



# Shoreline

## Celebrate Wildlife Refuges

National Wildlife Refuge Week is celebrated nationwide to help connect people with nature at the country's National Wildlife Refuges. Join the celebration of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Wildlife Refuge Week on October 8-14.



Established in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt designated three-acre Pelican Island in Florida as the nation's first wildlife refuge, the National Wildlife Refuge System, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, today protects more than 97 million acres, including 545 National Wildlife Refuges and more than 3,000 waterfowl production areas.



Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), like many other refuges, falls along one of the four North American bird flyways and is an important resting spot for birds to feed, breed, and recharge as they migrate to and from northern

nesting grounds and southern wintering grounds. Flyways are like highways in the sky for migrating birds.

Migrating ducks, geese, and songbirds use both lake and island sectors of Deer Flat NWR. "Deer Flat provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife throughout the year," according to Todd Fenzl, Deputy Refuge Manager, "but the most impressive display of wildlife occurs in fall and early winter when the geese and ducks arrive."

Canada goose populations on the refuge peak in mid-November with as many as 15,000 geese. Duck populations don't peak until mid-December, but then top out at up to 150,000 ducks. "It's quite a sight to see!" said Fenzl. The best time to see the geese and ducks is at dawn or dusk when large flocks travel between the lake and feeding sites.

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*"One of our most pressing challenges in society today is to teach our children, kids growing up in a digital age, that there is a world of nature beyond the computer and television screen. National Wildlife Refuges are some of the greatest places to learn the lessons of nature, and National Wildlife Refuge Week is the perfect time to start."*

*U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Director H. Dale Hall*



Endangered black-footed ferrets have been re-introduced at Charles M. Russell NWR in Montana.

“National Wildlife Refuges are America’s promise to its citizens that there will always be places where



Caribou at Arctic NWR in Alaska

wildlife and wildlife habitats can thrive,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director H. Dale Hall. “Just as important, the Refuge System

offers some of the finest outdoor recreation in the country.”

More than 40 million people visit National Wildlife Refuges each year for close-to-home wildlife-dependent recreation that is second to none.

Visitors to Deer Flat NWR can participate in environmental education programs, go hunting or fishing, or simply enjoy the splendors of nature while

watching or photographing wildlife.

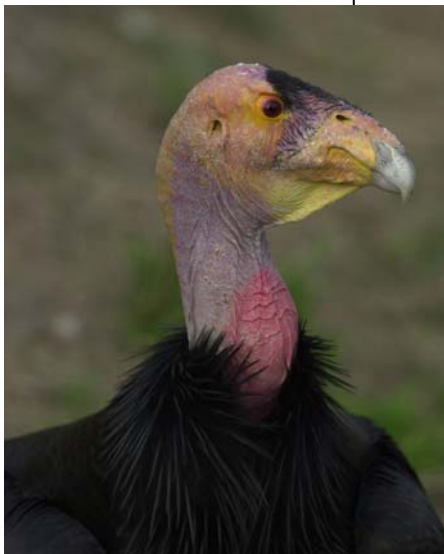


If you’re hoping to travel farther afield, you might visit Kootenai NWR in northern Idaho, one of the four refuges in southeast Idaho, or Malheur NWR in eastern Oregon.

“Our National Wildlife Refuges are among our nation’s most treasured places,” said National Wildlife Refuge System Chief Geoffrey L. Haskett. “There is at least one national wildlife refuge in every state. In many communities, there is a wildlife refuge less than an hour’s drive from your front door. National Wildlife Refuge Week is a great time for families to find a national wildlife refuge,

and the fun they can have together.”

*Find out about visiting the many Pacific Northwest refuges at <http://www.fws.gov/pacific>*



Endangered California condors have been re-introduced at National Wildlife Refuges. Some are raised in captivity in Boise at the World Center for Birds of Prey.



Visitors to Grays Lake NWR in southeast Idaho can see Sandhill Cranes.

# Frogs and Much More

Frog catcher. Plant surveyor. Researcher. Writer. Editor. These were just some of the many hats worn this summer by refuge intern Ashley Smithers.

She worked primarily on the Abnormal Amphibian Survey, a nationwide study in its second year at Deer Flat. To survey for deformed amphibians, Ashley set minnow traps and collected

American bullfrog tadpoles and frogs throughout the summer from the Upper Dam marsh and the marsh near Tio Lane.

