



Willapa Tidings

Newsletter of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge • Vol. 4, No. 2 • Winter 2004

Interpretative Trail Opens at Annual Meeting

by Kelly Rupp

Over 60 members and visitors gathered on November 15 to formally open the interpretative art trail at Refuge HQ. Culminating a five-year restoration project, the interpretative trail at Headquarters Creek yielded a record return of chum salmon this year. "Over 500 chum returned to spawn and begin again the cycle of renewal that characterizes healthy salmon habitat," announced Charlie Stenvall, Project Leader at Willapa. "This design project will further help protect the salmon here as well as demonstrate that small creek projects can be relatively easily restored to productive conditions for wildlife."

It is estimated that 80% of these returning fish successfully spawned, providing confidence that the stream will soon be self-sufficient to support a natural recurring run. The trail also recognizes the Centennial Year of the National Wildlife Refuge System, which celebrates 100

years of conservation achievements during 2003.

This first-in-the-nation art-inspired trail features the work of public art students from the University of Washington. Replacing traditional interpretive signs made of wood and words, the artwork provides visitors with an image that inspires reflection on the wildlife wonders in the area.

John Young, chairperson of the Public Arts program at the University, recognized the historic achievement of his students and the Refuge team. "This unique program combines landscape architecture with individually-expressed art," declared Young. "We've endeavored here to express our lasting impressions of the interconnectedness of salmon with humanity. Our artwork's legacy is in the continual rebirth of life in this stream." A sculpted oversized representation of a salmon skeleton greets visitors at the trailhead, from which an elevated boardwalk traverses mudflats to end at a rock



Photo by Rudy Schuver

Friends of Willapa NWR members walk the new Salmon Interpretative Trail.

garden where thirteen bronze statuettes of native amphibians are fixed to stone boulders.

continued on page 6: See Interpretive Trail

Willapa Bay: Important to Shorebirds

by Marie Fernandez, Refuge Biologist

Tiny travelers wing their way through the environs of Willapa Bay and the adjacent ocean beaches, including Leadbetter Point, each fall and spring, many spending the winter in this area and others as far south as Argentina. These are the shorebirds or "wind birds", a magical name ascribed to them as they seem to appear and disappear with the wind. Tiny, energetic sandpipers, elegant godwits, and several species of roly-poly plovers feast on the abundant resources of the extensive tidal mudflats



Dunlin courtesy of the US Fish and Wildlife Service/ line art by Timothy Knepp

continued on page 2: See Shorebirds

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Interpretive Trail Opens 1
- Bay Important to Shorebirds 1
- RV-ing in Wildlife Refuges 3
- Trail of Giant Cedars 3
- Meet our New Board Members 4
- Frogs, News, and Kids 4
- President's Letter 5
- Calendar of Events/Volunteering 5
- Members Gathering Approaches 6

Shorebirds

continued from page 1



and shallow waters of Willapa Bay and the sandy edges of surf-tossed ocean beaches. Many travel from the tundra of the high northern Arctic region to sites as distant as Tierra del Fuego at the southernmost tip of South America.

Shorebirds are truly outstanding in their migrational abilities. Many species travel extremely long distances of up to 20,000 miles round trip and can fly as long as 70 hours without rest. To fuel these amazing feats of endurance, a shorebird must be able to feed and rest en route.

Research efforts have found that many shorebird species collect in spectacular numbers at certain points along their migratory routes. These staging or stop-over areas, like Willapa Bay, provide usually predictable concentrations of food resources which include small worms, crustaceans, flies, insect larvae, and other invertebrates. Here, hungry shorebirds can build up fat reserves before or during their long journeys. In some cases, in the course of just a few weeks, one of these hot spots may support more than 80% of the continent's population of certain species.

On the east coast in Delaware Bay, more than a million shorebirds gather each year. Mostly Red Knots and Ruddy Turnstones, they time their journey north to coincide with the annual spawning of horseshoe crabs, whose eggs they consume by the millions. In Alaska, at the Copper River Delta, nearly 20 million shorebirds congregate, including nearly all of the world's Western Sandpipers and Pacific coast Dunlin.

Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor are also extremely important sites and host hundreds of thousands of shorebirds, with Dunlin and Western Sandpipers being the most numerous. Shorebird populations can suffer a disaster at these geographic bottlenecks due to natural causes such as large storms or hurricanes, human development resulting in loss of habitat, as well as chemical or oil spills.

The Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, headquartered in Massachusetts, coordinates and correlates vast amounts of shorebird data collected from the field across the hemisphere. This data has been collected for over 25 years and has revealed some disturbing informa-

tion on the health of our shorebird populations. Of the 49 species of shorebirds that migrate across North America, five have declined by 25% or more over the past several years. Sixteen other species have shown declines of 5 to 20%. The status of other species is still being drawn from valuable data gathered at key areas throughout the Americas. Causes of shorebird decline include loss of habitat, human disturbance at staging areas, and other factors.

The greatest threat to shorebird habitat in Willapa Bay is the encroachment of the non-native cordgrass, *Spartina alterniflora*. *Spartina* has invaded the rich mudflats of the bay, raising elevations and filling tidal channels, while converting the mudflats to dense areas of vegetation. Shorebirds that utilize mudflats have been directly affected. The invasion of *Spartina* into upper intertidal areas has reduced the availability of both high tide roosting and foraging habitat in the bay. It has been estimated that *Spartina* has reduced the available foraging time for shorebirds in the southern part of the Willapa Bay by as much as 50% of the daylight hours in winter. *Spartina* control efforts already underway will hopefully be able to restore much of this critical habitat.

The Willapa Bay area and adjacent ocean beaches are an important migratory, wintering and year round location for many kinds of spectacular shorebird species including Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, Black Oystercatcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Wandering Tattler, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Dunlin, Sanderling, Short-billed Dowitcher, Marbled Godwit, and Red Phalarope as well as many others. The Western Snowy Plover is a federally threatened species. Over 35 shorebird species have been documented at the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

Willapa Tidings

Published quarterly by Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

Volume 4, Number 2
Sandy Profeta, *Editor*

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

Mailing Address

PO Box 1130, Ocean Park, WA 98640

Telephone

360-665-0115

E-mail

fwnwr@willapabay.org

Web site

www.willapabay.org/~fwnwr

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

Bev Arnoldy
Ocean Park, WA
Katherine Driscoll
Oysterville, WA
Susan Fugate
Ocean Park, WA
Tom Kolasch
Astoria, OR
Suzy Whittey
Long Beach, WA
Kelly Rupp
Ocean Park, WA
Shawn Stern
Ocean Park, WA

NEW MEMBERS (As of 12-14-2003)

Benefactor Membership

Rick & Linda Hegrenes

Patron Membership

Robert Frost
Sara Jones
Bibbi Lee
Dorothy Rupp

Family Membership

Deanne Belinoff
Barry Disdero
Eldon Fisher
Carol Hazzard
David & Kathy Johnson
Nancy Gorshe/Michael Lalewicz
Penelope Schott
John & Lin Schroeder

Individual Membership

Maude Ballard
Shelly Pollock
Dorothy Williams

STAY INFORMED!

Sign up for the Friends e-mail list. Contact Michael McDowell at mjmcowell@qwest.net

RV-ing in our National Wildlife Refuges

First of a two-part series by Cay Roberts

President's Note: Dick and Cay Roberts spent the summer of 2002 at Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. They have been gracious to share their story with us.

If you're reading this newsletter, then chances are good that you do some volunteering for the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Nationwide, there are two types of volunteers - local and temporary residents. Anyone belonging to the Friends of Willapa NWR is familiar with the dedicated work of local volunteers, who accomplish an infinite variety of projects suiting the refuge's needs and the volunteer's talents and availability. Among other projects, Willapa's local volunteers develop and maintain trails and campsites, work with school children providing wildlife education, monitor waterfowl and shorebird activity, assist with this newsletter and help with the hunter goose check station.

The other cadre of volunteers at a national wildlife refuge arrive, live there typically for three months or more in their own recreational vehicle, using sites provided by the refuge, and then move on. Some return yearly; others, like us, use this special volunteer opportunity as

a chance to see the USA—or at least some very special natural parts of it. We've worked in the South at Okefenokee NWR in south Georgia; the South-central US at Laguna Atascosa NWR in south Texas; in the Southwest at Buenos Aires NWR in southern Arizona; in the Pacific northwest at the Willapa NWR complex, and in the East at the Pea Island-Alligator River NWR complex on North Carolina's outer banks and nearby mainland.

