

# WILD GOOSE TALES

SPRING QUARTER 2018



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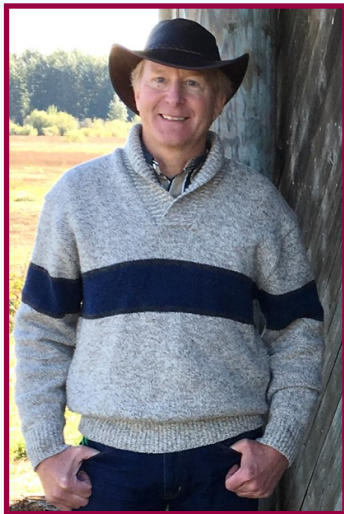
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## *President's Column*



**Dave Landkamer**

The circle of life is abundantly evident during spring and summer when so much biological vigor and renewal is before our eyes. I hope all of us have taken the time to witness and enjoy the serendipity of some of the vibrant wild life that is cycling around us. . To honor the season, I'd like to share with you a few of my recent wild life encounters, which have renewed my sense of belonging to the natural world. This spring, the irises in my gardens were more diverse and abundant than ever before, splashing vivid colors across the multi-green landscape. The

other, more mobile population explosion on my ridge has been of cottontail rabbits, now the size of fluffy softballs, bouncing around the lawn and into the bushes. I expect a pulse of assorted hawks will soon follow.

Leaving my property one morning, I slowed to a stop near one of my neighbors who was parked along the road going the other direction, watching a black-tailed doe near the roadside. After a few moments, she carefully crossed the road, and the smallest fawn I have ever seen (house-cat sized) wobbled across the road after her, and plunked down into the tall grass on the other side. Later this summer, this same fawn may be contentedly browsing the landscaping of my front garden. Further down the road, a group of four turkey vultures were gathered, scavenging the remains of an unfortunate roadkill gray squirrel. The vultures have recently returned

## *FRIENDS' MISSION*

*The Friends of the Willamette Valley Refuge Complex is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to:*

- *Promote the conservation of the natural resources of the Refuge Complex*
- *Foster awareness and appreciation of the Complex through educational and recreational opportunities*
- *Participate in activities that help the Complex achieve its goals.*

to the valley from their more southern wintering grounds to glean the productive agricultural countryside for carrion.

Last week I was driving after dark on a rural road north of Corvallis and a bobcat kitten about the size of a loaf of bread popped out of the hedge and ran along the road in my headlights for over 150 feet, before looking back at me and ducking into a blackberry bramble. When I arrived at the William L/ Finley NWR Headquarters one day last week, I had to

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## Prairie Flowers Bring Interested Crowds to Finley Refuge



Close to 70 enthusiastic nature lovers gathered on a sunny, windy evening for the Prairie Overlook Prairie Plant ID Walk at William L. Finley Refuge. The overflow crowd split into groups and ranged throughout the prairie.

Volunteer plant experts Steve, Jill, Jeanne, Alan and Heath, joined Samantha Bartling to help people identify plants. The spring wildflowers were abundant: Check-ermallow spp., Nootka rose, Peacock larkspur, Oregon Geranium, Cinquefoil, Bog Trefoil, Buttercup, Carex spp., Forget-me-nots, Monkey Flower, and many more.

Extra copies of the two plant id guides used will be available at the Finley Refuge Headquarters Building.







Identifying and naming wild babies



Talking about endangered species



Learning about egg shapes

## Games, Models, and Fun: Get Outdoors Day 2018

A clear, sunny day in beautiful Peavy Arboretum provided the backdrop for a successful and well-attended Get Outdoors Day. Samantha Bartling of Visitor Services, volunteers Kris and Debbie, and resident naturalists Pat and Bobbie Allaire, were ready with several bilingual interactive games and models especially aimed at children, whether they spoke English or Spanish.

