

The Grebe

FALL 2020

In Memoriam

Two Charter
Friends
(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

Rex Hanson, President
May Jo Schumacher, Vice-President
Becky Hanson, Treasurer
Bob Christensen, Secretary
Tricia Matthews, Member
Cathy Eells, Member
Kathleen McCarter, Member
Mike Ferdinand, Member

Contact Information

13751 Upper Embankment Rd
Nampa ID 83686
Email: friendsofdfwr@gmail.com
[www.facebook.com/
FriendsofDeerFlat](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofDeerFlat)

Bob & Kathy Christensen
Newsletter Editors

President's Message

By Rex Hanson

Dear Friends of Deer Flat:

As most of us know, the Refuge visitor center has been closed since March. Activities at the center and surrounding grounds have been curtailed/postponed due to Covid pandemic restrictions. However, the Refuge itself is still open to the public. So hiking, hunting, fishing and boating (in season) are still available on designated refuge lands. A few Friends' projects continue at a slower pace, i.e. Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Project and new ospreycam installation, to mention two.

CHANGES IN BOARD--In addition to all the other 2020 chaos (Covid, elections, wildfires, etc...), we announced in our last newsletter several changes involving our Friends' officers and board members. Since that time, we have welcomed Kathleen McCarter back on the board and Mike Ferdinand as a new board member. Gisel Holdcroft left the Board to pursue other responsibilities.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS--For the new year coming up, we would like to see some new faces to help take on the work of guiding the Friends group. It is traditional to have nominations for all the Board positions in Nov / Dec with elections in January. So please consider volunteering and/or nominating other folks (With their permission, of course!). I encourage all members to consider serving on the Board and/or accept nominations for positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer. I invite any of you who may be interested to attend one of our Board meetings to learn what activities and actions we are considering! Our next meeting will be via Zoom technology on November 17th at 10am. The Zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82035016975>. Email me at: hansonrex@gmail.com if you have any questions.

INSPECTOR GENERAL'S AUDIT--I recently participated in a quarterly telephone call conducted by the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA). The call was focused on the recent, somewhat divisive, audit conducted by the Interior Department's Inspector General. The audit called in question the current relationship and management of refuge friends groups. Responding to the issues raised in this audit will be a key activity for the Fish and Wildlife Service & Friends of Deer Flat in the next few months.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH REFUGE--In addition, we will soon be working on rewriting and renewing our 5-year partnership agreement (due for resigning in May 2021) with the Refuge. Also, some changes to the Bylaws and possibly other documents may need to be decided in the coming months.

Please stay well. I hope to see you at the Refuge soon! REX



It's Time for 2021 Membership Renewals



To Friends & "Want-a-be" Friends of Deer Flat

It is membership renewal time, and you will be getting a renewal request in the mail in the next few weeks.

[\(You may want to use the membership application at the back of this newsletter.\)](#)

Our Friends group values your membership—without you we could not do what we do! Your continued support is crucial to the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge and our mission.

The Friends have many exciting projects planned for 2021! One such venture is revitalizing the Kids Space at the Visitor Center. We will also be continuing several ongoing projects (See page 8 for updates).

Membership provides you with

- Seasonal newsletter and updates about refuge events and programs
- Invitations to special members-only events
- Discount of 10% at The *Grebe Nature Store*
- First-hand ability to support Friends conservation efforts on the Refuge
- Satisfaction of being part of a group that can take on ambitious projects such as habitat restoration and enhancing the learning opportunities at the Refuge.
- Membership fee is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law



Introducing Danny Kosiba – Volunteer Coordinator & Urban Planning Assistant



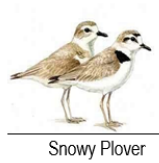
Danny is from Southwest Michigan, where he attended Hope College and received a degree in Biology. He has pursued his love for environmentalism by working across the US, and in countries like New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Iceland. Through these opportunities, he has been lucky enough to experience what the environment, and the issues it faces, means to many different global communities. In work varying from wetland to whale research, or from education to sea level rise policy, Danny has brought an enthusiasm for people and nature together to face each multifaceted issue. In California, he gained valuable experience addressing conservation and sustainability in an urban setting, and looks forward to using that experience in Deer Flat's urban planning efforts. You'll find him in his spare time outdoors with his camera, hiking, backpacking, reading, or watching any sport you put in front of him. Now, more than ever, Danny is excited to be back as a member of AmeriCorps and investing in communities and the environment.



