

The Grebe

**“Creepy Critters”
at the Refuge
October 27
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VOLUME 10, ISSUE 25

FALL 2018

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
Tricia Matthews, Vice-President
Becky Hanson, Treasurer
Mary Jo Schumacher, Secretary
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FriendsofDeerFlat](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofDeerFlat)

Bob & Sheryl Faller
Newsletter Editors

Mark Your Calendars – Volunteers Needed to plant shrub, forb and grass seedlings

The Friends’ Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Project, adjacent to the Refuge Visitor Center, is advancing to the second season.

**Your help is needed on Saturday afternoon,
November 3, from Noon to 3:00 p.m.
for the second annual hand planting
of native shrubs and forb seedlings.**

We will be planting and watering about 1,200 sagebrush seedlings, 100 saltbush seedlings, and 500 perennial forbs. Finishing this work in one three-hour planting session will require about 50-70 volunteers, armed with shovels and lots of energy. Digging will be a lot easier this year compared to last—the soil has been disked to loosen it up.

We are counting on you!

If you, your group, or family would be willing to be placed on the list to help us plant this fall, please contact Saskia van Adrichem, Refuge Volunteer Coordinator, at 208-467-9278.

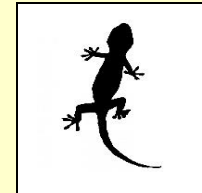
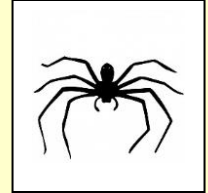
**The Friends group will
furnish drinks and pizza
for all volunteers.**

*by Bob Christensen,
Friends of Deer Flat
Board President*



*Collage of Shrub Planting
November 2017*

Join in the Fun at the Refuge's "Creepy Critters" Event



The Friends of Deer Flat will be joining forces with Deer Flat Refuge staff for the annual

"Creepy Critters at the Refuge" **Saturday, October 27, 2018 - 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** **Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center** **13751 Upper Embankment Road, Nampa**

There will be many hands-on wildlife-related activity stations, a craft table, stories, and Halloween candy for children of all ages to enjoy as they learn more about the Refuge.

Costumes are encouraged! All are invited to attend this family-friendly event.

The Friends will provide hot chocolate and cookies to refresh the ghosts and goblins who attend.



Grant Received

On behalf of the Friends of Deer Flat Refuge, board members **Tricia Matthews and Mary Jo Schumacher** applied for and were awarded the **National Environmental Education Foundation's "Everyday Capacity Building" Grant.**

The grant, received this fall, will be used to replace the Friends' old office equipment and to revamp our office space. A new computer and printer will be purchased for the Friends' office and a digital photo frame will also be purchased. New equipment will be used for projects, events and our increased number of community outreaches. Thanks to Tricia and Mary Jo for their diligence and hard work.

Refuge Updates

by Annette de Knijf, Refuge Manager



Nicole, Annalee and Saskia

We welcome three new AmeriCorps volunteers to our Refuge staff: two Environmental Educators (Nicole Hutcherson and Annalee Cameron), and one Volunteer Coordinator (Saskia Van Andrichem).

Nicole: Being raised in the Sonoran Desert, I grew up surrounded by cacti, beautiful skies, and a large close-knit family. My sibling and I spent our time in the sun, exploring the bizarre desert environment and cultivating a curiosity for the unique world around us. This, along with role models such as Bill Nye, Steve Irwin, and Neil Degrasse Tyson, helped to foster a love of science and nature that quickly grew into a fierce passion.

I pursued an education in wildlife and biology in hopes that I could make learning a fun, exciting experience and help people learn to love the creepier and less understood parts of nature—such as the desert I grew up in. While most of my family stayed down in the desert, I migrated up north with my fiancé to Idaho the year after we graduated from Northern Arizona University. We've been exploring the new-found world of snow and the green wilderness of the state since then—which is what led me to the Deer Flat Refuge. After volunteering the last few years with the SEEDS and DWJ programs, I'm excited to work on expanding and adding to the wonderful outreach programs the Refuge provides.

