



Willapa Tidings

Newsletter of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge • Vol. 1, No. 4 • Summer 2001

Fourth Graders Make Refuge Fieldtrips

Wind, rain, dark clouds and mud failed to dampen enthusiasm as 150 fourth graders explored habitat and wildlife at the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge in early May.

Three classes from Hilltop School, one class from Naselle, and two classes from Olney participated. The day-long field trip was the culmination of this year's wildlife education program. It let students view habitats and wildlife discussed in classroom presentations by the Friends and Refuge staff in October,



Terri Butler, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge manager, discusses wildlife habitat with fourth grade students during a May fieldtrip.

salmon and cutthroat trout.

Students examined habitats of the various species of salamander native to this area. They were delighted when Refuge staff were able to locate Western redback, roughskin newt, and Dunn's salamanders. Amphibian identification books presented to the classes earlier in the year aided in identifying each species. The classes also released red-legged frog tadpoles back into their pond of origin after having watched them change from egg masses in the classroom.

Students located and quickly identified Pacific treefrogs and red-legged frogs at the Tarlatt Slough unit. Students also collected tadpoles with a dip net for close-up viewing. Tadpole

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Field Trip Comments

"I really loved the newts, frogs, birds, crawdads and tadpoles. I wish we could come out there again. Thanks." —Austin

"I got soaking wet but I have some good memories from that day. Thanks again." —Mariah

January, and March.

The day began at Refuge Headquarters with a review of the merits of fresh water

ponds, streams, and forested areas. The students observed stream restoration in progress, including the addition of oxbows and structures made of downed trees to slow the current in some areas and create deep pools in others.

The Refuge staff explained the function of a salmon egg incubator and reviewed the importance of clean water and gravel in the stream to provide salmon spawning beds. Students saw how trees were recently planted to provide shade so that the stream can again become a natural habitat for

Teal Slough Joins Willapa Refuge

Teal Slough, 338 acres of old growth and previously logged hillsides, became part of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge in early June. The new acquisition is significant because it has some of the last coastal old-growth forest in Washington. Its sixty acres of old growth forest include some trees measuring thirty-five feet in circumference and believed to be eight hundred years old.

Adjacent to Refuge Headquarters and

running along the east side of Highway 101, the parcel is easily accessible to visitors. Its addition to the Refuge will also enable continuous protected forest habitat to stretch from the Naselle River to Willapa Bay.

"Teal Slough will complement Long Island's old-growth forest beautifully," said Charlie Stenvall, Refuge project leader. "It moves us closer towards having some

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First Annual Membership Get-Together

Mark your calendars for the first annual membership meeting and picnic, to be held rain or shine:

Date: September 22, 2001

Time: 3:00 PM

Place: Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, Highway 101 across from Long Island.

We encourage all members and their families to attend. It should be a fun opportunity for everyone to get better acquainted.

Fourth Graders Enjoy Fieldtrip



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identification proved to be more difficult.

Except for a pair of red-tailed hawks which greeted the invasion of their territory with numerous calls of protest, identifying birds in the area also challenged the students' abilities.

Mud continued to be a constant companion but the students hardly seemed to notice as enthusiasm remained at a high level.

The Friends' year-long education program was funded by a grant provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's National Wildlife Refuge Support Group Grant Program in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge Association, and National Audubon Society.

Tom Kollasch, Refuge staff biologist, searches for salamanders as fourth grade students watch with anticipation.

Calendar of Activities July—August—September

Friends Activities

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

- Develop bird list for Tarlatt Slough Unit
- Monitor nest boxes
- Plan education program for 2001-2002 school year
- Monitor fall shorebird migration
- Maintain trails and campgrounds
- Board Meeting July 19, 2001, 7:00 PM, Naselle Library. All members welcome.
- Annual membership meeting & picnic, September 22, 2001, 3:00 PM, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters. All members and their families invited.

Welcome to New Members

Patron Memberships:

Oysterville Sea Farms (Dan & Katherine Driscoll), Elizabeth Zoesch, Miranda Wecker, Peter Heckes, Ann Chiller

Family Memberships:

Larry Warnberg & Sandy Bradley, Harvey & Irma Larkin, Chuck & Suzy Whittey

Individual Memberships:

Linda Holland

Refuge Staff Activities

The Refuge staff will be pursuing these projects:

- Mow spartina meadows
- Complete construction of parking lot and boat ramp at Headquarters
- Monitor snowy plovers
- Monitor marbled murrelet
- Install fish ladders at Lewis and Porter's Point Units
- Improve pasture at Riekkola Unit
- Enhance wetlands, all units
- Conduct frog malformation study



Terri Butler, Refuge manager, shows students a salamander captured at the fresh-water pond.

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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.

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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.

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Nest Box Report

Bluebirds were seen on Lone Fir Road in March but apparently have not stayed in the area to nest—at least none are nesting in the fifteen nest boxes presently installed on the Refuge. All boxes are occupied by tree swallows and violet-green swallows. Most boxes had eggs in the nest on May 27, and two boxes at Riekkola Unit and one box at Lewis Unit had young chicks recently hatched.

The swallows normally arrive several weeks after bluebirds migrate. Hence, the bluebirds will have the first chance to occupy the boxes again next year. Bluebirds have been brought back successfully by using nest boxes in the Yelm, Roy, and Fort Lewis areas of Washington in recent years. Hopefully it can also happen here.