Reprinted from November/December 2006 Vol 1, No. 2 of *The Grebe*

Changing Seasons at the Refuge

As summer wound down, the mudflats that are so inviting to the local and migrating birds emerged as the water level of the lake fell. At the lower dam in August, a Snowy Plover was found. Snowy Plovers are rarely found in Idaho. They live and breed along the coast. What a great find!



Snowy Plover

In late September, the geese and ducks started arriving in large numbers, and hunters started staking out their favorite spots hoping for a successful hunt. Upland game birds are not stocked at the Refuge, but bird dogs can help locate the Quail and Pheasants that are hiding (in the riparian thickets). Duck numbers usually peak in December so hunters will be busy for the next few months.

The fishing season has come to an end at the lake for everyone but the diehard fisherman. Only non-motorized boats can be used in search of bass or catfish. The Refuge has much to offer to everyone who lives in the area. Fall is a great time to get out and spend time at the Refuge, whether biking, hunting, fishing or just wildlife watching.

It's your Refuge, if you don't use it, who will?



Camera Traps
(Installed by Eddie Owens & retrieved by Bob Christensen with the help of his grandson and son-in-law)

Photos Taken at Leavitt Wetlands – May 2020

(Placed in Two Locations East of the East Dike Trail)



Figure 1 - Eddie the Quadruped



Figure 2 - Great Blue Heron



Figure 3 - Ducks Winging Away



Figure 4 - Mule Deer Passing By



Figure 5 – Close-Up of Mule Deer



Figure 6 - Nocturnal Raccoon

In Memoriam

Two of our “charter” friends have recently passed on to their eternal reward. We express our love and condolences to their families.



Paul Anthony Tripp

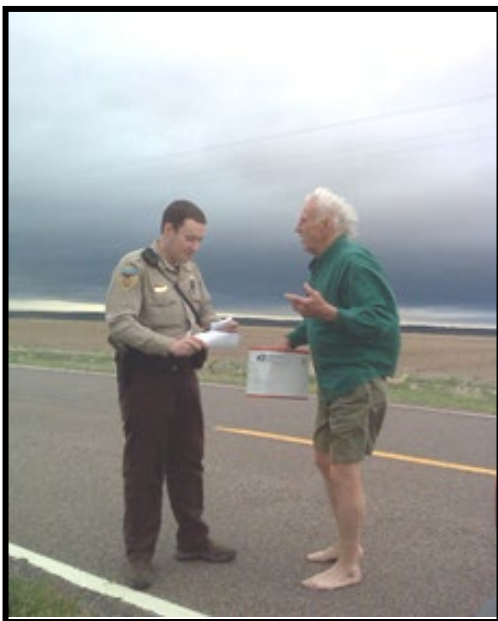
(August 14, 1945 ~ September 29, 2020 ~ Age 75)

Tony was born in Watertown, New York. He dedicated his life to his career in Social Work, and to his family.

After moving to Nampa, Idaho, Tony and his wife Noreen helped start the *Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge*. Noreen is a past president.

Tony often posed as Teddy Roosevelt at early-on Friends events.

Tony Tripp ~ posing as Teddy Roosevelt
(Photo from his Tribute Page)



**Al McGlinsky ~ casually
conversing with a local officer**
(Photo from his Facebook page)



Alfred Michael McGlinsky

(December 31, 1931 ~ January 22, 2020 ~ Age 88)

Al was an educator, an emeritus faculty member of the College of Idaho.