We've parked our motorhome and "camped" in towering pines, Sonoran desert scrub, western cedar, and on a barely vegetated Atlantic barrier island. Our visitors have included gopher, tortoises, and armadillos, scores of migrating hummingbirds, geese, coyotes, bobcats, ocelots, alligators, and (mostly friendly) snakes. We've worked in the spring, summer, and autumn.

Refuges find RV-ing volunteers useful. They are available weekends and on call at odd times. They're often the only people on site at night and on Sundays. They can be given longer assignments on a daily or steady basis. Because they are around on work days they can be sent on errands that need to be done, or handle a

need that comes up abruptly. Once trained, they can fill in for refuge staff who are suddenly called away. Rv-ers are volunteering in exchange for their campsite, and so they often handle some necessary but less attractive jobs, such as data entry or filing, restroom cleaning or listing the specs of all the tires on all the refuge vehicles.

In return for their services, RV-ing volunteers are usually expected to stay three months or more and work 24-32 hours/week, often on weekends if the refuge has an active Visitor Center. They usually receive a site with water and electricity and a sewer hook-up at no cost. In addition, there's often access to a nearby washer and dryer and some refuges provide free propane or a local telephone line hookup. Most refuges grant RV-ing volunteers internet access after working hours, just to pick up e-mail.

Contact Information:

Cay and Dick Roberts
402 Robin Road
Waverly, OH 45690-1523

The Trail of Giant Cedars

They go marching, the great red cedars,
striding the ancient forest, their silver
roots
toeing down into the green understory;

and I want to follow these peaceful giants
into high caverns of birdsong and hem-
lock,
into the place before iron and motors

and more stuff than anyone needs. Even
their sepulchers are taller than two log-
gers
or the huge double saws those men
hoisted

to fell them. I love that woman who dwells
in the broad stump of an old-growth
cedar,
its vaulted chamber fragrant and tender

with soft brown needles, and the whisper
and taste of a thousand winters of rain.
Under the fog she wears as a garment,

the sheen of her skin is a twisted skein
of slowly folded patterns, and the knots
of her old hands touch my own knuckles

and grow warm. When she tells me,
Come home, I open my clenched fingers
and now I rush toward her, almost as if

I had always known how.

— Penelope Scambly Schott

President's Note: Penelope is a Portland-based poet and new Friends member. She hiked Long Island for the first time this past summer when she and other hiking friends were visiting the area.



Photo by Bev Arnoldy

Old growth Western red cedar

Meet the New 2004 Board Members

by *Bev Arnoldy*

At the Annual Member Meeting held on Saturday, November 15th (after the Salmon Interpretive Trail Opening), three new board members were elected to the 2004 Friends of Willapa NWR Board of Directors: Katherine Driscoll, Tom Kolasch, and Shawn Stern. Past board members, Bev Arnoldy, Susan Fugate, Kelly Rupp, and Suzy Whittey were re-elected. Let's all welcome them!

Katherine Driscoll

Katherine Driscoll makes her home in Oysterville, with her 4-year-old daughter Rose, and is co-owner of Oysterville Sea Farms. Oysterville Sea Farms raises oysters in Willapa Bay and produces Oysterville's Finest food products. She is from the area and is glad for the opportunity to raise her family here. She is involved in the Oysterville Restoration Foundation, Oysterville Design Review, Ocean Park Chamber of Commerce, and Pacific County Economic Development

Council. Katherine is passionate about food, nature, children and animals.

Tom Kolasch



Photo by Bev Arnoldy

Tom Kolasch has a B.S. in Wildlife Management and B.S. in Biology from the University of Wisconsin. After working four years at the Yakima Training Center as a biologist, Tom moved to this area.

For the first six and a half years, he worked at Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer, Cathlamet, helping to reintroduce the white-tailed deer to upriver islands, Crims, Lord and Fischer. He also led the snowy plover surveys for two years at Leadbetter Point. Tom began working for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in September 2002 as the Ellsworth Creek Forest Manager, a 7,200 acre watershed, which abuts Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. There, he has been involved in building a comprehensive watershed restoration program.

Shawn Stern

Shawn Stern has taught science at Ilwaco Jr./Sr. High for the last nine years. He currently teaches Geo-Physical Science, Physics, and AP Biology at Ilwaco High School and Natural Resources at Sea Resources Watershed Learning Center in Chinook. Shawn has a B.A. in Anthropology & Biology from the University of Washington and an M.A. in Curriculum & Instruction from City University. He enjoys hiking, kayaking, viewing wildlife, and learning more about the natural history of the Pacific Northwest.

