



# Willapa Tidings

Newsletter of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge • Volume 1, Number 1 • Fall 2000

## Willapa Friends Group Established

Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge became an officially recognized organization July 20, 2000. On that day, nine potential members of a board of directors met at the PUD building on Sandridge Road and agreed to serve as directors.

Years of volunteering at goose check stations and bird counts at the Refuge led Ocean Park residents Rudy and Winona Schuver to value the richness and complexity of the refuge. It also led them to the realization that the understaffed and underfunded refuge could benefit from a lot more volunteer help. And, in return, the Long Beach Peninsula and entire area around the mouth of the Columbia River would learn more about this treasure in its midst.

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge's Project Manager Charlie Stenvall supported the formation of the Friends group.

The greatest financial support, which really got the group off the ground, has been a \$5,000 grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Audubon Society also participated in reviewing the grant and awarding the money.

The grant, designed to aid in the start-up and first educational projects of the



*Charlie Stenvall, Refuge project leader, gave a tour of the Refuge in late summer to members of the Willapa Friends board of directors. Here Lee Lowenson, Winona Schuver, Bette Arne, and Charlie stand on the shore of Long Island with the Refuge air boat before looking at spartina near the Lewis Unit.*

Willapa Friends group, will pay for a membership drive and educational materials for local school classrooms.

Dues and donations from the membership drive will be used to purchase lumber for volunteers to use in

building nest boxes, viewing platforms, signs, and other projects to support refuge goals.

Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge joins the growing number of wildlife refuge support groups across the country.

## Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Grows by 300 Acres in Past Year

The Willapa National Wildlife Refuge this past year has added about 300 acres to bring the total to approximately 13,900 acres, thanks to land purchases negotiated with two willing sellers. The purchases, both near the Refuge areas south of Willapa Bay, have been particularly welcome.

Refuge Project Leader Charlie Stenvall sees the acquisitions as important to the Refuge for many reasons. "The single biggest reason in my mind is that those parcels can be managed for maximum wildlife benefit," he said. The Refuge plans wetland, tidal, and forest restoration work on the acquisitions.

The larger purchase, of 155 acres owned

by Albert and Sweet-e Shier, stretches from Sandridge Road to the Riekkola unit of the Refuge in the Tarlatt Slough area. For this area, Charlie said Refuge work will benefit amphibians—red-legged frogs, Pacific

treefrog, and Dunn's salamander—as well as shorebirds, waterfowl, and passerines.

The other purchase, of 147 acres owned by Gerald Spanner, fronts Bear River just south of the main Refuge areas. On that parcel, the Refuge's dike removal, channel creation, and placement of large woody debris will be of "great benefit to anadromous fish," Charlie said.

Now that the land is under Refuge management, Charlie added, it is open to "wildlife dependent" public use, and the Refuge is making an annual payment to the county which exceeds the tax revenue the land would otherwise generate.

### Mission Statement

The purpose of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge is to provide support and assistance to Refuge programs and to enhance awareness and appreciation of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.



*Winona Schuver, Peter Weidman (partially hidden), Better Arne, Janet Weidman (in headband), Lee Lowenson (partially hidden), and Larry Scott listen to Charlie Stenvall describe stream restoration by the Refuge Headquarters.*

## Calendar of Activities

If you see an activity you'd like to participate in, call the Friends at 360-665-6859.

### November 2000

- Operate goose check station
- Monitor shore bird migrations
- Begin counting brant geese arrivals
- Board Meeting Nov. 16, Naselle Library
- Maintain trails and campgrounds

### December 2000

- Upgrade Long Island campgrounds
- Clean and disinfect bluebird nesting boxes
- Move and reinstall approximately 150 "protected area" signs at the snowy plover nesting and breeding area, Leadbetter Point. (Dunes have shifted, so the birds are using a slightly different area.)

- Operate goose check station
- Maintain trails

### January 2001

- Plant trees along streambank at Refuge headquarters
- Install new bluebird nesting boxes
- Build nesting boxes for wood ducks and hooded merganser
- Make presentations to local 4th grade classrooms
- Maintain trails at Leadbetter Point
- Board Meeting Jan. 18, 7:00 PM, Conference Room, PUD Building, 95th & Sandridge Road, Long Beach. All members welcome.

*Volunteers planted 130 trees and shrubs along the streambank by Refuge headquarters in mid-September.*

*For fifty years a floodgate prevented salmon from entering the stream, but the Refuge has had the gate removed, and salmon are once more expected in the tidal stream this fall.*



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Volume 1, Number 1

Michael McDowell, *Writer & Editor*

To request an address change, to contribute items of interest (including photos), or to write articles for publication, please contact Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge:

### Mailing Address

PO Box 627, Ocean Park, WA 98640

Telephone

360-665-6859

E-mail

rudwin@willapabay.org

## Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

A nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge was established in July 2000 to provide support and assistance to Refuge programs and to enhance awareness and appreciation of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

### Board of Directors

Rudy Schuver, *President*  
Ocean Park, Washington

Winona Schuver, *Secretary*  
*Membership Committee*  
Ocean Park, Washington

Larry Scott, *Vice President*  
*Volunteer Committee*  
Astoria, Oregon

Bette Arne, *Treasurer*  
*Education Committee*  
Ocean Park, Washington

Melissa Herrold  
*Membership Committee*  
Ilwaco, Washington

Lee Lowenson  
Seaview, Washington

Alan Richards  
Naselle, Washington

Peter Weidman  
Astoria, Oregon

Janet Weidman  
*Membership Committee*  
Astoria, Oregon

## Education Project Underway

In October, the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge began its major project of the year: a wildlife and wildlife habitat educational project for local fourth graders. The Friends asked the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge staff to visit the six participating fourth grade classrooms during National Wildlife Refuge Week, October 9-13.

