

The Grebe

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 17

WINTER 2016

Support Friends
through "Idaho
Gives 2016"
See Page 5

Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge

Our mission is to promote,
protect and provide resources to
preserve and enhance

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

for the enjoyment of present
and future generations.



Friends of Deer Flat Board of Directors

Bob Christensen, President
Bob Ruesink, Vice-President
Tricia Matthews, Treasurer
Kathleen McCarter, Secretary
Mike Shipman, Member
Lynn Wilfling, Member

Contact Information

13751 Upper Embankment Rd
Nampa ID 83686

Email: friendsofdfwr@gmail.com
[www.facebook.com/
FriendsofDeerFlat](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofDeerFlat)

*Bob Faller
Newsletter Editor*

President's Message – Changing of the Board

In my capacity as President of the Friends of Deer Flat, I've had the honor to work alongside most of our dedicated Friends members. And, like all organizations such as the Friends group, leadership is a key component to our success.

I want to acknowledge our board, who served as our 2015 officers and board members. Their dedication in sponsoring and carrying our Friends' actions and activities during the past year was invaluable.

Thank you Bob Ruesink (VP), Tricia Matthews (Treasurer), Kathleen McCarter (Secretary), Mike Shipman (Board Member) and Lynn Wilfling (Board Member) from Bob Christensen (President).

As we now move forward into a new year at the refuge, we express gratitude to new **2016 board members** for accepting their positions and pledging to work toward the common good of the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge.

- ✚ Bob Christensen, President
- ✚ Bob Ruesink, Vice President
- ✚ Tricia Matthews, Treasurer
- ✚ Mary Jo Schumacher, Secretary
- ✚ Mike Shipman & Kathleen McCarter, Board Members



Left to right: Bob R, Kathleen, Mary Jo, Tricia, and Bob C.
Mike (insert)



Friends of Deer Flat 2015 Activities

2015 was an eventful year at Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge, filled with projects and events that the Friends, volunteers and refuge visitors helped to support, including ...

- ❖ Supporting the new refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP).
- ❖ Pursuing membership renewals, recruitment & issuing membership cards.
- ❖ Providing about 80 lunches for Earth Day and 70 lunches for BioBlitz volunteers at the refuge.
- ❖ Manning information booths at the February Cast for Kids event at Karcher Mall, at Nampa Water Days in May, Nampa Farmers Market in May, at Capitol City Public Market in June, and at BioBlitz in June.
- ❖ Awarding and paying for *Discover Wildlife Journey* bus scholarships to six different Treasure Valley schools.
- ❖ Planting additional flora and manicuring the pollinator garden, as well as installing two new benches in the garden and laying down patio bricks.
- ❖ Providing bird seed and organizing volunteers to fill the bird feeders at The Coop and at the visitor center from November through May of last year.
- ❖ Printing 2,500 leaflets which describe the life cycle and habitat needs of the Western and Clark's Grebes at Lake Lowell.
- ❖ Conducting a campaign through Idaho Gives to help fund Friends and refuge events.
- ❖ Finding and committing sponsors for Kids Fishing Day.
- ❖ Continuing the litter lift campaign along the Iowa Curves.
- ❖ Partnering with the refuge to construct the "Della Johnson Memorial Trail."
- ❖ Purchasing wildlife cameras, which were placed at refuge bald eagle nests.
- ❖ Publishing 3 newsletters in a refreshing new format and a new Friends Board Manual.
- ❖ Developing a new Friends website (friendsofdeerflat.org).
- ❖ Holding an outreach event at the Nampa Coffee Garage.
- ❖ Reopening of the Grebe Nest Nature Store.
- ❖ Celebrating and thanking former officers and board members for their service.



Specklebelly

by Bob Christensen

The greater white-fronted goose, aka specklebelly, is a gray-brown goose found mainly west of the Mississippi River. Nesting on Arctic tundra, it winters in open country in mild climates along the Pacific coast and the Gulf of Mexico. Migrating and wintering flocks are occasionally spotted at Lake Lowell or along the Snake River.

My first sighting of these colorful birds was in the springtime near Nyssa, Oregon. Flock after flock were winging up and down the river looking for suitable farmlands on which to feed. Small numbers of specklebellies were also mixed in with flights of snow geese.

At Lake Lowell, specklebellies leave the lake, their night roost, before sunrise to fly to feeding areas in local farm fields. Their musical gabbling and honking can be heard as wavering lines of these geese pass overhead at dawn.

