

Wings

Newsletter for Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges Vol. X No. 2 August, 2003

Membership Improvements Celebrate Refuge Centennial

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society is offering new benefits for current and prospective members, as well as offering special memberships for active volunteers at Alligator River and other local refuges.

The first change, which is effective for all current members, includes a provision that memberships will be based on a calendar year. This policy will reduce administrative costs. This Centennial Year, all current members will have their present memberships extended to Dec. 31 of their current expiration year. That means Society members whose memberships expire in January, 2004 or later will have their memberships extended until December, 2004.

"The initial year of this new program may be costly in one way," said Society President Tom White, "but it will save us considerable money in the long run. Of course we're happy to accept donations at any time, but with memberships beginning on the first of each year, we can reduce the cost of maintaining monthly records of membership and at the same time create a more effective membership list."

The second benefit enables members and others to receive their quarterly copies of WINGS online rather than through the mail. Such a program saves printing and mailing costs and trees! A registration blank for those wishing to take advantage of this new concept is found on page 3. "We encourage all the computer-handy friends of these refuges to take advantage of this innovation," Mr. White said. "It will leave each member the opportunity to print out particular articles they want to save or pass on, without damaging the original copy and lets them reduce the paper load in their own homes while still keeping up on all the news at these refuges. Wings is actually a refuge newsletter, but CWRS donates the printing costs and much of the mailing costs as a way of helping these refuges."

"In all cases," the president continued, "members will continue to receive their 10% discount on all purchases at the Pea Island Visitor Center Gift Shop and will continue to be notified of all specials and events."

A third change is that all active volunteers at the local national wildlife refuges will be granted annual membership in CWRS. "Waiving their membership fee is just a small measure of our appreciation for all the work of these tireless volunteers," Mr. White said. "The Visitor Center Gift Shop and canoe programs are our primary sources for revenue for the Society. Our volunteers are the people who really raise the money. With the generous donation of their time, we are able to keep the Gift Shop open seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., year-round. The support the Society is able to provide to area refuges is a testimony to the dedication of these men and women."



The Bonner Bridge and Pea Island

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society members and supporters have probably read or heard concerns recently about the anticipated replacement of the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge. Questions such as: Where will the new bridge go? Will it make landfall on Pea Island? If not, where? If it bypasses Pea Island, how will visitors get to the Refuge for birding or fishing? These are all important questions - important to people and to wildlife.

One thing is certain: there will be access to Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. It may be different from the present access, but there will be access. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing public access to the Refuge for wildlife-dependent recreation. This includes fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and interpretive activities. All will continue.

According to the NC Department of Transportation, construction of a replacement bridge for NC Hwy 12 over Oregon Inlet is scheduled to start in 2006. The current bridge is in poor condition, and NCDOT wants the replacement to be completed and opened by 2010. Refuge Manager Mike Bryant is part of the Bonner Bridge Merger Team which was formed to help plan a new bridge that would meet the needs of the community and protect the Refuge.

The current bridge was completed in 1964, and the highway through Pea Island was in place even before that. Constant beach erosion, severe weather, and high traffic volume have taken their toll since then and have forced NCDOT to continuously maintain the thoroughway. The ocean moves 10 to 15 feet closer to the road every year. Ocean movement, which is a natural process, has forced NCDOT to create temporary dunes, remove sand, and relocate sections of the highway at a number of "hotspots" within the Refuge. From 1988 to 1998, the state spent more than \$27 million repairing and protecting the Bridge and this section of Hwy 12.

In 1989, NCDOT requested permission to install a terminal groin on the northern end of the Refuge to help protect the Bridge. The permit was issued with the stipulation that the groin be removed

if it were no longer required to serve its original purpose of protecting the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge.

The first alternative from the state was to build a new bridge a few hundred feet west of, and parallel to, the existing bridge. This proposal was not likely to be compatible with Refuge goals because of the disturbance and elimination of wetlands. Four more alternatives were proposed; that number was narrowed to two last February. Environmental analyses are continuing on each of these possible alternatives.

The shorter and less expensive of the two alternatives, Corridor 1, would be 6.2 miles long, cost \$138 million, and would eliminate one "hotspot" on Hwy 12. This alternative would also have greater impact on migratory bird habitat, since it would include crossing 1.2 miles of Refuge land. This would mean the State would have to continue its expensive repairs and maintenance of all the other Hwy 12 "hotspots".

Corridor 4, the second option still under consideration, would result in the construction of a 17-mile bridge at a cost of \$260 million and would make landfall in Rodanthe, just south of the Refuge. It would have the least impact on submerged aquatic vegetation beds which are critical to fisheries and migratory birds. It would allow natural forces to mold and shape the barrier island on which Pea Island Refuge exists and would bypass all three "hotspots," eliminating those maintenance and repair costs for NCDOT.

