hours –a time when the Refuge is closed to the public. This gave our visitors a chance to experience nature at the Refuge when they may see and or hear different wildlife. We want to use our connections within the Latino community and the Greenway school to attract families to the Refuge that may not normally know about opportunities like this.

Activities. *Creatures of the Night* is a family fun nature-oriented event that connects the wonder of what the Refuge is like at night with families that do not traditionally visit our Refuge. We have provided both Spanish and English flyers to the community *Creatures of the Night* is an evening-based event at the Refuge that will include bi-lingual night walks, cookie decorating, owl pellet dissections, interpretive tables, face painting, photography, and much more. It is a free- family-focused event involving our volunteering naturalist.

This event will allow Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge to associate with our underrepresented communities, and help the students understand how their connections with nature may differ from others. With this event, we can offer community engagement also while understanding the needs of the general public/neighborhood.

Face Painting, Bird Identification, Night walks, Costume (animal-inspired) parade, owl pellet dissection, scavenger hunt, nature-inspired arts and crafts.

Outcomes. This is our second year offering Creatures of the Night since the pandemic. It was so gratifying to see many returning families- who also encouraged other families to attend. The Friends had just tabled at the el Tigre event in Tigard, and many individuals and families came to Creatures of the Night because of that outreach. Students from Greenway and their families attended also after we had conducted outreach at the Greenway Back to School Night. The owl pellet dissection and bat cookies were a huge hit- but the highlight was the Night Walks and the Face Painting. Raquel Cruz is a face painter that I met at el Tigre in 2022 and the Good Cake Bakery is a local Latino –woman-owned business. These two women also helped promote the event within the community.

Future Plans and Opportunities.

We plan to offer Creatures of the Night as an annual event with increased outreach to our Latino community.

Additional Materials.



Name. Sarah J Anderson Field Trip

Amount: \$591.52

Goals. This relationship is helping the Service and the partners across multiple programs improve excellence via knowing and relating to the community and stepping stones to engaging with wildlife and through SEL. This will help them reduce barriers to visiting other greenspaces in their community including refuges by providing an experience to see wildlife up close and yet from the safety of the exhibits.

By working with Sarah J. Anderson Elem, we are increasing reach and diversity, as a Title 1 dual language school that we are working with via multiple touchpoints a year and over various grade levels.

Activities. It will support 72 students in a dual language class, from a Title 1 elementary school (Sarah J. Anderson Elementary in Vancouver). We will be studying - and the Zoo trip will support this - standards 1-LS3-1 (Make observations to construct an evidence-based account that young plants and animals are like, but not exactly like, their parents.) The trip will be a culmination of researching animals and writing about them, which meets language standards RI.1, RI.2, and RI.5, as well as W.1 and W.2. This cohort has not had as many experiences in the larger world due to the pandemic. A trip to the Zoo will also help them as they develop along SEL standards 5 & 6 (Social Management and Social Engagement). We live in an area with many natural features, from our classroom garden to wildlife refuges and The Cascades.

Visiting the Zoo is a great first step for introducing children to nature and allowing them to see it live and up close, but also safely. As we continue to build relationships with FWS, including field trips to nature reserves or in-class visits with live animals, the students must understand their responsibility as stewards of the Earth, maintain respect for all living things, and interact with their environment in safe ways.

Outcomes. The ongoing relationship will help determine if helping students engage with wildlife at this level helps them feel more comfortable visiting a refuge or local greenspace. The teacher seems very interested in engaging with the Service throughout the year, especially as we add support from bilingual staff.

Future Plans and Opportunities. VSM, Josie Finley, and Project Leader Juliette Fernandez went into the classroom in 2022 and would like to continue to work with this school. As a Title 1 school and a dual language school, it expands who we are reaching and how pushing to work towards providing dual language programming when possible.

FAC has a bilingual staffer who will be helping support the in-class program this spring and as a pilot of our Lamprey Kits, a Complex goal set by the Refuge PL, it seems they would further support these efforts to allow these students a trip to the Zoo, where many likely can't afford to go otherwise either.

Additional Materials. No photos were taken. A note about Resources: They are limited at the school as well as in the homes of many of these students and this is a great thing to support, as a way to connect them on a memorable and exciting level so that they might feel comfortable visiting us.

Name. Southridge 4th Grade Restoration Project

Amount: \$133.95

Goals. Engage local students in restoration onsite to do the following:

- Engage students and their families in an active conservation project
- Empower students to understand that they can make an impact in their community
- Create a relationship with a section of the local community that is not as connected to local refuge sites due to distance and lower socioeconomic status

- Create opportunities for students and staff to understand where recreation and conservation intersect so they can bring those lessons back to the work they are doing on their campus

Activities. Students were not able to do the initial project intended as the snow kept students home the day of the first proposed trip. The second trip had to be at another site due to crane nesting, so students cleared invasives and took native plant cuttings at another restoration site.

Outcomes. Students learned about plant propagation, planting and restoration techniques, and local species that benefit, as well as what the refuge is and how it is an asset to their community.