"I checked the frog's eyes to make sure both were there and the correct size, I checked the body for any skin webbing or extra or missing limbs or toes. Then I looked at its mouth to see if it was developed." Fortunately, Ashley found no deformities in her surveys.

Ashley also jumped in to help on other refuge projects. She filled in as Youth Conservation Corps leader when needed. She edited a variety of refuge reports. And she researched and co-wrote interpretive signs for the Visitor Center about bird banding, about the natural history of mounted specimens, and

about bird song.

She also helped assess plant diversity to determine

how well native plants are taking hold after rehabilitation of the 2003 burn near the Visitor Center.

Surveys found that ground cover is sufficient to allay earlier concerns about erosion. Also, several of the native grass species have become sufficiently well-established that even when cheatgrass invades from surrounding areas, the natives should be able to

compete.

Ashley is a biology major and environmental studies and Spanish minor at Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington, but is a Caldwell native. She chose to spend the summer at Deer Flat to help her decide whether she wants to pursue a career in field biology.

Ashley left in late August for her junior year at Whitworth. Refuge staff appreciated her enthusiasm and willingness to help with a variety of projects!



Ashley surveying plants in the 2003 burn.

*"I learned many valuable things this summer. I'm very happy I got to spend the summer working at the refuge."*

*Ashley Smithers,  
Summer Intern*



Bullfrog tadpole caught in this summer's amphibian study.

# Fire burns habitat near Gotts Point

*"While we lost a lot of sagebrush, we are very hopeful that we will be able to establish a healthier, more diverse population of native vegetation."*

*Elaine Johnson*

*Refuge Manager*

The second fire of the season near Gotts Point burned 96 acres of wildlife habitat and also threatened the homes of refuge neighbors, burning 19 acres of neighboring lands.

The fire is thought to have been caused by multiple lightning strikes. It was fueled by dry cheatgrass and spread quickly through the sagebrush grassland.



It's difficult to bring back the sagebrush because it cannot compete against cheatgrass and other exotic annual grasses for water and soil nutrients.

Cheatgrass takes root more quickly than native plants after a fire, which means that a

burned area can turn into a solid field of cheatgrass that increases future risk of fire and reduces the value of the habitat to wildlife.

To prevent that, the refuge is currently planning rehabilitation efforts. Plans include spraying herbicides to kill cheatgrass seeds and then planting a mix of native grasses and shrubs. Also, volunteers may be needed to help re-plant trees in the riparian area.

Unfortunately, this fire burned some of the best remaining sagebrush habitat at the refuge, and "sagebrush doesn't survive a hot fire," according to

Elaine Johnson, Refuge Manager. The fire was sufficiently hot to burn some of the riparian forest as well.

Sagebrush grasslands at Lake Lowell provide food and cover to many wildlife species, including mule deer, rabbits, foxes, coyotes, red-tailed hawks, and American kestrels.





## Thanks, Refuge Volunteers!

Refuge volunteers recently gathered for the annual Volunteer Recognition Event, enjoying a potluck lunch before venturing out on the lake for a boat tour to the New York Canal.

Whether they work only one or two hours or

hundreds or thousands

of hours in a year, refuge volunteers are a vital link in fulfilling the refuge mission.



Volunteers at recent recognition lunch.

This year, volunteers helped with a wide variety of projects, including staffing the Visitor Center, collecting litter, pulling

weeds, surveying biodiversity, helping with special events, surveying goose nests, educating visitors, and

much, much more!

A big thanks from refuge wildlife and staff to all our dedicated volunteers!

### *Volunteers by the numbers*

*(Sept 2005-October 2006)*

*Number of volunteers: 326*

*Number of hours: 3590*

*Most hours: 1722*

*Most hours by*

*new volunteer: 75.5*

## Refuge Volunteer Wins National Award

Volunteer Lauren Giebler recently received a national Take Pride in America award from Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne at a Washington D.C. ceremony.

Lauren volunteered over 3400 hours and left her mark on the refuge in many ways.

She expanded and improved the environmental education program, more than doubling participation in refuge programs.

She also undertook a number of other projects,

including starting a refuge newsletter, helping form Friends of Deer Flat, building a wildlife viewing platform, and organizing Idaho's first BioBlitz.