Busloads of parents and children, and families in cars continued to arrive throughout the day. The two sides of our table had two to three activities running simultaneously.

We used bird egg replicas to demonstrate the difference between eggs from secure, steep-sided aerial nests and shallower ground nests. We showed how eggs from species with ground nests evolved to have a pointed end that prevented rolling out of the nest, whereas eggs secure in bowl-like aerial nests evolved into rounded shapes.

Throughout the day, we rotated among the different games. We led children through constructing a wooden arch to illustrate the many ways in which a keystone species plays a crucial role in the ecosystem it inhabits. We guided children as they identified wild animal babies and tried to name them. We used silhouettes of elk body language to show that animals have many ways to communicate with each other besides making sounds.

The day was a success, both for the children who learned something new about nature, and for our effort to extend the mission of the Refuge Complex and the Friends Into the community.



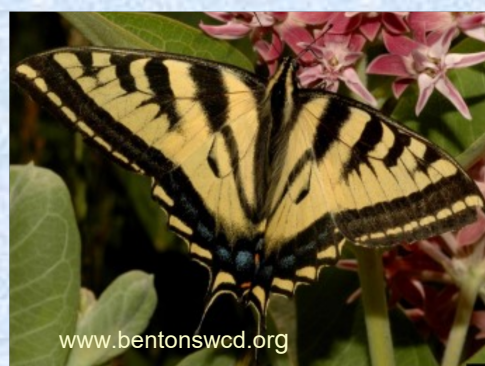


## Coming Events....

### Woodpecker Loop Environmental Education Shelter Celebration

**Saturday, June 23rd 2PM to 4:30PM Woodpecker Loop Trail, William L. Finley NWR (~ 10 miles south of Corvallis OR)**

Come celebrate the completion of our beautiful new Environmental Education Shelter. Enjoy the views from the new shelter and enjoy fresh Oregon strawberries with shortcake and ice cream (while supplies last). The shelter is ~ 0.35 miles from the trail-head. Turn right where the trail splits and head up the hill to the shelter.



### Sunday Wildlife Series at William L Finley NWR Pollinators!

**Sunday, June 24th 1-3pm Headquarters Building, William L. Finley NWR (~ 10 miles south of Corvallis OR), just outside the Wild Goose Nature Store.**

Join us at the interpretation table to learn about the many creatures that pollinate plants and how important they are to our environment.





## Bringing Back the Golden Hills: Restoring the Golden Paintbrush



Dr. Tom Kaye

Isaac Sandlin



William L. Finley NWR contains some of the few remaining areas of upland prairie habitat in the Willamette Valley. If you drive past the prairie on Finley Road during April and May, you will see the vibrant, golden, and threatened Golden Paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*).

This “wildflower” (modified leaves provide the golden color) once ranged throughout Willamette Valley prairies, and is thought to have been maintained by controlled burning practiced by the Kalapuya people<sup>(1,2)</sup>. With the arrival of European settlers, and the cessation of burning, golden paintbrush populations declined from changes in land use and from the encroachment of woody shrubs. The last naturally – occurring golden paintbrush plants in the valley were seen in 1938, and are now gone from Oregon, remaining only in locations around Puget Sound<sup>(2)</sup>.

In recent years, however, efforts have begun to restore this beautiful plant to those areas where upland prairie still exists in the Willamette Valley. To report on these efforts in the Willamette Valley NWR Complex, Tom Kaye of Oregon State University and Isaac Sandlin, his graduate student, led a tour of restoration sites at Finley NWR. Dr. Kaye is Executive Director and Senior Ecologist of the Institute of Applied Ecology, and his organization has taken an active role in efforts to reintroduce the golden paintbrush<sup>(3)</sup>.