Annalee: Growing up in Puyallup, WA, my childhood was spent adventuring through the big city of Seattle and the foothills of Mt. Rainier. My experiences as a child shaped whom I've become today—a lover of nature with a desire to surround myself with diverse groups of people. I took my passion for the environment with me to Washington State University, where I obtained a *Bachelor of Science in wildlife ecology and conservation sciences*. I felt so connected to the natural world that I wanted to learn more about how to create experiences for others so they could find their own connections within their environment. So, I took these curiosities along with me to Idaho and obtained my *Master of Natural Resource Sciences in environmental education and science communication* through the University of Idaho McCall Outdoor Science School. Today, I am beyond excited to get an opportunity to help others explore their environment as an environmental educator at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge!

Saskia: Having been born in France, raised in the Netherlands (where my family originated from), and graduated in Texas, I am very fortunate to say I have spent much of my life travelling. Growing up in different places has allowed me to foster a love of new countries, unique cultures, and intense wanderlust. After graduating from the University of Texas in Austin in May of 2018 with a degree in *Sustainability*, I moved to Nampa, ID, to work for the USFWS and pursue my dream of a career in environmentalism. I am thrilled to work as the new AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinator at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, and look forward to meeting all of our Friends volunteers!

Other News from Annette:

- The Region 1 Annual Project Leaders Meeting is being held in Boise this year, at the end of October. Region 1 includes Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii and other Pacific Islands. The group will come to Deer Flat the afternoon of October 31 for a tour of the Refuge. Approximately 65 people will be attending, including project leaders and their deputies from every refuge in the region.
- I am soon retiring. My last day will be December 31. I will be staying in the Treasure Valley for the foreseeable future. **I have enjoyed my work experience at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge and all of the friends I have made.**

Call for Nominations of 2019 Officers and Board Members

Nominations are being encouraged and accepted as candidates for officers and board members for the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge for calendar year 2019.

If you or someone you know is interested in helping lead the Friends of Deer Flat, please call Vice President Tricia Matthews (208-515-4836) or email her (idagal14@yahoo.com). **Nominations are due by November 1, 2018.** Positions which will be open for nomination include president, vice president, secretary and at least one board member at large.

Current 2018 Officers and Board Members include:

- President: Bob Christensen
- Vice President: Tricia Matthews
- Treasurer: Becky Hanson
- Secretary: Mary Jo Schumacher
- Board Members at Large: Kathleen McCarter, Cathy Eells, Rex Hanson, and Chris Matthews

2018 Friends Academy

by Cathy Eells, Board Member

The “hot August nights” of August 6-10 found me attending the 2018 Friends Academy at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia. It was a surprise and pleasure to receive an email from Joanna Webb informing me I was an alternate. I was invited to attend after another Friends board member had to cancel at the last minute.

It was the experience of a lifetime—dynamic speakers, a plethora of valuable information, and a bonding experience with 14 passionate board members representing Friends groups from Ding Darling NWR in Florida to Kilauea Point NWR in Hawaii. We were in class Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.—learning, sharing and discussing strategies to energize, inspire and motivate our respective groups.



NWRS Friends Academy 11
August 6-10, 2018

As I reflect on the experience, two words continue to resonate—*ambassador and passion.*

As a board member, I am an ambassador for Deer Flat NWR and our Friends group. I was inspired upon my return to Idaho with a firm desire to share my 20-year “passion” with other Friends members.

I encourage our community to join with us in ongoing efforts to preserve and protect our Refuge for future ambassadors and to be stewards of “wild places.”

Demise of Walnut Trees

by Bob Christensen



Felled walnut tree. Partially diseased tree in background was also cut down.

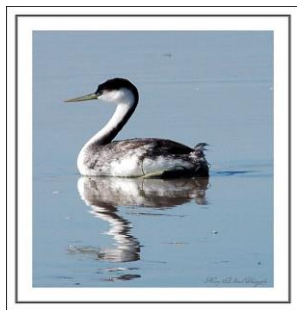
Thousand Cankers Disease is a recently recognized disease of certain walnut trees (*Juglans* spp). The disease results from a combined activity of the walnut twig beetle (*Pityophthorus juglandis*) and a canker-producing fungus (*Geosmithia morbida*).