The four wood duck boxes installed this year were invaded by European starlings. All birds (and their nests) are protected by law, except starlings and house sparrows. When the starlings were evicted and their nests destroyed, in one box abandoned wood duck eggs were discovered under the starling nest. Next year the wood duck boxes may have to be moved further out on the Refuge where there are fewer starlings.



Checking a nest box.

President's Letter

Nearly one hundred years ago, in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt created the first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island, Florida, to protect breeding colonies of brown pelicans. Roosevelt went on to set up fifty-two additional refuges during his administration. Each was designed to protect a particular wildlife species which otherwise would have become endangered or extinct. Through the years other refuges were added as the US population grew and habitat became critical. Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1937 to protect migratory birds, is now one of over 530 refuges that make up the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The mission of the Refuge System has remained relatively consistent over the years: to preserve lands and waters for the conservation of fish and wildlife for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Refuge System provides opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education and interpretation. However, such uses must be compatible and consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife management. In other words, wildlife comes first. These wildlife sanctuaries cannot be loved to death as some of our national parks have been—Yosemite and Yellowstone immediately come to mind. However, there are ample opportunities for recreational pursuits—all within the guidelines established by the US Fish and Wildlife

Service and each refuge manager. Recreation may be scheduled in selected areas while other areas will be restricted to avoid disturbance during migration and breeding season.

The Friends will assist with recreational activities when we can, consistent with Refuge goals and policies. During the next few months Friends will conduct interpretive walks at various sites on the Refuge. Since part of our mission is to enhance awareness of the Refuge, these nature walks will be made available to the general public. Local media will announce the schedule for these events. I encourage our members to participate in these walks. I would be especially happy to hear from any member who would like to assist in leading them.

The Friends' year-long wildlife education program for area fourth graders recently finished with a fieldtrip to the Refuge. It is my sincere hope that these fourth grade students have acquired through the year a greater appreciation for the natural world and the start of a life-long interest in and respect for wildlife.

It is with deep regret that I note the passing of Edmund "Swede" Johnson. He was a Friends member, a neighbor and a friend. He will be remembered most for his constant good humor and dedication to his fellow man. The community was his family. He will be missed by everyone.

—Rudy Schuver,
President



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 | | |

Trails at Leadbetter Drier This Year

Preserved in its natural state by both the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge and Washington State Parks, Leadbetter Point is unique with its shifting dunes, grasslands, ponds, marshes and lowland/wetland forests. The Refuge itself offers a 1.8-mile trail north and west to the ocean beach and a 1.1-mile interpretive loop. While the area is open all year, visitors will find flooded trails most winters. The 2000-2001 winter was unusually dry, but midwinter flooding can be knee-deep and occasionally waist-deep. Attempting to bypass wet areas damages the environment and inevitably proves fruitless because there simply is no dry route to the ocean beach during winter rains. But most of the year, the trails offer fine opportunities for viewing shorebirds and the pleasing vistas of Willapa Bay.

ATVs, horses, and bikes are not permitted on the trails. The best birdwatching is during the fall (September-October) and spring (April-May) migrations. The north parking lot used jointly by State Parks and the Refuge has recently been enlarged and resurfaced to

provide additional parking spaces, including spaces for recreational vehicles.

The trails at Leadbetter are maintained by volunteers. Board of Directors member Lee Lowenson has for several years single-handedly maintained these trails as well as the State Parks trails. He has been forced to discontinue his efforts at the Leadbetter Point Unit due to other pressing commitments. His trail maintenance and sign-making skills have made a valuable contribution to the Refuge and the community.

Any members interested in assisting with seasonal trail maintenance may call the Volunteer Committee chairman, Larry Scott, at 503-325-5611 or the president, Rudy Schuver, at 360-665-6859.



Old growth in Teal Slough area.

Refuge Expands by 428 Acres

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meaningful habitat for marbled murrelets and other old-growth-dependent species."

"Teal Slough is an important contribution to a beautiful and biologically rich corner of the state," said Curt Soper of the Nature Conservancy. "With only one percent of the old-growth forest still standing in Southwest Washington, it's critical that remnants such as Teal Slough be protected."

Many individuals and groups worked to have Teal Slough added to the Refuge. Rex Ziak of Naselle began his campaign to save the old-growth area many years ago.

Among others who have played major roles in bringing the area under the protection of the Willapa Refuge are The Nature Conservancy, who purchased the land, Hancock Timber Resource Group of

Boston, who agreed to sell the land, Microsoft billionaire Paul Allen, whose Paul G. Allen Forest Protection Foundation provided a \$5 million challenge grant, and US Senator Patty Murray, US Representative Brian Baird, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and the Makah Tribe.

In addition, ninety acres located at the junction of US Highway 101 and Bear River known as the "Elk Viewing Area" has also been added to the Refuge. Like Teal Slough, the parcel was purchased by the Nature Conservancy and sold to the US Fish and Wildlife Service as funds became available.

Web Sites about Teal Slough

- "Nature Conservancy Purchases Old Growth from Hancock Timber":
<http://www.htrg.com/w_n/news/1999/05-05.shtml>
- "A Stranger in My Own Home Town: The Fight to Save Teal Slough":
<http://arts.envirolink.org/arts_and_activism/RexZiak.html>

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