

The Grebe

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 24

SPRING/SUMMER 2018

Mark your calendars for
Saturday, November 3,
for a fun working
day at the refuge.

(Page 3)

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
Cathy Eells, Member
Rex Hanson, Member
Chris Matthews, Member
Kathleen McCarter, Member

Contact Information

13751 Upper Embankment Rd
Nampa ID 83686

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[www.facebook.com/
FriendsofDeerFlat](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofDeerFlat)

*Bob & Sheryl Faller
Newsletter Editors*

“Initiative”

from the President’s Keyboard

YOU CANNOT
ENDOW EVEN THE
BEST MACHINE
WITH INITIATIVE;
THE JOLLIEST
STEAM-ROLLER
WILL NOT PLANT
FLOWERS.

WALTER LIPPMANN
PICTURE QUOTES .COM

I’ve been thinking a lot about “initiative” these days.

Initiative is about taking charge of an opportunity or situation. It is the first step or impulse in a series of actions.

Initiative is a personal quality that shows a willingness to get things done and take responsibility. It is starting something, with the hope that it will continue.

I want to acknowledge the officers and board members of the Friends of Deer Flat, who are true initiative takers. I have been amazed and grateful for each of our board members who see a job or task that needs to be done and jumps right in to help. I couldn’t ask for a better group of people with whom to work and serve our refuge.

May we all take initiative to help the “Friends” accomplish great things at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge by:

- staying alert for ways to support and improve activities at the refuge.
- being the first to adopt and implement new projects or actions approved by the board.
- thinking how to simplify processes, finding better ways of doing things, and envisioning more effective ways of raising funds for special projects.

By Bob Christensen,

Friends of Deer Flat Board President



Visit these websites for more information about “The Friends of Deer Flat”

- Friends’ Website: <http://www.friendsofdeerflat.org>
- Friends’ Ospreycam: <https://www.friendsofdeerflat.org/osprey/>
- Friends’ Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=friends%20of%20deer%20flat%20wildlife%20refuge.>

Goal Exceeded in “Idaho Gives” Campaign

The “Friends of Deer Flat” joined hundreds of other Idaho nonprofits in the “Idaho Gives” fundraising campaign on May 3, 2018. Our goal was to raise at least \$1,000 to help with continued maintenance costs of the osprey live camera, purchase a new laptop for the group, and help augment our sagebrush steppe restoration funds.

We exceeded our goal by:

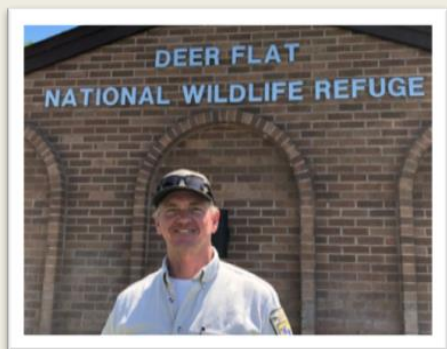
- receiving \$995 in donations from 19 donors, and
- winning a \$500 “Early Bird 5x5” Prize.

A big “THANK YOU” to all who participated!



Brian Clifford, New Deer Flat Refuge Staff Member

The Friends board and members welcome Brian Clifford to the Refuge Staff. Brian has taken over the maintenance duties at Deer Flat NWR. He comes to Deer Flat from Hagerman National Fish Hatchery, where he worked for 36 years as an animal caretaker/motor vehicle operator.



Brian considers himself a “jack-of-all-trades and master of some.” His main job at Hagerman was raising steelhead and rainbow trout. In addition, he drove fish distribution trucks to the Sawtooth Fish Hatchery in Stanley, retrieved eggs from returning steelhead, raised them for 10 months, then returned them to the same hatchery. Other places downstream where fish were released included the Yankee Fork and East Fork of the Salmon River. Brian also operated special fish life-support systems, such as water circulation, refrigeration, and oxygen aeration devices.

Taking care of the fish was not Brian’s only responsibility. His most recent project at Hagerman was constructing six raised bed gardens to provide habitat for insect pollinators, such as the Monarch butterfly. Local master gardeners assisted him with this project.