Over the past decade, this disease was only known in the western United States, where it has caused several large scale die-offs of walnut, particularly black walnut trees (*Juglans nigra*). In late July 2010, a well-established outbreak of the disease was found in the Knoxville, Tennessee area. This new finding is a first within the native range of its susceptible host, black walnut.

Why do we have this article in our newsletter? Unfortunately, this canker disease has taken a toll on the black walnut trees at Deer Flat Refuge housing and maintenance area located off Iowa Avenue just east of the upper dam. Recently, eight old walnut trees were cut down for safety and aesthetic reasons. Several were completely dead and the others were dying. The Refuge staff will be making plans to replant some hardier trees to replace those cut down.

Some good news from bad: The Friends group was offered the opportunity to sell the wood from these trees under a partnership agreement with the Refuge. **Steve Magleic**, the *Craft Wood Wizard* from Nampa, purchased the felled trees and larger limbs. Friends will use the money received to help with conservation projects at the refuge. In addition, the *Craft Wood Wizard* is going to donate a beautifully crafted walnut bench (made from the cut trees) to display and use inside the Refuge Visitor Center.

GREBE'S NEST NATURE STORE



Hours of Operation

Wednesdays: 9 a.m. to Noon
 Thursdays: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
 Friday: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Saturdays: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Proceeds from the Grebe's Nest Nature Store are used to help fund conservation projects and public outreach events at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. For more information, contact Tricia Matthews (idadgal14@yahoo.com).

Eagles and Ospreys Update

by *Bob Christensen*

We have two pairs of nesting ospreys and two pairs of bald eagles on Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

Ospreys build their stick nests on poles along the shoreline of Lake Lowell (right). This year, as in the past several years, the osprey pair that nests opposite the Refuge Visitor Center was often observed around their nest, bringing in sticks and other nest-building materials. We watched them as they ate different fish prey at the nest or on a nearby perch. Unfortunately, they did not lay a single egg again this year.



On the other hand, the osprey pair on the opposite side (East) of the Upper Dam forebay successfully raised two chicks again this year. Now that the nesting and rearing season is over, both pairs have left for parts south to spend the winter. We hope to see them again at Lake Lowell early next April.



Bald Eagle with Chick

Bald eagles which set up housekeeping on the Refuge construct their nests in tall cottonwood trees in the riparian forest along the perimeter of Lake Lowell. This year, as in previous years, we documented that the bald eagles again nested on the east end of the lake, and raised and fledged one chick.

Another eagle pair that nests near the narrows of the lake abandoned their traditional nest; we found no evidence that they nested elsewhere.

Instead, our wildlife camera recorded that a pair of Canada geese took over the nest, laid eggs and hatched out a brood of eight goslings. The one-day old goslings had a 100-foot freefall to the water below when they hopped off the side of the nest.



Bald Eagle Adult and Fledgling



Canada Goose and Goslings on Eagle Nest

“Bushwhacking to the Eagle Next with Grandpa”

by Bob Christensen

What started out to be a deer trail soon was lost in the weeds, weeds, weeds—knee high, waist high, chest high—even “as high as an elephant’s eye.” The tall, dense growth made our trek more than difficult—it was practically a survival experience. Also, across our path were fringes of woodlands which harbored fallen branches and logs hidden under the mats of vegetation.

The question arises: “Why were we beating ourselves up, trying to find a path through this jungle/jumble of weeds and woods?”

Grandpa was the trail blazer, leading the way to the bald eagle nest on the east side of Lake Lowell on the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. Behind him trudged his grandsons, Ammon and Lincoln, as well as Marc and Daniel, two volunteer tree climbers (both trained arborists). None of us had signed up for this type of exercise. Getting up early in the morning was bad enough, but adding a marathon endurance test to it was more than crazy. Grandpa knew it—he just hadn’t expected it to be quite this challenging. Yet, he forged doggedly ahead, ’cause that’s the kind of man Grandpa is—gotta get the job done, despite heck or high water (in this case high weeds).

