

Shoreline

Bald Eagles Nesting at the Refuge

Two pairs of bald eagles have again set up housekeeping at the refuge. Fortunately for wildlife-watchers, one pair is nesting along the north shore of Lake Lowell near the refuge

Visitor Center. The same nest was used for the first time last year.

To help the eagles successfully raise their family, the area near the nest has been closed to all entry and will remain closed until the chicks leave the nest, probably in early July.

Bald eagles can be sensitive to disturbance, especially while nesting. Adults will sometimes abandon nests if frequently bothered. Even if they keep nesting, the eagles may leave when people come near. Such disturbance may increase the possibility of chicks dying from exposure or hunger if left alone too long or too often.

"Unfortunately, there was no evidence that any chicks hatched from this nest last year," said Todd Fenzl, Deputy

Refuge Manager. "We ask the public to respect this closed area to increase the likelihood that the eagles succeed in raising young this year."

The closed area is clearly marked with signs, and the closed section of the path is blocked with a temporary marker. Visitors caught within the closed area can be fined up to \$100 per violation.

Although the area near the nest is closed, visitors are still invited to view the eagles.

Refuge staff have marked the best nest-viewing spot with a flagged stake. It can be reached by walking about 3/4 miles west of the Visitor Center along the gravel path. The nest can also be seen from the disabled-accessible observation platform that is just up the hill from the marked location. Although eagles and their nests are very large and can be seen with the naked eye from a considerable distance, visitors should bring binoculars or a spotting scope for the best views.



Spring 2007 Volume 3 No 1

"It was exciting to see the eagles return to last year's new nest. One adult was sitting on the nest and another was perched nearby."

*Todd Fenzl
Deputy Refuge Manager*



Bald eaglets in a nest at Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

Gotts Point to be Closed to Vehicles

Refuge regulars know that the gate to Gotts Point is usually open for vehicle traffic between April 15 and September 30. This year, the gate will remain closed, but the area will still be open to the public.

This popular recreation area is fairly isolated and has seen increased vandalism, littering, and other unlawful activities. The gravel road is also deteriorating due to misuse. Last summer, the area was closed early because vandals caused over a thousand dollars in damage to the outhouse.

According to Elaine Johnson, Refuge Manager, "The refuge has only one part-time law-enforcement officer and one maintenance person

to cover nearly 11,500 acres in two states and six counties. With our increasingly-limited operating budget, we can no longer ensure visitor and staff safety at Gotts Point, or afford to repair and maintain the infrastructure."

The closure may also help reduce wildfires. There have been several human-caused fires at Gotts Point in recent years. Since 2003, refuge fires have burned nearly 250 acres of sagebrush uplands, nearly a third of the total refuge upland habitat.

The refuge hopes to install a parking area at the entrance to Gotts Point in the future, but it will depend on the availability of funds.



Trash dumped at Gotts Point.



August 2006 damage to the Gotts Point outhouse.



One of several areas that burned at Gotts Point in August 2005.



Damage from illegal off-road driving at Gotts Point.



Spray-paint damage to Gotts Point signs.

Wild About Lectures!

The refuge kicked off its Wild about Life monthly lecture series in January with a standing-room only crowd to learn about Idaho's wintering raptors. The first three lectures attracted over 200 community

members. In February, attendees learned about wolf ecology and management, and in March about xeriscape landscaping. Thanks to our lecturers Barbara Forderhase, Michael Lucid, and Susan Bell.

"I think people are delighted to have such an interesting and informative series closer to home than Boise."



Copper, a short-eared owl, was a featured guest at the first Wild About Life lecture.



Participants learned about drought-tolerant landscaping in March.

*Wild About Life
Lecture Series
participant*

**Care about wildlife?
Concerned about the refuge?**

Then find your niche as a refuge volunteer!

The refuge needs your skills and enthusiasm to:

Staff the Visitor Center	Remove invasive weeds
Help with wildlife surveys	Help educate visitors
Count refuge visitors	Help with special events
Survey plants	Collect litter

Interested in volunteering?

Mark your calendar for the next
volunteer orientation (July 11 at 7 PM).

To start earlier, call 467-9278, e-mail deerflat@fws.gov, or
visit <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/currvol.htm>

Local wildlife needs *you*. Become a
WEED WARRIOR!



