

# The Grebe

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 24

SPRING 2019

Join us on April 6 for  
**Yellow-Bellied  
Marmot Day**  
See Page 6 to  
RSVP by  
**3/15/19**

## 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

Tricia Matthews, President  
Kathleen McCarter, Vice-President  
Becky Hanson, Treasurer  
Rex Hanson, Secretary  
Bob Christensen, Member  
Jolene Edwards, Member  
Cathy Eells, Member  
Chris Matthews, Member  
Mary Jo Schumacher, Member

## Contact Information

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Nampa ID 83686  
Email: [friendsofdfwr@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofdfwr@gmail.com)  
[www.facebook.com/  
FriendsofDeerFlat](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofDeerFlat)

*Bob & Sheryl Faller  
Newsletter Editors*

*From the President's Keyboard:*

## *"A Changing of the Guard"*

With the onset of 2019 comes the end of an era as Bob Christensen steps down as President of the Friends board. During the past four years he has been instrumental in reinventing our organization.

Bob, who had been involved with Friends since its inception in 2006, applied his knowledge and skills to lead and groom a new board in a positive direction to fulfill our mission statement. In 2017, he was instrumental in implementing a Friends Mentoring Workshop which has led to board growth, collaboration, successful project pursuits, community outreach, and recognition.

In addition to his presidential board duties, Bob monitored nesting osprey and bald eagles, pursued restoration of native habitat and development of nature trails, monitored the winter bird feeding program, upgraded the bird blind, successfully obtained grants for projects and busing scholarships, and established good working relationships with numerous agencies and individuals.



Gratefully, Bob will remain a member of the Friends board and will continue to pursue many of his biological projects at the refuge. His effectiveness and dedication have been an inspiration to us all.

So as Bob passes the baton to me as your new President, I would like to extend a sentiment of appreciation and the promise that I will strive to follow in his footsteps and guide our board forward in a direction that brings pride and value to Deer Flat Refuge and to the community.

*by Tricia Matthews,  
Incoming Friends' President*

## Your Friends of Deer Flat Board 2019



*Top (L to R): Tricia Matthews, President; Chris Matthews, Board Member; Rex Hanson, Secretary; and Cathy Eells, Board Member*

*Bottom (L to R): Becky Hanson, Treasurer; Jolene Edwards, Board Member; Mary Jo Schumacher, Board Member; Kathleen McCarter, Vice President; and Bob Christensen, Board Member*

## Friends Outreach

*by Mary Jo Schumacher*

Cathy Eells and Mary Jo Schumacher, Friends of Deer Flat Outreach co-chairs, are spearheading several exciting events this spring. Goals for these activities are to promote the Friends mission statement to our community and teach others about our beautiful refuge. Friends members wishing to volunteer at any of the events can contact Mary Jo Schumacher at [newfs48@gmail.com](mailto:newfs48@gmail.com). Volunteers can work during the entire event, or only a portion of the event, as their time allows.

The following events are scheduled:

- **Caldwell Information Fair:** Wednesday, April 23 (8am-2pm) at Connor Field House, Caldwell, ID
- **Dia de los Niño's:** Sunday, April 28 (11am-5pm) at Indian Creek Plaza, Caldwell, ID
- **Snake River Raptor Fest:** Saturday, June 1 (Noon-5pm) at Indian Creek Winery, 1000 N. McDermott Rd., Kuna ID.
- **Kids Outdoor Festival:** Saturday, June 8 (9am-Noon) at West End Upper Dam of Lake Lowell, Nampa

## Refuge Manager Retires



In our last newsletter, Deer Flat Refuge Manager Annette de Knijf announced her pending retirement, effective the end of December 2018. A retirement party was held for Annette at the Refuge visitor center on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Many of her friends from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Refuge staff, as well as Refuge volunteers and Friends members came to wish her well. Have a wonderful retirement, Annette! And thank you for being our mentor the last four years.

The Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge awarded Annette with a beautiful walnut bench handcrafted by Steve Magleic, Craft Wood Wizard, from Nampa, ID.

You wondered what happened to the walnut trees that were cut down around the refuge maintenance compound last fall. Well, now you now the rest of the story....