The boys (ages 10 and 14) were troopers, faithfully followed Grandpa, forging one step after another—lift ’em up and put ’em down and go, go, go onward.



Thumbs up from Lincoln on a previous eagle hike with Grandpa

Lincoln had the greater challenge, not being able to see over any of the tall weeds, just pushing ahead trying to keep the menacing weed heads out of his face and mouth. He occasionally fell behind because it was difficult for his shorter legs to step up and over all the obstacles.

Several times he had to get Grandpa’s attention to wait and let him catch up—it would be easy to lose one’s way in the tangle of brush and weeds.

Ammon was Grandpa’s faithful porter, not saying much, just carrying the pack and keeping right on Grandpa’s heels.



Ammon on a previous adventure, cleaning wood duck boxes

The objective was to get to the tall cottonwood trees where bald eagles nested, and then to retrieve a wildlife camera which had been placed high on a branch directly across from the nest. The camera had been taking pictures of eagle nesting activity since mid-February. It was now the first weekend of August and, although the morning air was slightly cool at ground level, it was very hot and muggy. **What tales would the photos tell of this bald eagle family? Had the eagles produced any eggs? Had the eggs hatched? Had they been successful in raising any chicks? Had the eaglets grown and fledged (flown from the nest)?**

Grandpa was intent on finding the answers to these questions, and he knew that the camera held the answers.

(Continued on Page 8)

“Bushwhacking” *(Continued from Page 7)*

So, onward went the bushwhackers, lurching, stumbling, but persevering along the uncharted path—especially as the group came head on to the brush tunnels and woody coverts, that even the local mule deer hesitated to pass through. By zigzagging through the brush and with the aid of compass and GPS, the group finally found their way to the tree that supported the eagle nest. It only took two hours to go the distance of one mile!!! Way to go guys!!!

Now came the much-needed rest for Grandpa and the sweaty boys. But Daniel and Marc still had to climb 100 feet straight up into the giant cottonwood to retrieve the camera.

The camera was finally retrieved and the group (with some trepidation) began the long, cumbersome trek back the way they came. There was only one way back—to retrace the same tangled route. With short rests for Grandpa to get his bearings, catch his breath, and rest his tiring legs, they eventually persevered, finally making it to the safety of the pickup in over an hour’s time.

When they arrived at Grandma’s house and told her of their harrowing experience, Grandma praised Ammon and Lincoln for doing “hard things!” In the end, they felt good about their formidable accomplishment, although both of them rated the hike as the most challenging they had done.

And, now, two more grandchildren can say they conquered the wilderness and survived a difficult but rewarding hike with their Grandpa.

Boise Front Butterfly Count

by Mary Jo Schumacher

The annual “**Boise Front July Butterfly Count**” was held on Sunday, July 8. The butterfly count is always the first weekend after the 4th of July. For 21 years, Dr. Paul Castrovillo, Entomologist for the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, led this endeavor.

I was somewhat limited in my knowledge of butterflies, so I attended Paul’s butterfly identification class on July 7, which was very helpful.

On count day, we met at 8:30a.m. in the Albertson’s parking lot on State Street in Boise. Paul surprised us with a treat—cinnamon rolls made by his wife. While we enjoyed our treats, we planned our carpools, destinations and assigned duties. Many veterans brought their own nets and were a wonderful source of information for us “newbies.” I car pooled with Cathy Eells and some of her birding friends, so we did a little birding too.



Lorquin's Admiral

We traveled on the traditional butterfly census route. We went up Military Reserve on Bogus Basin Road with two stops to count butterflies. We stopped at the Bogus Basin chairlift for lunch and more counting, then finished with a beautiful hike around Mores Mountain (next year I vow to be in better shape). The hike was absolutely beautiful and we finished up around 6 p.m. A record number of volunteers tracked 44 species and counted over 548 butterflies. **It was an amazing learning experience, and I plan on participating again next year.**

Community Outreach Reports

The Friends enjoyed several community events this summer. First, Annette de Knijf (Deer Flat Refuge Manager) and Mary Jo Schumacher were guest speakers at the **Treasure Valley Community Resource Meeting** on August 7. Their presentation highlighted Deer Flat Wildlife National Refuge and the Friends of Deer Flat. It was a wonderful opportunity to educate our community partners about Deer Flat's mission and goals for the future.