- Who:** You and your friends & family!
- What:** Remove invasive weeds to improve wildlife habitat. Help wildlife and have fun outside.
- When:** 3rd Saturday of month between March and October, 9 AM–11 PM
- Where:** Meet at the refuge Visitor Center with gloves, water, and a shovel.

Re-seeding Native Plants

Rehabilitation efforts have continued at the burned area near Gotts Point. A lightning-caused fire in August burned nearly 100 acres of sagebrush and some riparian vegetation along the edge of the lake.

In January, local contractors seeded the area with native shrubs and grasses, and straw bales were placed in some of the drainages to reduce erosion from the denuded hillsides.

The fire also damaged wooden posts on the boundary fence. In April, that fence will be replaced with wildlife-friendly fencing

in which the lower wire is high-enough to allow wildlife passage.



A rangeland drill planting native vegetation.

To allow the plants to become established, the rehabilitated area will be closed to the public for several years. Non-burned areas are still open for recreational activities.

“We’re very hopeful that the seeding will be successful. The seeds were planted just in time to take advantage of some precipitation and warm temperatures.”

*Elaine Johnson
Refuge Manager*



Straw bales within the burn will minimize water pollution from erosion.

Bookstore to open in April

Looking for a gift for a wildlife-lover? Then stop in at the refuge visitor center! The Grebe's Nest, a bookstore operated by the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge, will open for business in early April.

The bookstore will have a small inventory to start, including Audubon plush singing birds; local field guides, pocket guides, and other wildlife-related books; as well as bookmarks and pencils. Proceeds from bookstore sales will support educational efforts and refuge-enhancement projects.

Limited start-up funds were provided by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The limited budget will stretch farther thanks to contributions and

volunteer help. Cathy Eells and her all-volunteer bookstore committee have put in many hours planning the store and painting the store alcove. Ducks Unlimited Regional Director Steve Hall donated books. Friends members Jim and Kathy Iverson donated an armoire for displaying bookstore merchandise.

The refuge Visitor Center is open 8 to 4 weekdays and 10 to 4 Saturdays.

Why not plan a visit!



Some of the items to be sold at The Grebe's Nest.

Please keep your dogs leashed!

Planning a spring refuge hike? Don't forget the leashes!

Top ten reasons to leash your dogs:

- 10) Protect your dog from injury by wildlife.
- 9) Your dog won't scare other visitors.
- 8) Protect ground-nesting birds and mammals.
- 7) Protect your dog from injury by litter and thorny plants.
- 6) Allow wildlife-watching visitors to see more wildlife.
- 5) Reduce stress on wildlife. Even long after a dog has left an area, its scent may stress wildlife.
- 4) Protect wildlife by preventing waste of their already-limited energy reserves.
- 3) Protect wildlife from diseases and parasites spread through dog feces.
- 2) Obey the law and avoid a fine of up to \$100 per violation.
- 1) Your dog can wear fashionable leashes and collars!



Thanks!

Come BioBlitz With Us!

"Volunteers make the BioBlitz happen, so we hope to recruit many! Anyone interested in volunteering can call 467-9278 or e-mail amy_ulappa@fws.gov"

Amy Ulappa

Mark June 8-9 on your calendars for BioBlitz 2007! From 3 P.M. Friday June 8th through 3 P.M. Saturday June 9th, local scientists and naturalists will comb the refuge to document birds, fish, mammals, reptiles, insects, plants, fungi, and more in this 24-hour rapid survey of biological diversity.

The public is invited to participate by attending the

BioBlitz Festival from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. on Saturday June 9th. This free event will include guided boat trips to net fish, a small mammal trapping demonstration, insect collecting expeditions, native plant and bird walks, and more. Visitors can also learn to identify

insects at the Bug Tent, learn about Idaho's animals and plants at interactive booths from local organizations, and participate in kids' crafts and activities.

Want to get more involved? Volunteers are needed to conduct surveys, do public



Two of the many volunteers, naturalists, and scientists who documented refuge diversity at BioBlitz 2006.



Learning about live fish at BioBlitz 2006.

demonstrations and guided walks, staff their organization's booth at the festival, take photos, staff the bug tent, help with the festival, and more.

Bucks for Biodiversity

Support refuge educational programs like BioBlitz, day camps, and refuge field trips!

Pledge a donation for each species found during BioBlitz 2007.