Frogs, Newts, and Kids...Oh My!

by Kristine Massin

The 4th Grade Environmental Education Program is one of the biggest successes in the partnership between the Friends of Willapa NWR and Willapa NWR. Each year, staff and volunteers visit each 4th grade classroom in Ilwaco, Naselle, and South Bend four times on four different topics. At the end of the school year, the students visit the Refuge for a field trip—one of the highlights of their year! Friends members and refuge staff have already visited each classroom twice this year. Students learned about national wildlife refuges, basic bird identification, and bird adaptations.

The students are really looking forward to this spring when there will be visits on habitat and amphibians. Students will learn about invasive species and different habitat types through several interactive activities (also known as games!) in January. Come March, the amphibians have always been an extremely popular visit. What 4th grader can resist tanks full of slimy eggs, vividly marked salamanders, and displaying newts? In May, each classroom will culminate its year of environmental education with a field trip out to the refuge. Students, in small groups chaperoned by parents and teachers, rotate through eight short science stations on a variety of topics.

If you've ever wanted to share your enthusiasm for the outdoors, or preferred to make 'trial run' at working with kids, this

is the perfect opportunity to get involved. Training on each program is offered at the refuge, so no prior knowledge of the topic or teaching is required. The students are thrilled to have you there and they are easy to work with. You can choose whether to work on one, two, or all three programs. You can also elect whether to lead the program/field trip station or to assist someone else. For more information about volunteering, please call Kristine Massin at 360-484-3482.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

A Membership Database Coordinator is needed.

This position is a non-board volunteer position, hence the name change from "Membership Chair" to "Membership Database Coordinator". This position also does not require that you reside in Pacific County because the duties could be easily performed by someone living in Seattle, Portland, or anywhere! The position requires that the coordinator own a computer and have some Microsoft computer skills. The position is open as of January 1, 2004, the beginning of our fiscal year.

If you are interested and have further questions on the specific computer skills necessary and a description of the tasks associated with this position, feel free to contact me at beva@pacifier.com or at 503-665-0115.

President's Letter

I hope that you all had a safe and wonderful holiday season with family and friends. Happy New Year to all our Friends members! Our fall activities began with our 4th grade environmental education program at the Hilltop Elementary, Naselle, and South Bend schools. Friends volunteers Joanne Jambor, Susan Clark, and myself, as well as the Outdoor Recreational Planner, Kristine Massin, were actively engaged with the 4th graders teaching "Introduction to the Refuge" and "Birding Basics". We still need program volunteers who can assist and teach the remaining two lessons and the May field trip. See the "Volunteer Activities" section under the Calendar of Events for details about how to help!

The Refuge and the Friends sponsored two important events at Refuge Headquarters on November 15th: the Salmon Interpretive Trail Opening and the Annual Member Meeting. Despite pouring rain, many Friends members braved the weather to join in on the celebration. During the ceremony, Weyerhaeuser presented the Friends organization with a check for \$15,000 to help complete the Salmon Trail. During our annual member meeting, Katherine Driscoll, Susan Fugate, Tom Kolasch, Kelly Rupp, Shawn Stern, Suzy Whittey, and myself were elected to the 2004 Board of Directors.

At the meeting, volunteer coordinator Suzy Whittey, presented the results of the membership meeting survey sent to the Friends members this past summer. Those who responded want see quarterly member events. So, beginning on Feb. 25th, we will sponsor our first "Members Gathering." We hope to see you there!

We continue to work closely with Refuge staff on volunteer activities, advocacy, and funding efforts. We recently completed the construction of a photo blind at Tarlett Slough with grant money we received this past summer. In addition, we recently received a grant that will be used for educational purposes associated the new Salmon Interpretative Trail at the Refuge Headquarters.

We invite all of our members to our monthly board meetings generally held on the 3rd Thursday of each month, starting at 5 pm. Contact me for details if you are interested in attending.

-- Beverly Arnoldy (beva@pacifier.com)

Calendar of Events

January through March 2004

Events and Activities

- January 15th: Board of directors meeting starting at 5:00 p.m. Call 360-665-0115 or send e-mail to beva@pacifier.com for location and agenda.
- February 19th: Board of directors meeting, 5:00 p.m.
- March 18th: Board of directors meeting, 5:00 p.m.
- February 25: First Members' Gathering meeting. See "First Members Gathering Approaches" article for details.