To restore this species, it's important to first understand its' biology. Golden paintbrush is a parasitic plant that uses surrounding plants for some of its nutritional needs. It can perform photosynthesis and produce its own sugars, but it possesses modified roots that connect into the vascular tissue of its host plant. Water and nutrients flow from the host into the paintbrush plant. A paintbrush can grow by itself, but it thrives more successfully when it grows near its hosts. Golden Paintbrush is not picky about the plants it parasitizes. However, it prefers perennials over annuals, and some plants, like Woolly Sunflower, are especially preferred.

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*They came together to battle the dirt...*



**Thanks to the hard-working volunteers** who spent a day giving all the rooms in the historic Fiechter House a thorough cleaning before our two open house events. Diane, Jeanne, Pepper, B. A. Beierle of Preservation WORKS, Cowli, Pat, Bobbie, Debbie, Sam—Thank you!

*..so visitors could learn about our local history*



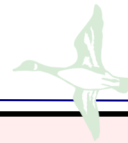
Bobbie (above) and Pat (right) Allaire bring Fiechter House to life for guests..



**Explore the inside of this 1855 pioneer house, one of the oldest buildings in Benton County.**

**Fiechter House reopens on June 16th, 10 AM to 3 PM**





brothers Riley Bieber and Graham Johnson (pictured right) Dave, Azizah, and Debbie engaged several students, some of whom were not aware of the existence of the refuges. Best of all, a number of students filled out applications for the position of Student Board Member. There is definitely interest in, and enthusiasm for, the work of the refuge staff and the Friends. We hope to tap that interest and energy in the coming year with increased student involvement.

## The Friends Reach Out to University Students

Friends volunteers visited Oregon State University for the "Beyond Earth Day" fair. We publicized the refuges and the Friends' mission with help from Phi Delta Theta fraternity



## The Willamette Valley NWRC is on Display at the Carnegie Library



For the month of June  
Mon — Fri, 10 AM – 6 PM

Carnegie Library, 302  
Ferry Street SW, Albany

The display contains  
photos and exhibits that  
highlight people, habitats,  
plants and animals at  
each of the Refuges of  
the Complex

Stop by and check it out!

(Thanks to Janine and Doug  
Spencer and Pat and Bobbie  
Allaire for creating the display)

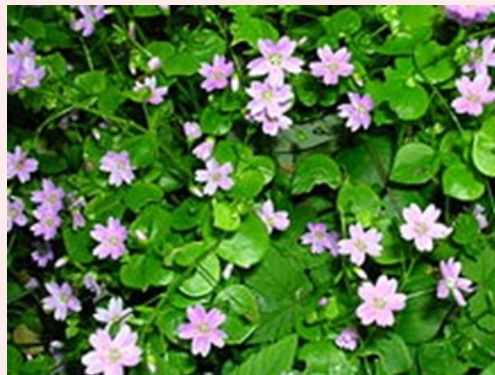




## Celebrating Spring on the Woodpecker Loop Trail



Enjoyment and education walked hand in hand up Woodpecker Loop Trail on the morning of May 5th. Ruth McEvoy, a founding member of the Corvallis chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon, led the Woodpecker Loop Native Plant Walk as part of Natural Areas Week. She led her 22– person group through the plant communities along the trail - oak woodland, oak savannah, ash swale, Douglas—fir forest, and mixed deciduous forest - and along the way helped the group identify and understand the native vegetation. To aid their learning, she distributed copies of a list of the native plants common to each community that included their scientific and common names and relevant ecological facts. The hike was enhanced by the fact that there were a number of birding enthusiasts in the group, who identified many birds and bird calls in the area. Below are some of the plants of the trail::



Candy Flower  
(Roger Griffith)

Woodsorrel  
(Walter Siegmund)







## The Elk Bugle: Stories from Elk spotters in the Field. by Dave Landkamer

At our Board of Directors meetings this spring, when we have reviewed the progress of our ongoing elk survey, I have been reminded of how valuable this simple citizen science project has been.

