



Willapa Tidings

Vol. 8 No. 3 Winter 2008

Newsletter of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge



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Help Us Plan for the Future

By Kristine Thompson

Over the next year, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge will seek input from you regarding your interests, concerns, and viewpoints about refuge management issues we need to address during development of the refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP). As we begin this planning process, we are provided the opportunity to look at our habitat management and public programs from a fresh perspective. We will review in detail our refuge management programs and the needs of our refuge habitats including wetlands, old-growth forest, riparian zones, pastures, and aquatic environments. We will also review each of our public use including environmental education, interpretation, photography, and wildlife observation. The refuge purpose will remain the same as when the areas were set aside to protect wildlife habitat and provide wildlife-dependent recreation consistent with wildlife needs. Your insights and observations are needed to provide a more complete and thoughtful process. Please share your ideas with us by attending an upcoming meeting or by submitting written comments.

About the CCP

When Congress amended the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (Act) in 1997, it incorporated an underlying philosophy that "wildlife comes first" on Refuges. The Act provided the Service with guidance for managing refuges to ensure the long-term conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. It also established six priority public uses on National Wildlife Refuges wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, interpretation, and environmental education. The Act also strengthened the compatibility determination process for assuring that priority uses and other activities do not conflict with refuge management purposes. The Act requires all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) to be managed in accordance with a CCP. A CCP ensures that the management of each refuge reflects the purposes of that refuge and the mission, policies, and goals of the Refuge System. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service views the planning process as an opportunity to strengthen current partnerships and forge new ones. The CCP for Willapa Refuge will outline refuge goals, objectives, and management strategies to achieve over a 15-year period following completion of the CCP.

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Looking West ~ Aerial Photo of Long Island

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Public Meetings

Two public open house meetings are scheduled to provide you opportunities to help us identify refuge issues and to have your questions about Refuge programs answered. The public meetings are scheduled at two locations for your convenience.

Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2008
Time: From 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Location: Willapa Bay
Chamber of Commerce
915 W. First
(corner of Alder and First)
South Bend, WA 98586

Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2008
Time: From 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Location: Ilwaco Heritage
Museum
115 Lake St
Ilwaco, WA 98624

Your comments help shape the future of the Refuge.

Address comments to:

Charlie Stenvall, Project Leader
Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex
3888 SR 101
Ilwaco, WA 98624-9707
Phone: (360) 484-3482 Fax: (360) 484-3109

Email comments to: FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov

For information on the planning process contact:

Rebecca Young, Conservation Planner
1211 SE Cardinal Court, Suite 100
Vancouver, WA 98683
Phone: (360) 604-2563 Fax: (360) 604-2505

Tentative Planning Schedule:

Planning Step:	Target Date:
Planning Update 1 issued.....	March 2008
Public Meetings.....	March 25 and 26, 2008
Planning Update 2 issued.....	Spring 2009
Public review of Draft CCP and EIS.....	Spring 2010
Response to public comments on the draft CCP/EIS in Planning Update 3.....	Summer 2010
Distribution of final CCP.....	Fall 2010

We will keep you informed if dates change.

Meet Your New Board Member Patty Wood

By Patty Wood



My name is Patty Wood. After vacationing on the peninsula in good and bad weather for about ten years we decided to escape Seattle. It took us about three years to build our house in Surfside. We moved in February 1993.

My husband Bruce and I opened and operated a small deli/café in Long Beach for five years. It was a great opportunity to meet the community. Since then I attended Clatsop Community College, where I worked in the library while attending classes. I worked at the Astoria Public Library at the same time. I now work in the Ilwaco branch of Timberland Regional

Library four days a week and Astoria one day a week.

We joined the FWNWR about three years ago, hoping to get to Long Island since we don't own a boat. We were asked to volunteer to man the booth at the Port of Ilwaco. Kelly Rupp showed us the skull and bone collection, and explained how they are used to educate the public, kids in particular, about the animals in the Wildlife Refuge.

After seeing how interested and excited the kids and many adults were by the display I was hooked! I think if we educate and show children the natural world they will want to protect it. They will understand how much fun it is to wander around and experience the sounds, sights and smells of it. They will have fun telling their parents what that plant is or identifying a bird for them. They will develop a sense of responsibility for their local environment and in time the whole earth and help to protect it.

Occasionally Kristine Thompson, Katherine or another Board member will have an activity or volunteer opportunity they would like the membership to be aware of. I am the person who emails you this information; I am just the messenger not the originator. I look forward to making myself useful in other ways as well.