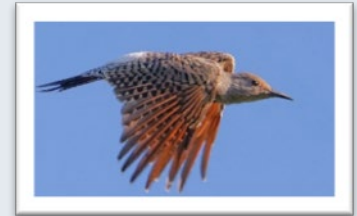
He and his wife Lee also helped organize the *Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge*. Lee was its first president.

Al often spoke out in support of the Refuge and other environmental causes.

Flickers, Owls, Turtles & Snakes

October is an invigorating month—crisp mornings, slanted shadows, cool breezes, and colorful leaves. It's an opportune time to meet nature one-on-one. And this is what we did the other morning—my daughter Britany, granddaughter Laura and me. The sun was a bright yellow orb, moving slowly west at about 45 degrees off the southern horizon as we trudged directly toward it along the East Dike Trail of the Refuge. This trail is well used by refuge visitors. It allows one to experience the ecotone between the refuge's woodlands and marshes and the surrounding agricultural landscape.

As we hiked slowly along, there seemed to be a scarcity of wild things on the wing, except for a few **northern flickers** showing off their orange shafts and white rumps as they, indeed, flicked from one cottonwood tree to another; announcing the presence with their shrill single-note calls, "Klee-yer."



We noted the unusual odor of the cool air mixed with the woody leaf smell of the autumn woodland, occasionally interrupted by the rank, sulfur smell of the exposed muddy soils in the adjacent cattail marsh. It was great to meet Mother Nature on her own terms.

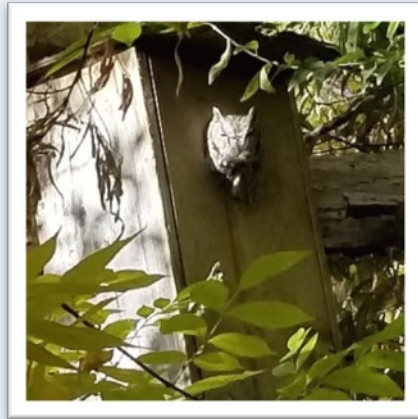


Photo by Britany

As we approached the southern end of the dike trail, we watched two sportsmen fishing from their kayaks in the clear, still waters of the inlet channel to Lake Lowell. It appeared to be a slow but pleasant angling experience for them. We on the other hand were in search of our own adventures, so we ducked off the main trail and followed a deer track to inspect a nearby wood duck box. We were amply rewarded. There, peering at us from his perch in the entry hole of the box, was a sleepy **western screech owl**. He hardly opened his eyes to see what had disturbed his blissful morning nap. We snapped a photo or two, wished him well, then silently retraced our steps.

Carefully stepping over some bleached logs on the trail, my daughter Britany looked down and spotted a small, rounded dark shape moving slowly across one of the narrow logs. It was an unexpected but exciting find, and the first I have seen in my twenty plus years of roaming the Refuge—a three-inch long **painted turtle**. This species of turtle is not endemic to southern Idaho, but is listed as the only turtle currently found on the Refuge—possibly introduced by pet enthusiasts. Painted turtles are ubiquitous within their natural range, inhabiting marshlands and adjacent woodlands.

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Grandpa – Painted Turtle - Laura
Photo by Britany



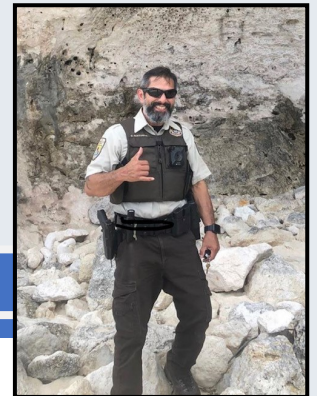
Retracing our path back along the East Dike Trail, we continued to hear and see flickers and finally the distant honking of Canada geese. Suddenly, Britany again stopped in her tracks, looking down near her toes and just behind the heels of my granddaughter Laura. I asked her what she saw, and then something long and narrow slithered past me, quickly disappearing into the trailside vegetation. It had the slender all dark look of a **North American racer**, a common snake native to Idaho.