For pledge form:

467-9278, amy_ulappa@fws.gov, or www.fws.gov/deerflat/currevents.htm#bb

Summer Jobs for Teens

Teens who are willing to work hard and enjoy working outdoors can apply to work at the refuge this summer in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program. The YCC works on projects ranging from weekly litter collection to noxious weed removal and repairing goose nesting platforms to fixing fence.

Having fun is also part of the program. The crew usually takes a trip to Celebration Park or the World Center for Birds of Prey. A hot work day on the river may be punctuated by a short swim or water fight. Even litter pickup can be fun, with stiff competition in the annual Diaper Derby.

Applicants must be available to work from June 11 through August 3, working forty hours each week from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Participants earn \$5.15

per hour, the Federal minimum wage. They will need to supply their own transportation to and from the refuge.

Teens interested in applying should call 467-9278 or stop by the refuge Visitor Center to pick up an application. Applicants must be at least 15 years old and cannot reach 19 years old before August 3, 2007.

Participants must be in good health and have no history of serious disciplinary problems or criminal behavior. Those who have participated in the Deer Flat YCC program in the past are not eligible to apply. Applications are due May 4. Crew members will be randomly selected from all valid applications.

"Without the help of the YCC, many refuge conservation projects would go uncompleted."

*Todd Fenzl
Deputy Refuge Manager*



A refuge YCC crew installing a regulation sign.

Earth Day Litter Lift

Who: You and your friends & family
What: Remove litter from the refuge...
litter's not for critters!
When: Saturday, April 21
9 AM - Noon
Where: Refuge Visitor Center

- Bring gloves and water.
- Wear clothes you can get dirty.
- Bags & snacks provided.



Come join in the fun!

Winter Day Camp Scrapbook

The refuge's first winter day camp was held December 28-29 for 24 second- and third-graders who learned about winter survival strategies.



REGISTER NOW FOR SUMMER DAY CAMP!

Desert Detectives Critter Camp

June 18-24

9 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

Kids entering grades 2 & 3 in fall

Biodiversity Basics Day Camp

June 25-29

9 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

Kids entering grades 4 & 5 in fall

Both camps are free!

Register now. Space is limited and registration is first-come, first-served.
Return form to Deer Flat, 13751 Upper Embankment Road, Nampa, ID 83686

Child's name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Grade child is entering in fall: _____

Age: _____

Registering for (circle one): Desert Detectives
(6/18-24)

Biodiversity Basics
(6/25-6/29)

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____



Jack of all Refuge Trades

Steve Kehoe is a relatively-new refuge volunteer, but he's accomplished a lot in a short period of time! Since first volunteering in August 2006, Steve has contributed well over 300 hours to the refuge!

He is mostly busy gathering data at the many refuge access points about the number of visitors and their activities. But Steve is truly a Jack of all refuge trades. He has participated in Weed Warriors, picked up litter, staffed the Visitor Center on Saturdays, helped organize the refuge shop, helped maintain wood duck nesting boxes, and been

the refuge's on-the-ground eyes and ears. Later this spring, he is looking forward to helping with goose nesting surveys on the refuge islands.

Steve started volunteering at the refuge when he recently moved from Ada to Canyon County and was looking for volunteer activities closer to his new home. He likes volunteering at the refuge "because I am able to work outside and feel satisfied that I'm doing something good for wildlife and for refuge visitors. I also very much enjoy meeting and talking with refuge visitors and other refuge volunteers."

New Volunteer Award

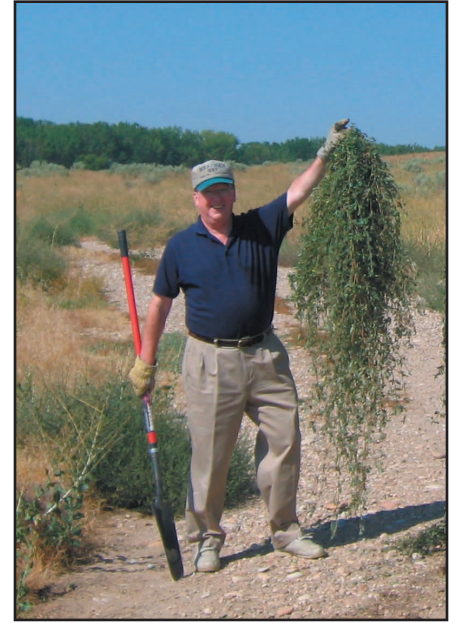
Refuge volunteers can now earn an Interagency Volunteer Pass, which provides the pass holder and several traveling companions free entry to federal lands for a year. Volunteers who work 500 hours after January 1, 2007 earn the pass.