When Dare County Commissioners addressed issues of the project in June, their concerns focused on maintaining an access road for the public to visit the Refuge, keeping the terminal groin in place, and keeping the old US Coast Guard Station (owned and managed by the State) protected. The USFWS firmly believes that Corridor 1, with its severe impact on migratory bird habitat, would most likely interfere with the *wildlife first* mission of the Refuge. The Service also notes that this alternative would fail to address the major issue of maintaining Hwy 12 through the Refuge on a long-term basis. For these reasons, it is unlikely that USFWS would accept this alternative.

Corridor 4, in addition to reducing long-term maintenance and costs, would improve safety and reliability along Hwy 12 and cause the least environmental impact. Although the initial cost is considerably higher than the other alternative, the long range costs of maintenance of the highway would be eliminated, creating a large cost savings. It is the preferred alternative when considering Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Refuge personnel will continue to meet with agencies and interested parties to discuss alternatives. If, in the final selection, the bridge bypasses Pea Island Refuge, there will be several additional years for USFWS to plan access to the Refuge. During that time, there will be many opportunities for the public to assist in finding ways to access the Refuge, taking into account the needs of both people and wildlife.

The Refuge staff is committed to keeping you informed about the future of the Bonner Bridge, encourages your input, and assures you that your ideas and suggestions will be reviewed, studied, and appreciated.

Wings Over Water Set for October 14-19, 2003

The 7th annual Wings Over Water, a celebration of wildlife and wildlands in eastern North Carolina, is slated for October 14 through 19. The festival is planned, organized, and implemented by a coalition of public and private sources working together. These include the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society, the Carolina Bird Club, the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce.



Some of the Festival's 100+ events are birding trips led by professional and world-renowned birders; archery, clay shooting, and fishing lessons; canoe and kayak tours through Pamlico Sound and black water canals; wolf howlings; owl prowls; and natural history programs. The 2003 WOW also includes the opportunity to visit an art gallery highlighting refuge habitat and a working museum where volunteers demonstrate traditional Outer Banks boat-building. The diversity of activities and the range of area covered.... the Outer Banks, Ocracoke Island, Roanoke Island and the mainland of eastern North Carolina.... make this an opportunity you won't want to miss.

Further information on WOW is available by contacting Interpretive Specialist Ann Marie Salewski, coordinator of this year's event, at Ann_Salewski@fws.gov, or by phone at 252-987-1118, or by visiting the event's web page at www.wingsoverwater.org.

Registration is available by calling the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce office at 252-441-8144.

A Sense of Wonder



...based on the life and works of Rachel Carson; written and performed by Kaulani Lee.

October 18, 2003

Wings Over Water offers this professional performance as a part of the Celebration of 100 Years of Wildlife Conservation... the Centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Admission is free.
Please join us.

Thanks to a generous donor!

Kim Robertson, who owns the Pea Island Art Gallery in Avon, recently made another generous contribution to the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society to benefit Pea Island Refuge.

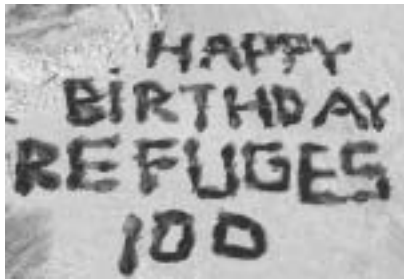
Kim, a Kansas native, describes Pea Island as one of her favorite places, a spot she visits often for "serenity and tranquility." She believes in making regular donations to further the Society's work and has set aside specific items in her art gallery. When those items sell, the entire proceeds benefit Pea Island.

The talented artist, who features her own work as well as that of 37 other artists in her gallery, said her contributing artists have been equally generous, many declining their own portion of the sale in order to benefit the Refuge.

Ms Robertson owns property in Salvo where she plans to build a reproduction of a life saving station to house her gallery.

"We appreciate Ms Robertson's generous donations to the work of the Refuge," said Society president Tom White, "and admire the unique plans she has to continue donations on a regular basis. It is people such as Ms Robertson and the generous members of the Society that enable us to assist the US Fish and Wildlife Service in its never-ending mission of protecting wildlife and habitat."

More information on Ms Robertson's work can be seen at her website, www.mixedmediaprints.com.



Check out the Centennial Body Art!! Can you tell how these words are written in the snow in South Dakota?? Go to <http://refuges.fws.gov/happyBirthday.html> for cool details!!

\$5,000 grant goes to CWRS

The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society recently received a \$5,000 grant to enable it to expand its membership program, announced Society Secretary Dru Ferrence. The grant, submitted last winter, was received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and will assist the Society in building its membership.