Brian believes that the federal government should be a steward of the land and led by example. In that vein, he is passionate about how the facilities and grounds are maintained. He took pride in the appearance and operations at the Hagerman Hatchery, and he hopes to continue that emphasis here at Deer Flat NWR.

Brian was born and raised in Hagerman. He says he has two great kids (a daughter and a son), who are grown now, but no grandkids yet. His interests include hunting, fishing, exploring, and “flint-knapping” to make arrowheads.

Welcome again to Deer Flat NWR, Brian.

Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Project Update

Spring and summer follow-up activities on our restoration site included watering the 3,000 shrub and grass plants planted last fall and keeping the weeds from overtaking the site. By examining several study plots, we were able to determine that average winter survival rates were very good:

- Sagebrush: 92%
- Saltbush: 85%
- Bunchgrass: 85%

Five hundred bitterbrush plants were added to the site in March. Unfortunately, these plants did not survive, possibly because they were bareroot and had been in the freezer too long. On a brighter side, we had a surprise emergence of bunchgrass seedlings, which were seeded in the fall of 2016.



BLM Photo

What we hope the restoration site will look like in the future.

Refuge workers disked another five acres of ground in preparation for seeding half during the fall of 2018 and the remainder in 2019. Be sure to mark **Saturday, November 3, 2018**, on your calendar for another fun day of planting shrubs, grasses, and forbs on our sagebrush steppe restoration site.

Why Care About Sagebrush?

The Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem is one of the most endangered ecosystems in North America. It provides essential habitat for many species, such as the Greater Sage-Grouse and pigmy rabbit, that live nowhere else in the world!

At Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, the upland sagebrush supports wildlife such as the mule deer, badgers, coyotes, northern harriers, western meadow larks, pocket gophers and gopher snakes.

Enemies of Sagebrush

Overgrazing and invasive annual grass species, like *cheatgrass*, have put at risk the continued existence of sagebrush ecosystems.

The grasses dry up early in the summer, providing an abundance of fuel for grass and brush fires.

USFWS/Silvia King

How Can We All Help?

The Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge are currently restoring sagebrush steppe habitat around the Refuge visitor center on lands that were ravaged by brushfires.

In November of 2017 we planted about 1,800 sagebrush and 100 saltbush seedlings along with 1,000 bunchgrass plugs on refuge uplands

We need your help to continue. You can contribute by donating funds or giving your time to help with the seed collections, planting, and nurturing activities.

www.friendsofdeerflat.org

Pollinator Gardening – Both at the Refuge and at Home

by Tricia Matthews

Summer has arrived and pollinators are hard at work at the Refuge. But did you know that you can help nurture pollinators right in your own backyard by adding plants to your garden that attract bees, butterflies, birds and other creatures?

- Bees particularly love purple flowers, such as lavender, cone flower, salvia, and Russian sage.
- Hummingbirds love tubular flowers found on honeysuckle, penstemon, and trumpet vine.

Whatever you decide to plant, make it a sun-loving perennial that can tolerate cold winters so it will bloom every year. To learn more about pollinators, check out the following link: <http://www.fws.gov/pollinators/>.

In addition to the buzz around the blooms, the pollinator garden located behind the visitor center is pleased to add 18 new commemorative bricks. Thanks to all of you who have supported this program.

If you would like to add a special message to our garden, please go to the following link on the Friends’ website to print off the order form and return it to the refuge office (<http://www.friendsofdeerflat.org/2015/10/pollinator-garden-engraved-bricks/>).



OUR NEXT ORDER DEADLINE IS AUGUST 31.

Speaking of Pollinators ...

The Grebe Nature Store now offers locally-produced honey (in 3- and 6-oz bottles). All nature store purchases help support the store and the Friends’ activities. We are happy to announce that we now have gift certificates available for purchase – what a great gift to all refuge and nature lovers! You can purchase the certificates from a volunteer at the Refuge Visitor Center (see store schedule below).