Environmental Education Update

By Kristine Thompson

The Refuge offers an invaluable opportunity for students to experience and learn about the natural world. We have completed the first two sessions of the 4th grade Environmental Education (EE) classes, What is a Refuge and Birds! With the aid of Friends volunteers, Sandy Neilson, Carolyn Glenn, Joanne Jambor Patty Wood, and Amy Cook, we conduct 9 classes at 5 schools to 185 students every week of programming. The students are eager to learn and we build on the excitement by continuing to visit their classrooms throughout the spring. The capstone experience is a field trip on May 21 or 22. All five schools will bring their students out to the Refuge for the day. Three schools will visit us on May 21, and two on May 22. We are looking for volunteers to help us with these fun-filled days!

Dues Reminder

By Bill Hutton

This is an early reminder that, with the change in the Friends' by-laws of last November, all membership dues are payable on July 1, 2008. The by-law change was made to streamline our renewal process and eliminate a few recurring problems we experienced with tracking billing and renewal notices every quarter.

Dues and donations from our members are the primary source of income for Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. From an operating budget of about \$6000, we provide annual scholarships to high school seniors who graduate from local schools, environmental education programs for 4th and 8th grade students, interpretive walks on the refuge, quarterly member gatherings that include the annual member's barbecue, and public outreach experiences such as the Salmon Interpretive Trail and the upcoming Critter Talk on April 17. Your dues also support our website, and this quarterly newsletter.

The Friends group is an all volunteer organization and we strive to provide an interesting, quality experience for the greatest number of members. Nearly 100% of every dues dollar goes directly to support our mission, which is to provide support and assistance to Refuge programs and to heighten awareness and appreciation of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Join Us for the 5th Annual Critter Talk April 17, 2008

By Suzy Whittey

Would you like to learn interesting facts about the wildlife we live with here on the peninsula? Here about some species that you may never have heard about before? Suzy Whittey will be presenting a entertaining evening of interesting true and false stories. Join in and see if you can separate the true stories from the false ones.

This fun learning event will be held on Thursday April 17 at 6:00 pm in the conference room at the PUD (Public Utility District) building at 9610 Sandridge Rd. in Long Beach, WA.



Photos By Suzy Whittey

Operation: Mussel Transfer

By Marie Fernandez,
Wildlife Biologist, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

The Willapa National Wildlife Refuge was busy the last two weeks of September 2007 transferring a freshwater mussel species, the western pearlshell, from a nearby river with a healthy population to three small streams on the refuge which contained no mussels. This landmark moment required a great deal of preparation and the cooperation of various entities.

In early September 2006, Willapa NWR Wildlife Biologist, Marie Fernandez, attended a meeting of the Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup. Expounding on an idea that originated with Charlie Stenvall, Project Leader of the Willapa NWR Complex, she presented a pilot project to transfer freshwater mussels – specifically the western pearlshell (*Margaritifera falcata*) – to Willapa NWR streams.

Several weeks later in mid October, two members of the Mussel Workgroup were able to come down to take a look at several of the refuge streams, a few of which were determined to contain suitable habitat. Suitable habitat for the western pearlshell consists of permanent streams with cool water temperatures, gravelly bottoms containing areas of stable substrate, medium gradients, clear water, and the presence of salmonid fish hosts, including cutthroat trout and Coho salmon. Fish hosts play a crucial role in the reproductive strategy of freshwater mussels.

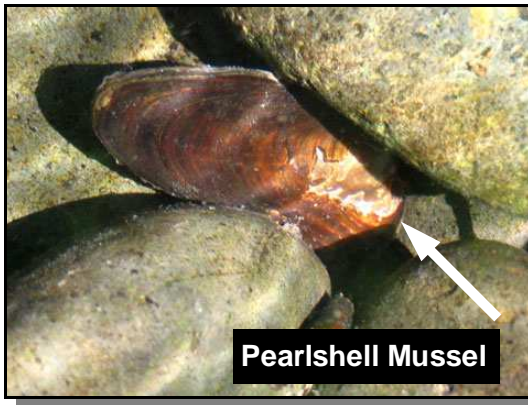
In order to transfer 100 western pearlshell mussels to the refuge, sufficient donor populations needed to be found. The Naselle and Bear Rivers were known to have populations of western pearlshell mussels, but would they have enough to allow taking a few for the refuge project? As far as refuge personnel and members of the Mussel Workgroup knew, no detailed data was available on populations of mussels in either of these rivers.