In a recent (12/29/2015) waterfowl count at Lake Lowell, specklebellies numbered 400, while the Canada Geese count was at 3,150, and duck species (mostly mallards) were numbered at 22,250.

Specklebelly pairs stay together for years and migrate together, along with their offspring. White-front family bonds can last longer than in most geese and some young stay with their parents through the next breeding season. Parent and sibling associations may continue throughout their lives.

- **Average length:** M 29", F 27"
- **Average weight:** M 6.2 lbs., F 5.5 lbs.
- **Description:** *The white-fronted goose is named for the distinctive white band found at the base of bill. The sexes are similar in appearance, but males typically are larger. The head, neck and upper back of white-fronted geese are grayish-brown. The lower back and rump are dark brown, and the tail is dark brown and edged with white. The chest and breast are grayish with dark brown to black blotches and bars on the breast, giving it the nickname "Specklebelly." The belly and upper and lower coverts are white. The bill is pinkish with a white tip and the legs and feet are an "obvious" orange.*



Range Map



UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE REFUGE



WINTER STAR PARTY WITH BOISE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Are the long winter nights getting you down? Embrace the season and bring your family out to the refuge for an evening with the stars! There will be activities for kids including story-time (in both English and Spanish) and an indoor star lab. There will be a short presentation at dusk, followed by outdoor stargazing.

Where: Deer Flat Refuge Visitor Center

When: Saturday, **March 12, 2016** - 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

WATER QUALITY FIELD TRIPS

Volunteers are needed from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on **Monday, March 28th** and **Friday, April 1** to chaperone 7th grade students and help them collect water samples and conduct other activities during their efforts to collect science fair data at the refuge. No experience is necessary and training will be provided.

MAY MIGRATION EVENT

Wing over to the refuge for our new spring migration celebration! Did you know that monarch butterflies fly between 50-100 miles per day during their annual migration? Or that the Arctic tern travels 22,000 miles each year between its breeding grounds in the Arctic and its winter grounds in the Antarctic? Kids and families can learn more about these fabulous flying athletes at activity stations at the visitor center.

Where: Deer Flat Refuge Visitor Center

When: Saturday, **May 14, 2016** - Times to be determined

Tumbleweed Tidbits

In the fall and early winter, many plants at the Refuge dry out, conserving energy within their roots. Their bases become brittle and break off at the soil level, enabling the wind to carry them away.



One of the most common of these “tumbleweeds” is the Russian thistle. Originating in Eurasia, these spiny plants are drought tolerant and capable of dispersing seed for miles as they tumble along in the wind, displacing native vegetation. They can be seen piled up against any obstruction throughout the Refuge and should be disposed of regularly.



The Grebe Nest Nature Store Hours

Mondays:	9 a.m. to Noon, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Tuesdays:	8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Wednesday:	9 a.m. to Noon
Friday:	10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturdays:	10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

*** Available Now at the Nature Store ***

As North America continues to travel through the final months of winter and into spring, there is plenty of night time to get outside and enjoy star gazing. The refuge will be hosting a star gazing event on March 12 with a wonderful opportunity for everyone to see and identify the prominent stars and constellations visible from the Treasure Valley at this time of the year.

Get prepared for this fascinating event with a folding guide entitled *The Night Sky*, available at the *Grebe Nest* Nature Store. This practical pocket reference is laminated for durability and offers an excellent source of portable information for novices and experts alike.



IDAHO GIVES 2016

Mark your calendars for Thursday, May 5, to support the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge through **Idaho Gives 2016!** Idaho Gives Day is a designated 24-hour period of giving sponsored by the Idaho Nonprofit Center. Donors can go to idahogives.org between 12:00 am and 11:59 pm on May 5 to support the nonprofit(s) of their choice. One important consideration about supporting Idaho Gives is that all donations made to the Friends of Deer Flat that day are not designated, which means funds can be used to benefit many important projects at the Refuge. Almost \$500 was donated to the Friends in 2014 and about \$300 during Idaho Gives Day in 2015. Let's top both of those figures in 2016!

Thank you for your support!

VICE PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE

Everyone Recruit 3 New Members!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! And Happy Anniversary! This year is the 10th Anniversary of the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge.

I was not a part of that handful of people who got the ball rolling to create the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge, but have since become acquainted with many of the founding members.