I asked Britany why it was that she was finding all the ground-dwelling creatures. Laura piped up and proclaimed, “Grandpa, you are always looking up, trying to see the birds. Mom is always looking down, so she won’t step on things.”

By Bob Christensen



*Laura & Britany at the “Pumpkin Patch”
(Just East of the Lake Lowell Upper Dam)
Photo by Grandpa*



Introducing Charlie Quitugua – New at Deer Flat - Senior Law Enforcement Officer

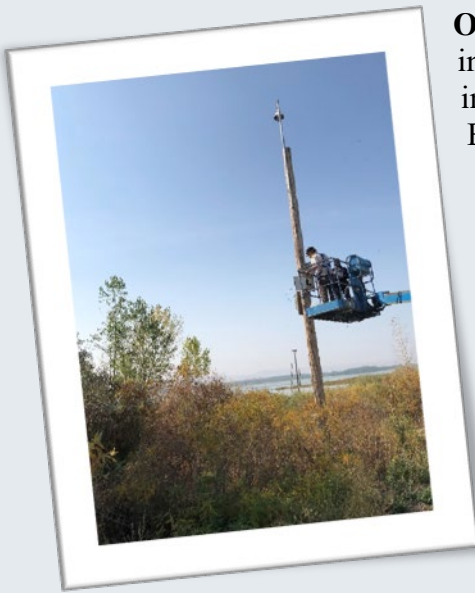
I have over twenty-three years of law enforcement experience—seven years with the Guam Police Department on the island of Guam and thirteen years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I began my law enforcement commission with U.S. Fish and Wildlife at the Guam National Wildlife Refuge as a Federal Wildlife Officer. After two and a half years there, I then served as the Law Enforcement Zone Officer in Honolulu, managing the law enforcement program and working on the pacific region’s wildlife refuges, marine monuments, and atolls.

I have always wanted to work in an area with wildlife diversity, and I thought it was time for a change, so I packed my bags and brought my family to beautiful Idaho to explore the great outdoors. I bring with me my wife and three kids along with our two dogs. I am excited to be here, to work at Deer Flat NWR and ultimately explore all that Idaho has to offer.

I hope to meet you all soon. CHARLIE

UPDATES ON SOME FRIENDS' PROJECTS

Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Project—Each month during the summer, Bob Christensen with the help of a few well-appreciated volunteers continued to water the small shrubs planted the first week of November of 2019. Proposed planting this fall of the next plot was postponed, due to restrictions on volunteer activities. Plants grown in the contracted nursery during 2020 will be held over by the nursery, so we can plant them either in the spring or fall of 2021.



Ospreycam—This fall, Rex Hanson was able to coordinate the installation of a new osprey *Wi-Fi* camera near the visitor center. The installation was conducted by Refuge Manager Eddie Owens, Wildlife Biologist Molly Astell, and Refuge Maintenance Chief Brian Clifford. Molly has been visiting from California, where she works at Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge and is a specialist in using cameras to view California Condors. Rex depended on her guidance to purchase and configure the equipment funded by the Friends. Eddie and Brian were able to obtain a lift to place the camera in position and have plans to expand this project to other locations around the Refuge. We look forward to seeing the camera ready to record and livestream osprey nesting activities during the 2021 nesting season. A link will be posted so that osprey fans can view from their home computers as well as the visitor center. The ospreys usually return to Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge by the first of April each year.

Pollinator Garden—Because of the *Covid* issues, Tricia Matthews has been the only one allowed to work on the garden this season. She installed the spring order of memorial bricks in May, then did extensive weeding and pruning of both the garden and the trail. She also removed some plants that were becoming invasive to make room for new plantings, which will be done this next spring. At the end of August, Tricia used a gift certificate to purchase a cubic yard of mulch, which she hauled out to the garden. Now that frost has killed off the leaves, Tricia plans to return to the garden to finish up pruning, leaf removal and distribution of the mulch. She is hoping that the *Nampa Garden Club* will be able take over the grooming of the pollinator garden during the 2021 growing season.