Enter intrepid refuge volunteers, Russ Lewis and Bill Hutton. Starting in early July along with Marie, Russ and Bill waded and snorkeled several miles of the Naselle and Bear Rivers looking for mussels. An essential item of equipment – the Aquascope, a long thin tube with a clear bottom specifically built for underwater viewing. What do western pearlshell mussels look like?

Russ Lewis (right)
and Bill Hutton
(left) conducting a
survey for western
pearlshell mussels.



Well, they look a lot like rocks! All visible mussels were counted and an attempt was made to break them into size categories based on the portion of burrowed mussel that was visible. (One stipulation for the surveys was that the mussels not be handled. Freshwater mussels are protected by law. According to current Washington Law (WAC 220-56-129): "It is unlawful for any person to take or possess freshwater clams and mussels taken for personal use.")



By the end of August, over 1400 western pearlshell mussels had been visually surveyed on portions of the Bear River and over 2400 had been surveyed on portions of the Naselle. Armed with this hard won data, applications for permits were submitted to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The refuge needed two permits for this project – a collection permit and a transfer permit. The needed permits were received by mid September. Due to having the most similar habitat, a decision was made to take the 100 mussels from the Bear River. Traveling to the largest mussel beds found on the Bear River, some of which involved quite a long walk, the group concentrated on proper collection, transport and relocation techniques in order to insure best survival for the collected mussels

The western pearlshells were carefully removed one by one from the substrate, noting their orientation and burial depth. All mussels were measured and weighed and a unique numbered tag was affixed to each valve of the shell. Photographs of each mussel were taken. Mussels were returned to a mesh bag in the river until all mussels that were to be taken from that particular bed were collected and processed. Mesh bags were placed in coolers filled with river water and transported back to the vehicle for the drive to the refuge. Placement considerations at the three target refuge streams included reduction of danger from siltation and utilizing stable sections of the streams, sometimes behind or along entrenched large woody debris and among tree roots to reduce the danger of high water, freshet events or debris dislodging mussels.

Marie, Russ and Bill are currently monitoring the mussels.

If you are interested in learning more about our freshwater mussel species in the Pacific Northwest and Western North America check out the following websites:

<http://www.fws.gov/columbiariver/musselwg.htm>

http://www.fws.gov/columbiariver/mwg/pdfdocs/Pacific_Northwest_Mussel_Guide.pdf

http://biology.usgs.gov/status_trends/Shaul12APRIL06.pdf



Make A Difference! Volunteer!

By Kristine Thompson

Volunteering adds to a sense of personal ownership in the Refuge System. And while that sense of ownership benefits the refuges and all the plants and animals that reside or migrate there, a personal connection with a refuge benefits volunteers too. Volunteers are awarded an Interagency Volunteer Pass after accruing 500 volunteer hours. This pass allows volunteers free entry to federal lands that charge fees, for one year. Volunteering is a wonderful opportunity to spread the word about the mission and importance of the Refuge. We always have projects that require a little extra help.

We anticipate staff and volunteer work parties to pull gorse and scotch broom at Leadbetter this spring. As we get interested individuals, we will set up dates and times.

Our 4th grade environmental education program is charging ahead. We have one more week in the classroom and the fieldtrip to Tarlatt Slough unit on May 21 and May 22. We are seeking volunteers for these two days in May. You may be assisting with the setup, moving students from one site to another, or providing instruction at a station!

Long Island is a wonderful place to visit. The old growth cedar forest, diverse wildlife, and variety of habitats make Long Island a magical place. The island is only accessible by boat and extremely tide dependant. Unfortunately, many trails are difficult to traverse due to down trees and overgrown vegetation. Campsites are also in need of attention. If you have interest working on Long Island this spring or Summer please contact me.

Occasionally, we put out a group email to those members who provided email addresses soliciting assistance on a variety of topics. If we do not have your email address and you would like to be notified on any volunteer projects, please contact me.

Kristine M. Thompson, Park Ranger
Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex
3888 SR 101
Ilwaco, WA 98624-9707
360-484-3482
360-484-3109 (fax)
kristine_thompson@fws.gov
<http://www.fws.gov/willapa/>

Volunteering Feels Good!