"We appreciate all the members who continue to support the refuges in such a generous manner," said Ms Ferrence. "However, we are constantly trying to expand our membership in order to give us a louder voice in legislative matters. This grant will allow us to pursue new means of increasing membership."

Biological Notes

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge

--As of this writing, there have only been two sea turtle nests on the Refuge. Although the nesting season is coming to a close, there are hopes for more nests. The first nest was found on July 7, considerably later than previous years; the second was found on July 24. Both nests were from loggerhead sea turtles. One nest was relocated to a safe spot on the beach, away from high tides and tidal pools, and had 96 eggs. The other nest was left in its original location; therefore, there is no count on its size.

--Turtle Watch Training was held August 19. Because the number of nests is low, there will be fewer volunteers needed for this phase of the turtle program.

--Frequent, heavy rain has made it very difficult to maintain optimum shorebird habitat in the three impoundments. However, above-normal water level and fresh rainwater have created great growing conditions for submerged aquatic vegetation. This should provide a good food supply for our wintering waterfowl.

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

--biological program staff continued work with a graduate research project on bear hair collection for use in DNA analysis. Technicians collected hairs from barbed-wire traps set out over the Refuge. The traps were baited with doughnuts to entice the bears. Staff also monitored collection sites for a survey of amphibians. Researchers are trying to determine if malformations are caused by environmental factors, disease, or genetics.

--Farm unit conditions were too wet for cooperative farmers to plant crops or wildlife plots during the planting windows. On a positive note, the wet conditions have been really good for moist soil plant production. Wintering waterfowl should arrive to an excellent food source.



Board of Directors

Tom White, Jr., President	(252) 473-3512
Bob Webster, Vice President	(252) 473-5233
Dru Ferrence, Secretary	(252) 441-0510
Warren Davis, Treasurer	(252) 261-2702
Hilda L. Bayliss, Wings Chair.	(252) 473-2992
Dorothy Fink, Mem. Chair.	(252) 480-4654
Mary M. VanSickle, Sales Chair.	(252) 441-4788
Bonnie W. Strawser, Ref. Liaison	(252) 473-1131

Wings Electronic Subscription

Yes, I'd like to take advantage of the Society's new idea of sending WINGS via e-mail. Please take me off your regular mailing list and add me to your e-mail subscription list. (Please provide ALL information on your label- or send the label)

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____ City/State/Zip _____

My e-mail address is: _____@_____

Please also send an email edition to my friend at : _____@_____

NOTE: You may handle this process electronically by emailing the information to jenny_howard@fws.gov.

30-Second Interview

ANN MARIE SALEWSKI

Ann Marie is a Wildlife Interpretive Specialist at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, and has been at Pea Island since December.



What is your educational background?

I earned a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science at Mary Washington College in Virginia, with a double major in Spanish.

How long have you been with US Fish and Wildlife Service, and why?

More than four years ago, I was a seasonal employee with the National Park Service. I accepted a one-year position with USFWS. Now, I don't think I would ever work for any other government agency.

Where have you worked with USFWS?

Before I came to Pea Island, I was at Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex, a group of 8 refuges in New England that encompasses everything from a barrier beach to a riverine habitat. I was stationed at Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.

What are your responsibilities at Pea Island?

I am responsible for all the public programming for Alligator River and Pea Island Refuges; I supervise educational and general refuge interns, and I coordinate special events, including Wings Over Water.

What are your immediate and long-term personal goals?

To see more of North Carolina, the Outer Banks in particular, to dive

shipwrecks off the coast, kayak around the islands, go to the gym more often and continue fixing up my house and garden. These are all immediate personal goals which lead to my long-term goals of buying my own home, a kayak, and possibly getting married and having a family.

What are your professional goals?

At Pea Island, I want to support the Refuge in all of its projects, including exploring public use access options relating to the Bonner Bridge Replacement Project. I want to expand public programs and be a part of the team that continues to improve the quality of all of our programs.

Do you have any hobbies?

More than you can mention! My newest hobby is scuba diving. I also crochet, kayak, hike, backpack, garden, and read. I believe in giving volunteer service to the community, and I am active in a number of areas.

Where do you live?

My brother and I rent a home in Colington Harbor, a great place with a fenced area where I'm establishing a wildflower garden. We share our home with two indoor cats, Inca and Maya.

For a WILD Time..... Be a Refuge Volunteer!!

Contact: Ann Marie Salewski (ann_salewski@fws.gov)
or Jenny Howard (jenny_howard@fws.gov)
252-987-1118

Our special needs: program guides, Visitor Center staffing, assistance at special events, trail maintenance, native plants garden "adoption".....



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 1969
Manteo, North Carolina 27954