## Star Party



(L to R) Chris Matthews and Tricia Matthews

On February 22, more than 260 attendees braved the cooler weather and cloudy skies for a star-filled evening at the *Out-of-this-World Star Party* at Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge! Children and their families had a galaxy of fun. Community partners and volunteers provided the following activities:

- Star Crafts
- Star Lab provided by Whittenberger Planetarium
- Star Stories by Caldwell Public Library
- Telescopes brought by Boise Astronomical Society
- A scale model solar system hike along our Nature Trail
- Astrophotography Talk and Demonstrations by Patricia Thorpe
- Easy Stargazing Talk by Dr. Verhage of NearSys
- Celestial Navigation Talk by Joe Fodor
- Scavenger Hunts
- Shoot for the Stars activity station by TRIO Upward Bound

President Tricia Matthews and Board Member Chris Matthews hosted an information booth highlighting the Friends of Deer Flat and our activities. Cookies and coffee for the event were generously donated by Flying M Coffeehouse and Lisa Myers. Thank you to Diane Barker, Darlene Irvin, and Harry Schumacher for serving the great treats, which also included warm apple cider.



(L to R) Diane Barker and Darlene Irvin

If you have not yet been to the Star Party, consider attending in 2020. You never know what you might see through that telescope!

## Murphy's Neck – A Wildlife Mecca

*by Bob Christensen*

Murphy's Neck is a small (22-acre) bay situated on the NW corner of Lake Lowell. It is bordered on the north by Orchard Avenue, on the south by the open expanse of Lake Lowell, and on both the east and west by majestic cottonwoods and dense undergrowth.

I have passed by this area untold times, always hoping to spot anything of unusual interest or even predictable wildlife activities. Sometimes I have been disappointed—not seeing any creatures—but other times, I have been amazed at the variety of wildlife interactions contained in this relatively small sheltered bay.



In early March, while giving a tour of the Narrows bald eagle nesting sites to Saskia, one of our AmeriCorps volunteers, and Emily, Saskia's College of Western Idaho intern, we passed by Murphy's Neck, going to and coming back from the south side of the lake. On our first pass, I pointed out the active red-tailed hawk nest at the NW corner of the bay and told them about the dark-phased red-tailed hawks that had been nesting there for years. As we looked up over the trees, we caught sight of two juvenile bald eagles in playful flight rising in the air above the cottonwood trees. In a gesture of playfulness, they locked talons and tumbled \* end-over-end toward the frozen ground. Fortunately, the two large birds released their hold just in time to regain the breeze and flapped harmlessly away across the bay. *(Continued, Page 5)*

*\* Talon-grappling and tumbling are frequently observed behaviors; seen between all combinations of eagles—between mated adults, un-paired adults, adult and immatures, immatures with immatures, etc. These are also likely “unions” of any-sex combination of birds. That variety of participants, tells me right away there is no one answer to what this behavior is for, but rather, that it happens for a variety of reasons. Three come to my mind immediately: pair-bonding, aggression, and play.*

**American Eagle Foundation**

## Murphy's Nest (Continued from Page 4)

On our second pass by Murphy's Neck, we were rewarded with a spectacular display of wildlife in action. Dispersed in the middle and along the edges of the water were small rafts of mallards and a gaggle of Canada Geese. These floating waterfowl were being harassed by occasional low flights made by juvenile bald eagles. Six of these large raptors were perched in the cottonwoods and one at a time they would swoop down menacingly low, almost skimming the water toward the ducks and geese. The Canada geese responded nonchalantly by ducking their heads; while the mallards would flap their way, low across the water, to settle in another area of the bay.

Near the outlet of the bay, was a large beaver lodge (which from a distance looked like a small fortress) and directly opposite the lodge in the east shallows of the bay, lined up in a tight row, were nine great blue herons—stiffly standing side-by-side like fence posts stuck in the mud. And this spectacle was not all. While glassing all of these fascinating creatures, I also spotted a rusty-gray coyote, casually sitting on his haunches, only inches away from the edge of the pond. He was patiently watching the nearest raft of puddle ducks. But after a few minutes he lost interest and, turning on his paws, slowly ambled away into the thicket of brush and trees.



## Yellow-Bellied Marmot Day at the Refuge

Friends of Deer Flat and  
Deer Flat Chapter Master Naturalists  
invite you to the

# Yellow-Bellied Marmot Day

at the Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center  
Saturday, April 6 – 12:00 noon to 3 p.m.