**AN
URBAN
PLAN**

DEER FLAT NATION WILDLIFE REFUGE

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY THROUGH A NEW VISITOR SERVICES PLAN

by Susan Kain, Visitor Services Manager

Refuge staff have begun “getting our grebes in a row” to start developing a Visitor Services plan. Although that’s the official bureaucratic title, the planning team is looking forward to developing a Connecting-the-Local-Community-to-Nature plan, a Striving-for-Excellence plan, and even a How-to-Get-More-Funding plan! Putting it that way, of course we are excited to start down this path.

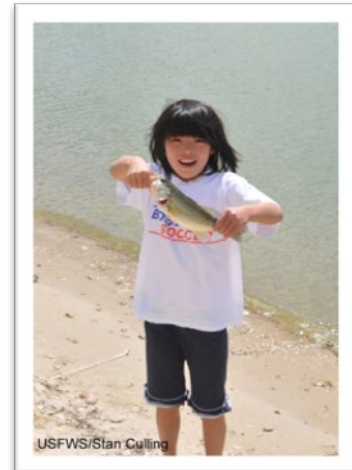
The plan will consider all kinds of visitor activities, from birding to school field trips, family picnics to water activities, and shore fishing to duck hunting. It will consider both existing and possible new visitor facilities, from a visitor contact station to restrooms, hunt blinds to improved signage, and trails to electronic resources. And, it will consider how to involve community members with wildlife, habitat, and conservation, both at the refuge and in local communities.

As part of this process, in the next year or more we will be:

- Assessing our current visitor activities, programs, and facilities
- Learning more about the local community
- Connecting with stakeholders
- Figuring out how to meet the challenge of designing visitor services programs that will inspire diverse local communities to spend more time outdoors and to make wildlife, habitat, and conservation relevant in their daily lives



If you are interested in learning more, reach out to the team at deerflat@fws.gov. There will be opportunities for Friends and other community members to get involved as we get further into the process. We look forward to engaging with you in this effort!



As the Visitor Services Manager, I will take the lead on the planning. Refuge Manager Eddie Owens and I are excited to have Danny Kosiba join us on the core planning team to help reach out to the community and develop the plan. Danny is serving as a Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute AmeriCorps member. Read his bio elsewhere in the newsletter and you’ll discover why we consider ourselves lucky to have him on board!



The Grebe Nest Nature Store

**The Grebe Nest Nature Store is open limited hours (see below).
Friends' members receive a 10 % discount on all store merchandise purchased.**

Mondays:	1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Tuesdays:	Closed
Wednesdays:	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Thursdays:	10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Fridays:	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Saturdays:	10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

CLOSED

The Nature Store is volunteer-operated and may not always be open during posted times depending on volunteer availability. We recommend calling ahead if you are interested in buying something during operating hours.

Yes!

- I want to be a member**
- Renew my Membership**

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State /Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Annual Membership Levels (Please mark one)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| _____ Owl (Senior or student) | \$ 10 |
| _____ Deer (individual) | \$ 15 |
| _____ Fox (family) | \$ 25 |
| _____ Osprey | \$ 50 |
| _____ Eagle | \$100 |
| _____ Goldeneye | \$500 |



Join
the
Friends
of
Deer
Flat
Wildlife
Refuge

Yes!

I want to be involved.

Please mark all areas of interest and ways you'd like to participate.

- Habitat Restoration
- Staffing the Bookstore
- Organizing events
- Litter Lifts
- Weed Eradication
- Project Participation
- Photographic Documentation of Events and Activities
- Garden Enhancement
- Newsletter
- Publicity / Public Relations
- Grant Writing
- Fundraising
- Community Outreach
- Board of Directors
- Advisory on specific policies, protocols and processes.
- Other (please specify)

Engraved Bricks Order Form

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 OR one symbol.

Lettering may be a maximum of 19 characters and/or spaces per line.

Inquire at friendsofdfwr@gmail.com about available symbols.

Brick price is \$50 for one; or \$45 each for two or more bricks.

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

Make check or money order payable to and mail to:

Friends of Deer Flat 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: _____