Volunteer Activities

Many volunteer opportunities await your help. To participate in any of these activities (unless otherwise indicated), contact the Friends volunteer coordinator, Suzy Whittey, 360-642-2239 or send email to cwhittey@pacifier.com.

- Environmental Education
 - January 20nd: Naselle Habitat class, 8:30 a.m.
 - March 22nd: Naselle Amphibian class, 8:30 a.m.
 - March 25th: Hilltop Amphibian class, 11:30 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.
 - May 19th, 20th, and 21st: Fourth-grade field trips.
- Adult awareness: Booth display at the Saturday Mkt. and other events.
- Native plantings: Help plant the new Salmon Interpretive Trail during the spring season.
- Lead hikes on the Refuge.
- Visitor counts, surveys, and sharing refuge information.
- Join the committee to plan new member meeting events.
- Trail and campground maintenance on Long Island. Trail maintenance at Leadbetter Point.

- New membership
 Renewal

Membership Form



Make checks payable to: Friends of Willapa NWR

Send to: Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge
 PO Box 1130
 Ocean Park, WA 98640

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____

Yes! I want to receive Friends e-mail announcements. My e-mail address is _____

Volunteer interests

- Community outreach
 Environmental education
 Membership recruitment
 Fund raising
 Public relations
 Habitat restoration

Invite a friend to become a member!

Amount Enclosed:

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

Contributions to FWNWR are tax deductible. No goods or services are provided in exchange for your donation.

- Special Projects and events
 Trail and campground maintenance
 Shorebird and waterfowl monitoring
 Fish and amphibian monitoring

Interpretive Trail

continued from page 1

Further along the trail, fifty steel silhouettes of individual salmon are whimsically mounted in trees above the stream, reminding visitors of the close relationships between salmon habitat and healthy forests. Additional artwork remaining to be installed includes an interpretive tide clock sculpture and an overlook designed to provide hikers with an all-encompassing view of the entire trail and bay. This final half-mile of the trail will be completed in the spring when drier weather conditions prevail.

On hand for the trail opening were major donors to the trail construction, including Weyerhaeuser Corporation, as well as representatives from the Willapa Bay Fisheries Enhancement Group who initiated stream restoration efforts in 1997. "We're proud to share in the successful restoration of this salmon spawning ground with the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge," noted Stan

Lubinus, District Operations Manager for Weyerhaeuser.

Oblivious to the human celebrations nearby, the still-spawning salmon in the stream ignored the afternoon festivities, too focused on their egg-laying mission to pay much notice to the gawking of passersby on the trail. Long may this cycle continue!



Photo by Rudy Schuwer

Spawning chum salmon were spotted along the Salmon Interpretive Trail.

First Members Gathering Approaches

by Suzy Whittey

Mark your calendar now for February 25, 2004 for our first "Member's Gathering."

Thank you for taking the time to fill in and return the "members meetings" survey. The information you shared shows that you would like to get to know one another, meet your board members, learn about the refuge and the issues we face, go on hikes, and have some fun. We plan

to announce each "gathering" in the newsletter, so check it each quarter for the next "Members Gathering". They will be held in February, May, August and November.

Our first gathering will be held on February 25th at 7:00 pm in the PUD conference room at the corner of Sandridge Road and 95th St. in Long Beach, WA. Please join us for some fun! Contact: Suzy Whittey 360-642-2239 for details. We will also send out an announcement on our e-mail list.

MANY THANKS TO OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

Astoria Real Estate

Bay Center Mariculture, Inc.

Charles Nelson Guest House, Ltd.

Coast Seafoods Co.

The Depot Restaurant

Ekone Oyster Co.

Heckes Oysters

Herrold Oyster & Fish Co.

Jolly Roger Oysters

Lighthouse Realty

Lion's Paw Inn

Northern Oyster Co.

Oysterville Sea Farms

Pacific Oyster Co.

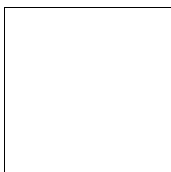
Sand Point Clam Farms

Sea Tow Portland/Vancouver

Sheldon Marine Enterprises

Sid's Supermarket

The Shoalwater Restaurant



Willapa Tidings
Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 1130
Ocean Park, WA 98640