I appreciate the vision and dedication they had to provide initial funding and support for activities and events important to the mission of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

Some of those activities and events include:

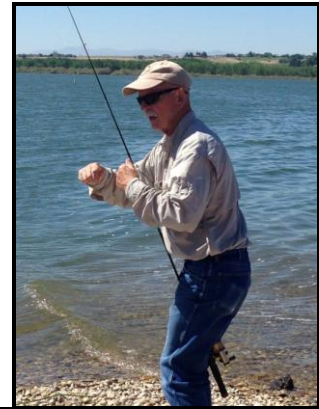
- Establishing a pollinator garden to demonstrate to visitors how they too can attract pollinators to their own backyards.
- Developing a bird feeding program, including construction of a blind for bird-viewing and photography.
- Installing a web-cam (*currently under repair*) to view osprey nesting activities on the refuge.
- Providing bus scholarships for local schools so that young students have a day of hands-on experience learning about habitats that the refuge provides and the plants and animals that are dependent on and part of those habitats.

These are just a few of the many projects that Friends have helped support during the past 10 years. Current membership of Friends is somewhere between 50 and 60, and has been relatively stable over the past few years. We are still made up of a group of dedicated and hardworking people who strongly believe in the importance of the refuge and the necessary support that Friends can provide.

Now to my point: we need more members, more funding, and new ideas if the Friends are going to prosper and grow in supporting even more and bigger projects on the refuge in coming years.

My challenge to each of you, the members of Friends, is to recruit three new members during the coming year.

*Share your interest and passion with family, neighbors and friends. Encourage them to join you in supporting our mission—
“To promote, protect and provide resources to preserve and enhance Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge for the enjoyment of present and future generations.”*



Mike Ruesink, Friends VP

A supply of Friends' brochures is available in the office to assist you in your efforts, or can be sent to you via e-mail.

Congratulations to Bob Faller 2015 Outstanding Friends Member

- ❖ Conducted the 2015 Membership Campaign
- ❖ Edited and published *The Grebe* Newsletter
- ❖ Organized Friends' *BioBlitz* Activities
- ❖ Headed up the 2015 "Idaho Gives" Fundraising Campaign
- ❖ Initiated a plan to reopen The Grebe Nest (the Friends' Nature Bookstore)



Yes!

I want to be a member.

Just copy this page, cut on dotted line above, complete the requested information below, then mail it along with your annual dues to:

**Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge
13751 Upper Embankment Road
Nampa ID 83686**

Name(s)

Address

City/State /Zip

Phone

Email

Annual Membership Levels (Please mark one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Owl (senior or student)	\$ 10.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deer (individual)	\$ 15.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fox (family)	\$ 25.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Osprey	\$ 50.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eagle	\$ 100.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldeneye	\$ 500.00



Join
the
Friends
of
Deer
Flat
Refuge

Members who join at certain levels receive one incentive gift per membership amount (as long as supplies last).

Bring your 2016 Friends membership card to the Deer Flat Refuge Visitor Center on Saturdays from 10 am to 4 pm. Incentives must be claimed by March 15, 2016.

**\$15-\$24: Mood Pencils
Children's postcards (set of 5)
Handheld Pinball Games**

**\$25-\$49: Snake Bracelets
Animal Pencil Sharpeners
Animal Pens
Compressed Towels
Friends of Deer Flat Lapel Pin**

**\$50-\$99: Playing Cards
Wildlife Purse
Pair of Jabebo Earrings**

**\$100: Engraved Brick for
Pollinator Garden**

If you qualify for the \$100 incentive of the engraved brick, please complete the form on Page 8 of this newsletter.

Thank you for your support.



Engraved Bricks to Beautify the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge Pollinator Garden

Friends of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge are selling engraved bricks to help support the many activities at the refuge.

Your brick will be made a permanent part of the Pollinator Garden located just behind the Refuge Visitor Center.

Whether you are honoring a friend or family member, or celebrating a special occasion, our engraved bricks make a wonderful and lasting gift.

Each brick is 4" x 8", and may contain up to three engraved lines. There is a maximum of 15 characters and/or spaces per line.

You are eligible for one brick for each \$100 membership.

Make check or money order payable to and mail to:
Friends of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge (c/o Bricks)
13751 Upper Embankment Road, Nampa, ID 83686

Engraving information (please print)

Line 1 _____

Line 2 _____

Line 3 _____

Your information

Your name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____