As Secretary Kempthorne told her at the ceremony, Lauren "you do Idaho proud!"



Lauren (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) after the D.C. awards ceremony with (from left) Susan Kain, Janet Giebler, and Elaine Johnson.

# Youth Conservation Corps

*"This year in YCC I learned about why the refuge is important in conserving the environment for future generations...and about how to dig a proper hole and pour cement!"*

*Observations of a 2006 YCC member*

If you saw a hard-working group of teens at the refuge this summer, then you probably saw the 2006 Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). Each summer, Deer Flat recruits a crew of 5 teens, from 15 to 18 years old, to help protect Deer Flat's wildlife habitat.

This year's crew helped with projects from fence repair and facilities maintenance to removing invasive weeds, from fixing nesting platforms to picking up litter.

"I was impressed with the

leadership skills shown by the crew and their level of cooperation in getting the job done, whatever the task," said

Elaine Johnson, Refuge Manager.

The YCC program combines work experience with conservation education. This year's crew visited the World Center for Birds of Prey, the Hagerman National Fish Hatchery, and Celebration Park to learn more about endangered species, the life cycles of native

fish, and the geology and Native American history of southwest Idaho.



YCC crew members learn to throw atlatls at Celebration Park

**Care about wildlife? Concerned about the refuge?  
Then consider becoming a refuge volunteer!**

The refuge needs  
**YOU...**

your talents, your enthusiasm, and some of your time,  
to help fill the following positions:

Visitor Services Assistant  
Biological Assistant  
Office Assistant  
Recreational Survey Assistant

Education Assistant  
Landscaping Assistant  
Litter Collector  
Refuge Friends Group Member

For a volunteer application, stop by the Visitor Center or  
Visit the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/currvol.htm>



# Litter Lift!

**Who:** You & your family and friends!

**What:** Help collect litter at the refuge.  
Bring gloves  
Bags & breakfast provided  
Wear clothes you can get dirty.

**Where:** Refuge Visitor Center

**When:** 9 AM – Noon  
Saturday, September 30

**Why:** Litter's not for Critters!



*Remember: Litter's Not for Critters!*

Local wildlife needs you. Become a

# **WEED WARRIOR!**



**Who:** You? Help wildlife and spend time outside.

**What:** Remove invasive weeds to improve wildlife habitat at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

**When:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month, 9 A.M. - 11 A.M.

**Where:** Meet at the refuge Visitor Center with gloves, water, and a shovel.

# Friends' Focus



**Recent Programs:** In July, Al Larson, AKA "Mr Bluebird," talked about area birds and plants. In August, departing refuge AmeriCorps volunteer Lauren Giebler told of her activities during two years of service. In September, Deputy Refuge Manager Todd Fenzl answered many questions about the history and management of Deer Flat.

**Action Alert:** The Action Alert committee came up with guidelines about when to oppose development near the refuge. They testified three times before the County Planning & Zoning commission following those Board-approved guidelines. Both proposals they opposed were defeated. Thanks for their efforts!

**Grant Proposal:** We submitted a proposal for a Friends start-up grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. We requested funds for 1) equipment to produce newsletters, brochures, and outreach presentations; 2) supplies for special events; and 3) supplies to start up a small bookstore at the refuge visitor center. Many thanks to Jon Minkoff and Al McGlinsky for their many hours of research and writing. Let's keep our fingers crossed that we are awarded this \$5,000 grant.

**Volunteer Activities:** Friends are participating in a variety of volunteer activities at the refuge. The group recently adopted the Iowa Curves, near the Upper Dam, agreeing to keep the area clear of litter. The first Friends' clean-up will be on September 30 from 9-12. Call Amy Ulappa, 467-9278, for more information or to sign up. Other volunteers have helped with Weed Warriors, keeping the Visitor Center open on Saturdays, and helping in the refuge office.

## *Upcoming Events:*

**Saturday, Sept. 16**  
*Caldwell Indian Creek Festival.* Visit the Friends booth.

**Saturday, Sept. 30**  
*Ride and Roam for the Refuge.* 8 AM. Bike or hike to show your support for the refuge.

*Refuge Helpers.* 9 AM. Help clean up the Friends-adopted Iowa Curves.

**Tuesday, Oct. 3**  
*General meeting.* 7 PM. A panel of County Planners will discuss how they see the future of the Refuge.