We also sponsored two outreaches this year, one this summer and other in early fall. These events were held to continue the Friends' resolve to reach out to the Latino community. **Fiesta OLV** was on August 18 at Our Lady of The Valley Church in Caldwell (see report next paragraph), and the other was **Fiesta Patrias** at Caldwell Memorial Park on September 16 (see Cathy's report below).



Annette and Mary Jo at OLV Fiesta

Annette and Mary Jo attended the Fiesta OLV event, where we were joined by MJ Byrne from the BLM. MJ is the special assistant to the state director of youth education. MJ brought Junior Ranger activity booklets in Spanish and English, which were very popular with the children. The music and food were wonderful. Annette brought with her the ever-popular mystery box, beaver pelt and tail. The Friends raffle basket enticed many adults over to the booth, which gave us a chance to talk about Deer Flat and the many activities available there.

Thanks to Annette and my husband Harry for their continued support of this important Latino outreach.

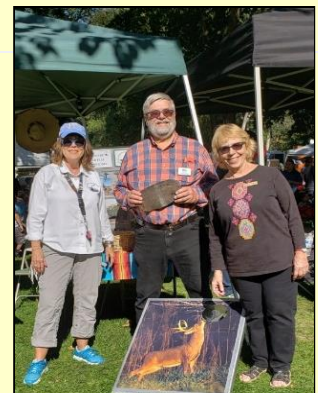
- Report by Mary Jo Schumacher

Sunday, September 16, was a sublime Indian summer day when the Latino community was celebrating "**Fiesta Patrias,**" Mexican Independence Day, at Caldwell Memorial Park. Hundreds of Hispanic families strolled by our Deer Flat NWR/Friends booth.

Annette, our Refuge Manager, brought handouts, a bean bag game, and a sense of fun. The Friends had candy, a raffle backpack with goodies, and great enthusiasm.

We were pleased when many of the youngsters visiting our booth fondly remembered their former school field trips to Deer Flat. Our goal is to reach out to the Hispanic community, making them aware of all of the activities the Refuge provides for adults and children.

I want to thank my team; Rex and Becky Hanson, Mary Jo and Harry Schumacher, and Annette De Knijf, I couldn't have done it without each and every one of you.



Cathy, Harry & Mary Jo at Fiesta Patrias

- Report by Cathy Eells



Yes!

I want to be a member.

Just copy this page, cut on dotted line above, complete the requested information below, and 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)

- _____ Owl (senior or student) \$ 10.00
- _____ Deer (individual) \$ 15.00
- _____ Fox (family) \$ 25.00
- _____ Osprey \$ 50.00
- _____ Eagle \$ 100.00
- _____ Goldeneye \$ 500.00

Join
 the
 Friends
 of
 Deer
 Flat
 Refuge

Yes!

I want to be involved.

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

- Habitat Enhancement
- Staffing the Bookstore
- Organizing events
- Litter lifts
- Weed eradication
- Project Management
- Photographic Documentation of Events and Activities
- Historian
- Newsletter
- Publicity / Public Relations
- Grant Writing
- Fundraising
- Lobbying and Advocacy
- Board of Directors
- Advisory on specific policies, protocols and processes.
- Other (please specify)

Engraved Brick Fundraiser for Refuge Pollinator Garden

To provide for many refuge activities, Friends of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge sell engraved bricks that are placed in the Refuge Pollinator Garden. For \$35 each or 2 for \$60, your brick(s) will be a permanent part of the Pollinator Garden located just behind the Refuge Visitor Center. Our next order deadline is August 31.

For more information, contact Friends of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge (c/o Bricks)
13751 Upper Embankment Road, Nampa, ID 83686