Future Plans and Opportunities. Pending bus funding, Jackie Bergeron’s 4th-grade class will continue to visit the refuge annually to learn restoration techniques and how to create opportunities for students at their school to be able to benefit and learn from nature. The site they will be working on will be shifted to decrease scheduling conflicts with nesting cranes. As they work to restore habitat on their school grounds, adjacent to a creek that flows through the refuge, they will be able to actively learn how actions in one part of the watershed affect everyone downstream. Working along the trail system they will be able to engage and contribute to the conversation about how to balance human and wildlife needs and connect communities with nature.

It was recently brought to our attention that all of the 4th-grade classes in this school have lost a huge piece of their science curriculum with the loss of a specific science kit series. While the Service cannot replace all that material, we can provide a place to brainstorm local place-based educational opportunities to fill some of these gaps. We will be working with Ms. Bergeron on ensuring the curriculum and activities created through this work are replicable not only to other 4th-grade teachers in this district but also to those in other local districts and counties. This project specifically creates a template for active restoration engagement from these younger grades on our sites – something that has been lacking historically.

Additional Materials.

This project was estimated at 300. The other Southridge field trip project was estimated at \$467.75. Due to a cancellation of one of these trips, and the school finding funding elsewhere for the 2022 field trip, we have spent only \$134 of that \$634 total requested. We would like to propose that the remaining be used for bus funding for Bergeron’s class to come out this fall, and for supplies for students to be purchased to allow the students to do so in rainy weather comfortably. Supplies would include rain pants, gloves, and hand tools that work better for youth. These tools would benefit all youth groups working onsite.

Name. Hispanic Family BirdFest & Bluegrass Spanish-Language Tour 2023

Amount: \$4,311.70

Goals. There are Latino families in Portland and Vancouver surrounding areas that do not have the access (funds, transportation, time) or knowledge to visit Ridgefield NWR. This gives those families a chance to access a new place, learn about it, and hopefully tell others and come back in later years. Our goal of reaching wider audiences and being more inclusive is met by offering this Spanish Language Tour specifically for our Spanish language-speaking potential visitors. Not only do we increase diversity and awareness of the Refuge, and the potential to support it, but we are hoping that by offering to bring them in, we are reducing barriers to visiting for those communities as well,

which should increase trust and increase our reach. Reduce barriers, increase diversity, increase reach, increase awareness, and increase trust.

Activities. The plan was to have two buses from one location go to the River 'S' Unit of the Refuge for a drive around the Auto Tour, and the other two buses go to the Carty Unit for a quick walk. Then both buses with reload, meet for a provided lunch in Downtown Ridgefield, then switch units of the Refuge. Then the buses will return them to their pickup locations.

What happened instead was we did not get anyone from Vancouver, and many wanted to drive themselves from Portland, so we utilized one bus. All families arrived at the Carty Unit of the Refuge for the Welcome Blessing from the Chinook Indian Nation, and welcome from the Refuge, then they were able to choose whether they wanted to hike, do crafts, view the photo contest, or just sit and enjoy the gorgeous weather. At 11 AM- we had food delivered for the group to enjoy, and then they got on the bus and went for a drive around the Auto Tour Route before returning to their original location.

Outcomes. While we didn't end up having the time or capability to prepare the groups the way that we had hoped, so that they would be self-leading and feel empowered from that- we did get more people to sign up and join us than before. Obvious enjoyment was visible on the group's faces, and the amount of leftover food tells a story of delicious enjoyment. I have heard that families were excited to learn about a new place to visit, closer than they expected.

Future Plans and Opportunities. I would love to be able to continue to offer this bussing-based access event for Latino families coming to BirdFest & Bluegrass. Whether that looks like families bringing themselves for dedicated times, or if we can continue to find funds for bussing and food.

Additional Materials.

<https://www.nwfamilydaycation.com/bigredtent>

Name. Afghan Women's Family Day Event

Amount: \$163.22

Goals. Welcome Afghan and Syrian refugees to the refuge for a day of nature catered to them. Reduce barriers, increase diversity, increase reach, increase awareness, and increase trust.

Activities. A day of hourly bird walks, nature tours, nature crafts, and snacks – began with a bus going to pick the women up, and once arriving at the Refuge, a warm translated welcome.

Outcomes. Happy smiling faces! Families feel safe, welcome, and included. The refuge has seen an increase in this community using the trails on their own, apart from the coordinated event. Additionally, the coordinator has sought additional employment opportunities for other refugees. Though the refuge cannot support additional people, this is an indicator of trust.

Future Plans and Opportunities. Repeating this event would be incredible to offer annually, but if not, translating more materials would be a big step toward the feeling of safety for these families.

Additional Materials.

The women didn't want their photos taken in general but included are some images of staff and volunteers.



Name. *Refuge Maps – Super Nature Adventures/Art Nature Place*

Amount: \$1,900

Goals. Refuge and Gorge Refuge Stewards, Friends of Ridgefield NWR, and Tualatin NWR worked together with volunteers and Super Nature Adventures to create an accessible, family-friendly, fun, and interesting map that people can pick up at the trailhead, or download online.

Activities. Multiple meetings were held with staff, volunteers, and stakeholders to determine what it is that is included in the maps, what is helpful, what is interesting, and what is engaging while also being important for visitors to know.

Outcomes. The first map for Steigerwald Lake is in draft, the Ridgefield and Tualatin maps are underway.

Future Plans and Opportunities. These products will continue to be refined for final production early in the calendar year.

Additional Materials.

There are opportunities for additional self-led, engaging educational materials if we are interested and able to fund them.