This new pass is one of several that are part of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass Program that began in January. The new Interagency Annual pass costs \$80, replaces the Golden Eagle Passport, and provides free entry to federal lands for a year.

The Interagency Senior Pass, which replaces the

Golden Age Passport, is available to citizens or permanent residents who are 62 or over. It costs \$10 for a lifetime pass. The Interagency Access Pass, which replaces the Golden Access Passport, is free to citizens and permanent residents who are permanently disabled. The Senior and Access passes provide free entry to federal lands as well as half off of some amenity fees like camping. Plastic Golden Age and Access Passports are still valid and do not need to be replaced. The new passes are available at the refuge Visitor Center.

Many thanks to all
refuge volunteers!



To make sure that
your volunteer hours are
being counted toward the
Interagency Volunteer Pass
and other awards, please
contact Susan Kain (467-9278
or susan_kain@fws.gov).

Seasonal Sights and Sounds: The Melody of Spring

The arrival of spring in southwest Idaho is heralded by the boisterous and cheerful song of male western meadowlarks. Although meadowlarks are year-round refuge residents, their loud, flute-like song makes them most noticeable in spring. If you hear the distinctive song, look atop bushes and fence posts for a robin-sized bird with a bright yellow breast and a black, V-shaped “necklace.”

Like most songbirds, only male meadowlarks sing, and they sing to stake claim to a breeding territory. Watch a singing male for a while and you may observe his mating display. When a female arrives, he

defends the area from intruders, and the females do most of the work of raising their families. Females nest on the ground, shaping a depression in the ground with their bill, lining it

with grass, and usually at least partially covering it with a grass roof, which probably protects the eggs from predators and the weather. Females lay between three and seven eggs, incubate them for about two weeks, and feed the chicks until they start

to fly after about 12 days.

Meadowlarks, like many other members of the blackbird family, use their long, pointed bills to probe in the ground for insects, spiders, and other small invertebrates. In winter, they mostly eat seeds and sometimes gather in large flocks to feed in agricultural fields.

Unlike many songbirds, in which males are more brightly colored than females, meadowlark females and males look the same. The female’s bright yellow chest is well hidden when she’s incubating or brooding her young, and if a foraging meadowlark of either sex spots a predator, it usually freezes and crouches to hide its bright yellow chest.



Western meadowlarks were among the over 300 species first documented by Lewis and Clark!



When you’re in refuge uplands looking and listening for meadowlarks, also look for American kestrels sitting on fence posts or hovering over grasslands and cottontails scampering from bush to bush.



points his bill in the air, puffs out his yellow throat and flaps his wings above his head.

Typically two females nest in each male’s territory. He

Friends' Focus



Recent Happenings: The Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge have been busy! In January, Noreen Tripp and Cathy Eells attended the Non-profit Day at the Idaho Legislature to learn how to build an advocacy support program and engage in effective lobbying. They also set up a Friends Group display at the Capitol, networked with other non-profits, and chatted with Sen. McGee and Rep. Bolz of District 10.

In February, with tremendous help from the Southwest Idaho Birders Association, the Friends held their first annual Great Backyard Bird Count at the refuge. Eighty-four children and parents enjoyed bird walks, making bird feeders, bird identification games, and even cookies and cocoa.

In March, Lyndell Jackson and Jon Minkoff attended the National Wildlife Refuge Association's Beyond the Boundaries Conference in Washington, DC. Friends of Deer Flat was the only recently-formed friends group invited to this conference. Lyndell and Jon will share what they learned during the conference at the May 1st Friends meeting. Also in March, Nila Huskey started work on a website for the group.

Committee Reports: The **Bookstore Committee** has been working hard to open The Grebe's Nest book store in April. The **Projects Committee** completed plans for a photo blind and is applying for a grant to help fund materials. They hope to complete the blind this summer. The **Action Committee** has been reaching out to other groups in our area to preserve open spaces near the refuge.