**Tuesday, Nov. 7**  
General meeting. 7 PM.  
Topic TBA

**Tuesday, Dec. 5**  
General meeting. 7 PM.  
Topic TBA

*Mission Statement: "to promote, protect, and provide resources to preserve and enhance Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge for the enjoyment of present and future generations."*

Interested in becoming a member, joining a committee or receiving the new Friends newsletter? Then call the McGlinskys at 465-0404.



# Fall Activity Schedule

## September

### Saturday, Sept. 30

Roam & Ride for the Refuge  
8 A.M., Visitor Center

### Litter Lift

9 A.M., Visitor Center

## October

### Tuesday, Oct. 3

Reading at the Refuge  
10 A.M., Visitor Center

### Friends Group Meeting

7 P.M., Visitor Center

### Wednesday, Oct. 4

Reading at the Refuge  
2 P.M., Visitor Center

### Week of Oct. 8

Celebrate National Wildlife  
Refuge Week!

### Tuesday, Oct. 17

Reading at the Refuge  
10 A.M., Visitor Center

### Wednesday, Oct. 18

Reading at the Refuge  
2 P.M., Visitor Center

### Saturday, October 21

#### Weed Warriors

9 A.M., Visitor Center

## November

### Wednesday, Nov. 1

Reading at the Refuge  
2 P.M., Visitor Center

### Tuesday, Nov. 7

Reading at the Refuge  
10 A.M., Visitor Center

### Tuesday, Nov. 14

Friends Group Meeting  
7 P.M., Visitor Center

### Wednesday, Nov. 15

Reading at the Refuge  
2 P.M., Visitor Center

### Tuesday, Nov. 21

Reading at the Refuge  
10 A.M., Visitor Center

### Saturday, November 18

#### Weed Warriors

9 A.M., Visitor Center

## December

### Tuesday, Dec. 5

Reading at the Refuge  
10 A.M., Visitor Center

### Friends Group Meeting

7 P.M., Visitor Center

### Wednesday, Dec. 6

Reading at the Refuge  
2 P.M., Visitor Center

### Tuesday, Oct. 17

Reading at the Refuge  
10 A.M., Visitor Center

### Wednesday, Oct. 18

Reading at the Refuge  
2 P.M., Visitor Center

## Ride & Roam for the Refuge

### September 30<sup>th</sup>

8 AM

Bike 30 miles around  
Lake Lowell

9 AM

Run or walk at Lake  
Lowell

10:30 AM

Gather to celebrate the  
refuge and rally for safe  
paths in Canyon County.

# Environmental Education

## *PASS IT ON!*

*Do you know someone who might be interested in a FREE, fun environmental education program? Then please pass on a copy of Shoreline or help them contact us at the refuge. Thank you for helping us spread the word about our programs!*

**All programs and field trips are free!!**

*For more information about other Environmental Education opportunities, including Service Learning and Community Programs, please contact the refuge at (208) 467-9278 or [deerflat@fws.gov](mailto:deerflat@fws.gov).*

## Classroom Programs

Bring the refuge to your classroom! Refuge staff will visit your school to present a standards-based, interactive environmental education program. Choose from the programs listed below or request one tailored to meet your needs!

- Alien Invaders
- Animal Camouflage
- Animal Toolkits
- Bird Beaks
- Ecosystems Alive
- FISH!
- Highways in the Sky
- Touch Trunk
- Wetlands' Wonders
- What Did the Owl Eat?



## Field Trips

Visit Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge at Lake Lowell for a standards-based environmental education activity or hands-on exploration of sagebrush upland, riparian, and lake habitats!

**One Class?** Schedule a hike on the Nature Trail and/or an environmental education activity. All visits include time in the Visitor Center and a brief orientation to the refuge.

**More Than One Class?** Large groups will be split into smaller groups and rotated through 3 or 4 stations. Stations include the visitor center, nature trail, and one or more outdoor environmental education activities. Each station lasts approximately 20-25 minutes. The Visitor Center station includes an 11-minute refuge orientation video.

## Want to know more?

Visit the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/education.htm> for more information, including a calendar of refuge availability, details about classroom programs and field trip FAQ's.

**Schedule a classroom program or field trip!**

**Phone:** (208) 467-9278 **Fax:** (208) 467-1019

**E-mail:** [deerflat@fws.gov](mailto:deerflat@fws.gov)