Terri Butler, Refuge manager, visited three classrooms at Hilltop School in Ilwaco, Project Leader Charlie Stenvall visited a classroom at Naselle Elementary School, and Refuge wildlife biologist Deborah Jaques visited Olney School in the Astoria school district.

Refuge staff gave slide presentations about the Refuge, discussed plants, birds, invertebrates and habitats, and displayed stuffed birds.

The week of January 8-12 Friends of the Refuge plan to visit the classrooms again to discuss habitat and introduce "Project Feeder Watch," a national program offered by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Each classroom will receive bird feeders and food and students will learn how to observe,



*View of mowing tracks in spartina grass north of Refuge headquarters, from above Teal Slough.*

identify, and keep data on the birds they see.

Friends volunteers will continue to visit the classrooms throughout the school year and will provide each room with reference books and videos about local wildlife. The educational program will conclude with field trips in the spring to Refuge areas for up-close looks at habitats.

## Thank you, Members and Donors!

Since its inception in July 2000, the following families and individuals have become members and in some cases donated to the Friends of Willapa

National Wildlife Refuge well beyond the membership dues.

### Benefactor Memberships

Nick Schuver, Rudy & Winona Schuver

### Patron Memberships

John & Melissa Herrold, Elizabeth McDowell, L. F. "Swede" & Carole Warneke, Richard & Janet Wilson

### Family Memberships

Bette Arne, Russ & Joyce Jones, Michael & Janis McDowell, Dick & Cay Roberts, Larry & Susan Scott, Deborah & Charlie Stenvall, Peter & Janet Weidman

### Individual Memberships

Jacob Borkowski, Carl Buchholz, E. "Swede" Johnson, Lee Lowenson, Mary Pachek, Robert Schuver, Walt Weber

# Membership Form



Make checks payable to: Friends of Willapa NWR

Send to:  
Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge  
PO Box 627  
Ocean Park, WA 98640

All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Amount enclosed:

- \$10 Individual Membership
- \$15 Family Membership
- \$50 Patron Membership
- \$100 Benefactor Membership
- \$500 or over Advocate Membership

## Volunteer Interests

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Projects and Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising        | <input type="checkbox"/> Trail and Campground Maintenance   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach          | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations    | <input type="checkbox"/> Shorebird and Waterfowl Monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Education     | <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat Restoration | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Amphibian Monitoring      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Recruitment      |  |   |

## Willapa Refuge Dates from 1937

Although the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge has been making itself better known in the last couple of years, the refuge has been operating since 1937, when it was established as the Willapa Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.

The Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act of 1934 raised the money for purchase of refuges throughout the country to protect habitats for a variety of wildlife, particularly migrating birds.

The southern quarter of Willapa Bay was one of the earlier areas chosen to protect because the Willapa Bay area had always been an important resting and wintering ground for migrating birds and shore birds, but, according to the Refuge's December 1938 quarterly report, increased oystering, fishing, hunting, and lack of protection had produced a "marked decrease" in the number of birds in the area.

The Refuge now includes not only the land at the southern end of the bay (the Lewis and Reikkola units), but also Leadbetter Point at the very northern end of the Long Beach peninsula, north of Leadbetter Point State Park, and all of seven-mile long Long Island. The land managed by the Refuge includes sand dunes, sandy beaches, intertidal mudflats, both freshwater and saltwater marshes, grasslands and forest lands.

Waterfowl such as black brant,



*Dunlin sandpipers in flight on the ocean beach near Leadbetter Point.*

trumpeter swans, Canada geese, scaup, canvasback, bufflehead, scoters, and American wigeon winter in Refuge aquatic habitats and grasslands. The threatened western snowy plover nests in Refuge protected areas at Leadbetter Point.

During spring and fall migrations, the Refuge hosts some of the largest populations of shorebirds on the Pacific Coast. The Refuge is one of three sites on the West Coast where more than 100,000 sandpipers feed and rest.

Wildlife in the forested and uplands

portions of the Refuge include black bear, black-tailed deer, Roosevelt elk, bats, bobcats, and grouse. The Refuge's rivers and streams support chinook, coho and chum salmon, steelhead, and sea-run cutthroat trout.

Recent years have brought to the Refuge an excessive growth of spartina, or smooth cordgrass, a non-native species which thrives in intertidal mudflats and marshes. Spartina threatens the habitat of shorebirds, waterfowl, clams, crabs, and oysters.

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