Presidents Letter

By Katherine Mack Driscoll

Welcome signs of Spring are appearing on the refuge and all around the region. The days are a little longer and warmer, the plants are budding and flowering, it's wet - producing the perfect energy that works like magic to attract countless birds and waterfowl to Willapa. The air is literally filled with the cacophony of bird sounds! This is a great time to visit the refuge to take notice and spend a little time enjoying this beautiful place. Remember the new artwork added to the Salmon Art Trail at the refuge headquarters, too, it is open Monday thru Friday and worth revisiting.

This is also the time of year the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge make plans to participate in seasonal festivals and markets, the 4th grade field trip, Ilwaco Saturday Market, scholarship, family and plant hikes and the Annual Hike & BBQ. Volunteer help is needed to make these activities a success. Please email or call the contacts mentioned in the Volunteer Opportunities section of the newsletter to participate.

Plans have also been made for myself and Amy Cook, Vice President, to attend the 2008 National Wildlife Refuge System "Friends for the Future" Conference in West Virginia, April 4 - 7. Our trip includes a visit to our elected officials on Capitol Hill to tell them about the continued need to support the refuge and to thank them for their past support of our six-year comprehensive *Spartina* eradication project on Willapa Bay. In addition, we will be extending invitations for them to come visit and see first hand the precious habitat that has been regained by so many of us working together.

Thank you for your participation and continued support of our efforts to preserve natural habitat.

Katherine Mack Driscoll, President



Willapa Tidings

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Suzy Whittey, Editor

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

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president@friendsofwillaparefuge.org

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www.friendsofwillaparefuge.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

President: Katherine Driscoll
Vice President: Amy Cook
Treasurer: Kelly Rupp
Secretary: Michael O'Meagher
Directory Membership: Bill Hutton
Director Publicity: Carole Wiegardt
Director at Large: Patty Wood

Calendar of Events

April 17 - Critter Talk - PUD Building - Long Beach, WA - 6 to 8 pm
 Contact: Amy Cook acook006@centurytel.net or 360-642-8968

May 3 - Willapa Bay Seafood Festival 9 am to 5 pm.
 Contact: Kelly Rupp kelly.rupp@leadtoresults.com

May 3 - Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival
 Contact: Amy Cook acook006@centurytel.net or 360-642-8968

Week of May 15th - 4th Grade Refuge Field Trip
 Contacts: Kristine Thompson at kristine_thompson@fws.gov or 360-484-3482
 Amy Cook acook006@centurytel.net or 360-642-8968

August - Annual BBQ & Hike
 Contact: Katherine Driscoll 360-783-2699 or
 kmack@lighthouseproperty.com



Board Meetings:

Tuesday – March 25th
 Ilwaco Heritage Museum 6 pm

Wednesday – April 23rd
 Refuge Headquarters 4:15 pm

Wednesday – May 28th
 Refuge Headquarters 4:15 pm

Have you visited our web sites lately?

Friends of Willapa NWR

<http://www.friendsofwillaparefuge.org/>

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

<http://www.fws.gov/willapa/WillapaNWR/>

Please Welcome New Members

Patron

Diane & Greg Stone

Family

Shawn Schmelzer

Individual

Ruth Walker
 Amy Greenhut
 Shirley Croddy
 Vicki Libby

Thank You!



Many Thanks to our Business Members for their Support

Autodesk, Inc
 Bailey's Café
 Bay Center Mariculture, Inc.
 Beachdog.Com. Inc
 Coast Seafoods Co.
 Cottage Bakery & Deli
 Depot Restaurant
 Ekone Oysters
 Green Angel Gardening
 Harmony Soapworks
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 Independent Books
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 Lighthouse Realty
 Northern Oyster Co.
 Okie's Sentry Market
 Port of Peninsula
 Sandridge Topsoil & Bark
 Seatow
 Shoalwater Restaurant
 Sid's Supermarket
 Taylor Shellfish Farms

Membership Form

- New Member
 Renewal

Invite a friend to Become a Member !

Make checks payable to: Friends of Willapa NWR

Send to: Friends of Willapa NWR
3888 State Route 101
Ilwaco, WA 98624-9707

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Yes! I want to receive Friends e-mail announcements.

My e-mail address is _____

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

Memberships

- Individual (\$10)
Family (\$15)
Patron (\$50)
Benefactor (\$100)
Sustaining (\$250)
Advocate (\$500)
or more



Scholarship Fund Donation

\$ _____

Other Donation
(Supports education Program)

\$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Volunteer Interests

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat Restoration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Recruitment | <input type="checkbox"/> Trail and campground maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Projects and Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Shorebird and waterfowl monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and amphibian monitoring |

Thank you for Your Membership and Support!