NATURE STORE GIFT CERTIFICATE

RECIPIENT NAME _____

DONOR NAME _____

AUTHORIZED BY _____

AMOUNT _____

Not redeemable for cash. Redemption value not to exceed \$100

FRIENDS OF DEER FLAT
13751 Upper Embankment Rd
Nampa, ID 83686
<http://FriendsofDeerFlat.org>

Nature Store Hours	
Monday:	Closed
Tuesday:	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday:	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Thursday:	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Friday:	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Saturday:	10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
	(when the refuge visitor center is staffed)

Student Field Trips

Supported by the Friends Group and Master Naturalist Chapter Volunteers

by Rex Hanson



*Lake Ridge Elementary students learning about animal tracks in "Track Your Neighbors" science module. Study area near Refuge Visitor Center, May 17, 2018.
Picture by Rex Hanson*

The Friends of Deer Flat Refuge aided several school field trips by awarding bus scholarships to the Refuge this spring. The "Discover Wildlife Journeys (DWJ)" program involved four elementary schools from the Caldwell/Nampa area. These programs allowed fourth and fifth graders the opportunity to experience the Refuge, some for the first time.

Volunteers from the Friends' group and the Deer Flat Master Naturalist Chapter helped to guide several DWJ science lessons:

- "How's the Water" (water quality)
- "Bird Cafeteria" (ornithology)
- "Track Your Neighbors" (animal tracking)
- "Tools of the Trade" (habitat adaption)

Volunteers assisted AmeriCorps staff (like Rhian Smith in the photo to the left) and had great fun interacting with these bright and enthusiastic youngsters.

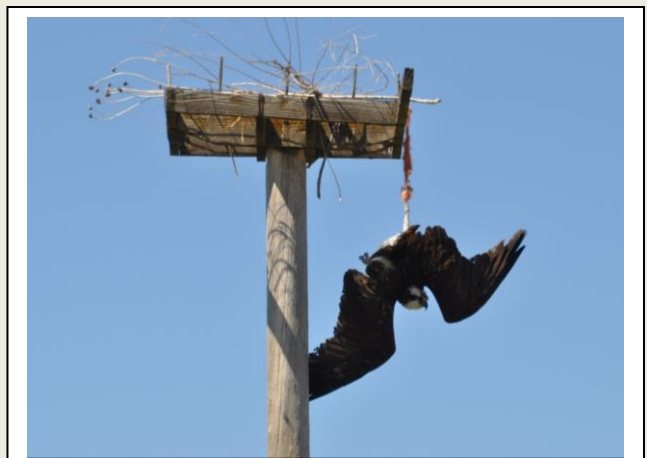
A Cautionary Tale

by Nic Carlson

In mid-June, an osprey (who had a ball of baling twine caught in its talons for a few months prior) got hung up on a nesting platform near the Visitor Center. Luckily a few visitors walking along the Nature Trail reported the tangled osprey to the Visitor Center, and staff who were able to call Idaho Power to come rescue the bird.

The osprey had to spend a few nights at a rehabilitation facility to be rehydrated but was soon released. It is now healthy and back at the main nesting platform.

This is a reminder to us all to be aware of the things we leave lying around!



*An osprey tangled in baling twine hangs from an alternate nesting platform.
(Photo Susan Kain/USFWS)*

Friends Outreach 2018

by Mary Jo Schumacher

This has been a busy year for the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge. A major focus was our community outreach, where we met many people in the community who love Deer Flat, and others who did not know about us but were anxious to visit. Some of our community events are listed below:

- Hyatt Hidden Lakes at the Boise Watershed
- Caldwell Information Fair
- World Migratory Bird Day at Zoo Boise
- Día de Los Niño's (Caldwell Children's Day)
- Snake River Raptor Fest
- Caldwell Family Fun Day

To aid in our outreach, the Friends updated our display board. **Bucks Bags** graciously designed and made a special carrying case for us to move the board to various events. They refused payment and offered this as a donation to our efforts. A big thank you goes out to **Bucks Bags**!