The **Membership Committee** is planning several upcoming events, including having a Friends booth at Earth Day in Boise on April 21st, holding a Ride and Roam and International Migratory Bird Day celebration on May 19 at the Visitor Center, and having a Friends booth at the BioBlitz Festival on June 9. Anyone interested in volunteering to staff the Earth Day booth can contact Al McGlinsky (al2mcg@fiberpipe.net).

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, Apr. 3

General Meeting, 7 PM
Lecture about water quality;
general meeting follows @ 8 PM

Saturday, April 21

Refuge Helpers litter clean-up, 9 AM-noon.

Friends booth at Earth Fest, Julia Davis Park in Boise, 11 AM-4 PM

Tuesday, May 1

General Meeting, 7 PM
Topic TBA

Saturday, May 19

Ride & Roam, 10 AM-12:30 PM
International Migratory Bird Day
celebration, 1-3 PM

Tuesday, June 5

General Meeting, 7 PM Lecture
about Biodiversity; general
meeting follows @ 8 PM

Saturday, June 9

Friends booth at BioBlitz Festival
at refuge VC, 10 AM-3 PM

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.

Want to become a member, join a committee, or receive the Friends newsletter?
Then call Lyndell Jackson at 459-4740 or 880-6127.

Spring Activity Schedule

April

Tuesday, April 3

Reading at the Refuge

10 AM, Visitor Center

Wild About Life Lecture & Friends Group Meeting

Water pollution & conservation

7 PM, Visitor Center

Wednesday, April 4

Reading at the Refuge

2 PM, Visitor Center

Tuesday, April 17

Reading at the Refuge

10 AM, Visitor Center

Wednesday, April 18

Reading at the Refuge

2 PM, Visitor Center

Saturday, April 21

Earth Day Litter Lift

9-12 AM, Visitor Center

May

Tuesday, May 1

Reading at the Refuge

10 AM, Visitor Center

Friends Group Meeting

7 PM, Visitor Center

Wednesday, May 2

Reading at the Refuge

2 PM, Visitor Center

Tuesday, May 8

Wild About Life Lecture

7 PM, Visitor Center

Tuesday, May 15

Reading at the Refuge

10 AM, Visitor Center

Wednesday, May 16

Reading at the Refuge

2 PM, Visitor Center

Saturday, May 19

Weed Warriors

9-11 AM, Visitor Center

Ride & Roam and

Internat'l. Migratory Bird Day

10 AM-3 PM, Visitor Center

June

Tuesday, June 5

Reading at the Refuge

10 AM, Visitor Center

Wild About Life & Friends Group Meeting

Biodiversity

7 PM, Visitor Center

Wednesday, June 6

Reading at the Refuge

2 PM, Visitor Center

Saturday, June 9

BioBlitz 2007 Festival

10 AM-3 PM, Visitor Center

Saturday, June 16

Weed Warriors

9-11 AM, Visitor Center

Tuesday, June 19

Reading at the Refuge

10 AM, Visitor Center

Wednesday, June 20

Reading at the Refuge

2 PM, Visitor Center

WILD ABOUT LIFE LECTURE SERIES

A monthly lecture series that offers something for everyone. Topics range from identifying Idaho birds to wildlife-friendly landscaping and from identifying & removing weeds to fish identification.

Held 7 to 8 PM at the refuge Visitor Center alternately on the first or second Tuesday of each month. **Mark your calendar and tell your friends!**

April 3

Water Does a Lot for Us...What Can We Do For Water?

Find out about water pollution and how you can help prevent it.

May 8

Local Fish and Riparian Areas

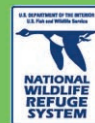
Learn about local fish and the importance of riparian areas.

June 5

Biodiversity: What is it and Why Should We Care?

Find out about biodiversity and the role of zoos in conserving it.

**WILD ABOUT LIFE
CO-SPONSORS:**





Environmental Education

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!
- Jaws and Levers
- Lessons from the Lorax
- Scat and Tracks
- 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 20-25 minutes. The Visitor Center station includes an 11-minute refuge orientation video.

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. Thanks for helping us spread the word about our programs!

For more information about other environmental education opportunities, including Scout programs, service learning, and community programs, please contact us at (208) 467-9278 or deerflat fws.gov

All programs and field trips are free!

Want to know more?

Visit the refuge web site at <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/education.htm> for more information, including details about classroom programs and field trip FAQs.

Schedule a classroom program or field trip!

Phone: (208) 467-9278 e-mail: deerflat@fws.gov