**RSVP BY MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> to  
[friendsofdeerflat@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofdeerflat@gmail.com)**



### EVENT INCLUDES

- ❖ **Potluck Lunch** (meat and drinks provided; please bring a side dish)
- ❖ **Meet new people** who share your goals and interests
- ❖ **Raffle/door prizes**
- ❖ **Marmot Presentation** by Bob Christensen
- ❖ **Master Naturalist Certification Presentations**

## Friends of Deer Flat Honored

*By Tricia Matthews*

Friends of Deer Flat was one of the winners of the 2018 Idaho Press *2C Spotlight Award* given by Idaho Press, Idaho Power, College of Western Idaho, and other area sponsors. The Friends were honored for efforts to preserve and enhance the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge for wildlife and the public. In addition, Kris Horton was individually recognized for her quarterly litter lift program at the Iowa Curves. The award and a collage of related Friends' programs and projects can be viewed at the Visitors Center bulletin board near the rear entrance.



### *Award Ceremony Attendees*

*Top (L to R): Cathy Eells and Annette de Knijf  
Bottom (L to R): Harry & Mary Jo Schumacher,  
Tricia & Chris Matthews*



## Project Funding: Grants

*by Rex Hanson*

Support for Friends projects relies heavily on donations, Friends memberships, monetary grants, and the dedicated efforts of volunteers. Grants during in the 2017-2018 period were received from Idaho Women's Charitable Foundation (IWCF), Southwest Idaho Legacy Organization (SILO), Idaho Community Fund (ICF), National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), National Environmental Education Fund (NEEF) and Chevron Humankind.

These grants have and will continue to support habitat restoration (NFWF), bus scholarships for local primary school students (IWCF, ICF & SILO), office equipment upgrades (NEEF), and operating expenses (Chevron).

We are happy to report that funding is sufficient to allow for 2019 activities to move forward. We are grateful to these funding organizations for supporting our activities. The Friends plan to continue earning the grant distributors' trust by spending their money wisely as we continue to impact and improve our community and Deer Flat NWR.

## Friends' Pollinator Garden Commemorative Bricks



The Friends of Deer Flat are now taking orders for commemorative bricks to be placed in the Pollinator Garden behind the Refuge Visitors Center.

**Deadline: April 1, 2019**

Use the link below (or type as shown) to access the brick order form:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dALOpAuXQKpHF0uur8iF1rvEjfK21fBw/view?usp=sharing>

## The Grebe Nest Bookstore

Management of "The Grebe Nest" Nature Store is now under the direction of Cathy Eells (a founding member of the Friends and the store) and Becky Hanson (Friends Treasurer). One new feature of the store is the ability to accept credit and debit cards along with cash and checks. Idaho sales tax continues to be included in the price of every item, simplifying the transaction process. The introduction of this technology has allowed sales to triple in 2018 from 2017.

The store is open limited hours. Those hours are **9 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays.** Friends members receive a 10 percent discount on all store merchandise.

We are always looking for volunteers who wish to "mind the store." Please contact the refuge at [saskia\\_vanadrichem@fws.gov](mailto:saskia_vanadrichem@fws.gov) if you are interested in volunteering.



*New inventory has been added, including the ever popular Jabebo earrings, assorted wildlife pins, new plush birds, the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the National Geographic Birds of North America, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of Sibley's Birds of Western North America.*

*Currently on clearance is the Audubon Field Guide for Birds, Western Region reduced from \$22.95 to \$14.95.*



## Report: Coping with the Federal Shutdown

By Tricia Matthews

The 35-day federal government shutdown from December 21, 2018 through January 25, 2019, was the longest in U.S. history, and presented a number of hardships and challenges for refuge staff and volunteer supporters. Although refuge property remained opened to visitors (hikers, fishermen, hunters), all buildings were closed. Mail could not be delivered, many visitor activities were cancelled, and meetings were relocated. Winter bird feeding behind the Visitors Center and at the bird blind continued, but volunteers had to clean feeders off-site. Other volunteers monitored the refuge, and we are especially grateful to Doug Clegg for his report of gate damage at the Gotts Point parking entrance. The gate has since been repaired and should better withstand vehicular impacts. This shutdown, however frustrating, prompted the Friends board to develop a plan to continue refuge operations and protection, and displayed the resilience of Deer Flat Refuge volunteers.

### Yes!

#### I want to be a member.

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(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)

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