Snake River Raptor Fest.
Pictured (l to r): Hailey McKinney
and Tricia Matthews



World Migratory Bird Day at Zoo Boise.
Pictured (l to r): Refuge Manager Annette
de Knijf and Mary Jo Schumacher



Caldwell Information Fair.
Pictured (l to r): Refuge Manager
Annette de Knijf, Mary Jo
Schumacher, and Tricia Matthews

College Students Improve Refuge Outreach

by Mary Jo Schumacher



BSU Refuge Intern

Amy Aiello worked as an intern at the Refuge with the Friends group. Originally from the Tri Cities in Washington, Amy is a junior at Boise State University working on a BA in Communications and Public Relations. She would like to use her degree to work in the field of environmental causes. While she was with us, Amy learned how Friends interacted with the Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge, and about native resources the Refuge manages. We especially valued Amy's knowledge of social media. She helped improve our Facebook account to make it more attractive and opened an Instagram account for the Friends, which makes us more efficient in posting pictures for outreach activities. We learned a lot from Amy and enjoyed the time she spent with us.

BSU Student Grant Writers

Friends' Vice-President, Tricia Matthews, recently attended an Idaho Nonprofit Center seminar focused on grant procurement and board development. When Tricia heard that a BSU English professor was looking for nonprofits to help his students learn how to write grants, she enlisted three of the students to help the Friends Group. **Allyssa Pogue, Abby Moreland, and Jennifer Wood** worked together to update the Friends' webpage, Facebook, outreach displays, brochures and flyers. We owe a debt of gratitude for the skills and diligence that these students brought to our organization. We wish them well in their future endeavors.



Thanksgiving for Turkeys

A big **THANK YOU** to Rachel and David Staats, who organized and directed the bird feeding program during fall, winter and spring. We also appreciate all who helped keep the feeders full during that time. You are awesome! **And a special "thanks" comes from the wild turkeys that raided the feeders earlier this year!**



"Tom Turkeys at Bird Feeders" - Pictures by Bob Christensen

Touring Deer Flat Refuge

by *Rebecca Hanson*



Pictured (l to r): Bob Christensen, Annette de Knijf, Rebecca Hanson, and Rex Hanson

It was one of those iconic and sunny May days in Southwest Idaho—cool in the morning with clear skies—when Annette de Knijf, Manager of the Refuge, took Friends of Deer Flat board members on a personalized tour of the refuge.

We climbed into the refuge vehicle at the maintenance garage area and learned some of the history of the maintenance compound. Some of the buildings date back to the late 1930's.

We visited the fire tower, saw fallow farm grounds, the equipment bone yard (no real bones), one of two osprey nesting platforms (both of which are occupied), watched a couple families of Canada geese with gawky goslings in tow, then continued on a drive around Lake Lowell/Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge boundaries.

We learned that, in addition to the Upper and Lower Dam recreation areas, there is a dike (East Dike) near Tio Lane that helps the formation of a wetland area where we saw lots of cattails, a few wood ducks, and a great blue heron. The New York Canal brings in irrigation water at this end of Lake Lowell.

We continued our drive on the south side of the lake, visiting the various parking lots where people access the lake waters for fishing and kayaking, and the two parking lots used by boaters to launch their watercraft. Even though it was only about 10 a.m. on a Thursday morning, there were already a number of people out enjoying these activities. We saw several great white egrets standing stately in the flooded riparian areas. Lake water will eventually retreat after summer irrigation depletes the excess.

At the Lower Dam Recreation Area (which has changed significantly since my family used it for recreation in the 1960's), we learned about current cooperation between the Refuge and Canyon County Parks Department, which manages the grassy picnic area and the beach.

As we observed a couple of Western grebes at Murphy's Neck (also known as the Middle Embankment), we learned about the many challenges of managing one of the oldest refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. By executive order, President Teddy Roosevelt created Deer Flat NWR in 1909. Today, under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it remains a gem in the Treasure Valley—one most residents take for granted.

The Refuge is open and free to the public all year during daylight hours. If you haven't visited, bring your kids, grandkids, well-mannered dogs on leash to explore the refuge.

Thank you, Annette, for a wonderful tour!



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