

United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex
BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 23, 2008
INFORMATION: Maggie Briggs 410-228-2677

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge Holds Workshop

On August 2, 2008, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge is conducting a workshop to bring everyone to update on what's happening at the Refuge. Beginning at 8:30 am with bagels, muffins, juice, and coffee, staff program managers, through power point programs, talks, and various media, tell what has happened in their programs this past year and what is planned for the coming year. Learn what changes are taking place in staff and management programs for the Blackwater and the Complex, what biological programs and surveys are taking place, and how you might help with improving habitat for wildlife. Find out about prescribed burns and the fire program, what kind of maintenance projects there is to do, and how you can assist law enforcement.

If you like people, helping others, educating kids, working in a library, designing artwork, wood working, puppet shows, gardening, birding, fishing, trail walks, and public events, all while learning about wildlife, then there is a project or activity for you that will also help the refuge. Volunteering can be fun, satisfying, and a way of meeting new friends with similar interests. Meet the staff and other Volunteers. A free lunch will be served at noon, compliments of the Friends of Blackwater. Since it is necessary to know how much food to prepare, it is necessary to register for the workshop by calling 410-228-2677 between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm weekdays and 9:00 am to 4:00 pm weekends. If you can't come for the whole day, ending at 4:00 pm, come for as long as you can. The schedule is as follows.:

8:30 am - Bagels, Muffins, Coffee, etc.
8:40 am- 8:45 am - Introductions -Maggie Briggs
8:45 am - 9:00 am - Friends of Blackwater President - Marty O'Connor
9:00 am - 10:00 am - Refuge Manager - Suzanne Baird
10:0 am -10:15 am - break
10:15 am -11:15 am - Biological Program - Dixie Birch
11:15 am - 12:00 am - Law Enforcement and Maintenance - Pat DiDomizio
12:00 noon - 12:45 pm -Lunch courtesy of Friends of Blackwater
12:45 pm - 1:45 pm - Fire Program - Bill Giese
1:45 pm - 2:00 pm - break
2:00 pm - 2:30 pm - Tourism Update - County Tourism
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm - Public Use Program - Maggie Briggs
A New Volunteer training will be held in the Visitor Center conference room on Thursday, August 7,

2008 from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. This training will be to introduce new Volunteers to the Volunteer Program, what is expected of Volunteers, what Volunteers can expect of the Refuge, and what are the policies and procedures. We especially need Volunteers who will help with staffing the information desk, Friends of Blackwater Eagle's Nest Bookstore, our new research library, and environmental education programs. What ever activity you want to help with, information and training will be provided.

The main requisite to being a Volunteer at the information desk is to enjoy meeting and talking with people, be willing to assist visitors, and know how to smile! The Visitor Center is open every day except Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Volunteers staffing the Visitor Center will normally work an 8:00am to 12:00pm or a 12:00pm to 4:00pm shift during the weekdays; but we especially need weekend Volunteers who would work a 9:00am to 1:00pm or 1:00pm to 5:00pm shift on weekends. You can work as many shifts as you want from one 4 hour shift to all day, once a month, once a week, or more often. We are aiming for two people for every shift. Volunteers have fun assisting people from all over the world while learning first hand about Blackwater's numerous and fascinating wildlife. If you are interested in wildlife, like people, and enjoy learning as well as helping to educate other people about wildlife and Dorchester County, this is the job for you!!

The research library is presently open by appointment until we have more Volunteers to staff the library at least once or twice a week. You can enjoy the many birding and natural history books while helping others who come to use them as well.

Our education programs are presently for getting our 4th and 6th grade Dorchester County students out into nature. The programs are led by teachers with the help of Volunteers. All Volunteers will be trained at an educational workshop to assist the teachers.

Volunteers will also be provided a chance to see the refuge, especially many of the areas that the public normally do not see. This tour will be given on August 25, 2008 starting at 9:00 am at the Visitor Center. You will need to bring a lunch and drink, binoculars, snacks, and camera. We see something different each year. The tour will probably last until approximately 4:00 pm.

Other types of activities the Refuge needs help with include: painting, fence building, mowing grass, constructing hiking trails, janitorial cleaning, invasive species mapping, frog surveys, shore bird surveys, breeding bird surveys, blue bird box surveys, plant identification, planting trees and marsh grass, bird box repair, filing and answering phones, computer data base entry, numbering, cataloging, and organizing library books, and tour guides for bus tours, trail walks, and Visitor Center tours. Training will be provided when necessary, but some of these positions require some background knowledge of the subject.

If you are interested in Volunteering, please call Maggie Briggs at 410-901-6124 to find out more about the positions and the Volunteer training. If you want to attend the Workshop on August 2, please call 410-228-2677 and sign up for the workshop.