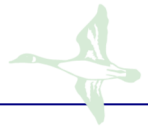
One of our directors, an HP employee who is also an avid elk spotter and proficient videographer, has taken several scenes of the elk herds he has watched during his elk surveys. The outstanding videos show the elk herd moving across the refuge fields, elk calves chasing and playing, and bulls posturing. He told us at that meeting that the wildlife he has seen on the elk surveys has “changed his life”. And I realized then that he was speaking for all of the elk spotters, and for visitors across all three of our valley refuges, who come to see our magnificent wildlife resources.

At a subsequent meeting, the refuge complex Project Leader, Damien Miller, told us of how he had used the data and videos from our elk survey to corroborate and expand upon elk population and composition data collected about our local elk at an important wildlife management meeting with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, local farmers, and other valley constituents.

Our elk survey project is making a difference in the lives of our members and volunteers, and for the management decisions that the state and federal agencies make about our natural resources. As Teddy Roosevelt might say, for whom our local Roosevelt elk are named, “Bully”!!!







## **Wild Goose Nature Store**

**at  
Finley Refuge  
Headquarters  
Building**

**Open  
Friday, Saturday,  
Sunday All Year**

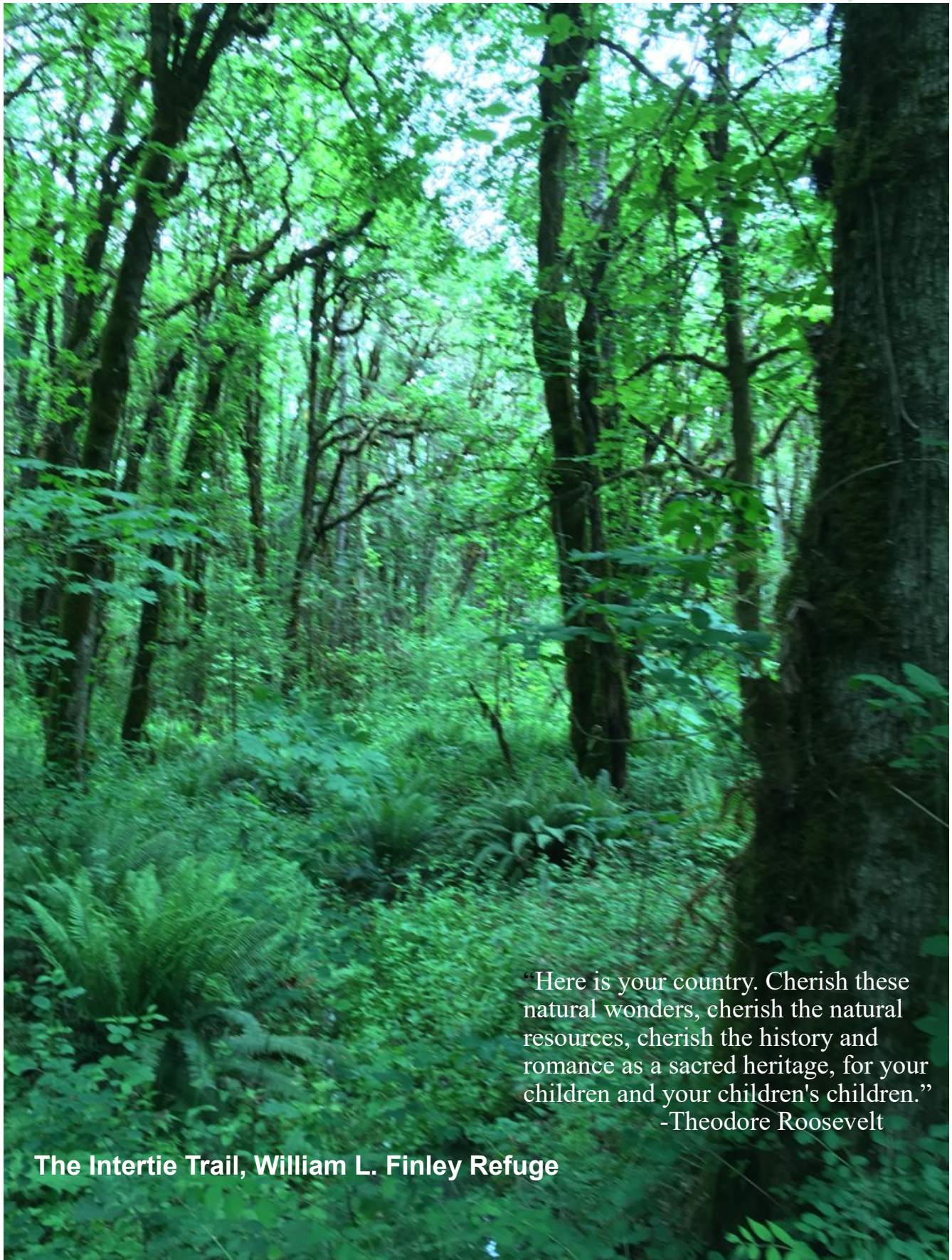
**10 AM to 4 PM**



Have you ever been hiking in the refuges and wished you could identify that bird you saw on a nearby branch? There is a new video for sale at the Wild Goose Nature Store that will provide a most enjoyable lesson about many of the refuge birds. It is a 27 minute video titled "Close Encounters of a Bird Kind" and it is the result of the long – time efforts of bird watcher and photographer Jon Hazen, and the artistry of guitar harpist John Doan.

Hazen has compiled high – resolution images that capture close-up views of 110 Western Oregon birds that live in and around the 3 refuges of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Jon provides the name of each bird and where it was found, and the photos clearly show their field markings. Interspersed with the birds are photos of beautiful refuge landscapes. The images smoothly dissolve into each other, and are accompanied by relaxing guitar harp music played by John Doan. Check it out for a most pleasant education.





“Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children.”  
-Theodore Roosevelt

**The Intertie Trail, William L. Finley Refuge**





## Meet Bobbie and Pat Allaire



If you visit the refuges, you may see Bobbie and Pat Allaire, who are currently resident naturalist volunteers at the Willamette Valley NWR Complex. They earned their certification as Oregon Master Naturalists from Oregon State University and have volunteered year round at state parks and wildlife refuges in Oregon since 2014.



Pat and Bobbie are working with Samantha (Sam) Bartling in Visitor Services and developing refuge visitor programs from "wetlands to acorns" and everything in between. Engaging the community with various outreach programs, they are thrilled to contribute to conversations about the incredible habitats in the Complex and the historic Fiechter house



The Allaires have produced a number of interactive educational games to teach children about ecological concepts. These include Elk Body Language (center photo), The Keystone Species Arch (pictured left) and Wild Babies (seen at the top of page 3).





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To be successful, it is important to surround the paintbrush with a diverse assortment of hosts. They survive better if they can tap the diverse food resources, as well as defensive compounds, of different hosts.

Another of Tom's graduate students at OSU, Beth Lawrence, conducted a comparison of seed sources and found that seeds from Whidbey Island, Washington, performed well in Willamette Valley prairies. These seed sources are now the main parts in paintbrush seed mixes used in Oregon.

In the team's first attempts, they prepared a golden paintbrush – woolly sunflower seed mix. They found that broadcasting the seed was an easy and efficient method of planting. The seeds were planted in long strips so the paintbrush plants could be exposed to as many prairie microhabitats as possible. Then, in 2015, a two-acre patch near Woodpecker Loop was sprayed to kill weeds. The seed mix contained many native plant seeds with the paintbrush seeds, including Roehmer's Fescue, another preferred host.



The original seedlings are now 8 years old and are creating their own offspring. After the initial planting, there was an increase in the numbers of paintbrushes and then a gradual decline as individual plants died. (Paintbrushes live about 5 – 6 years <sup>(4)</sup>.) The paintbrush plants and their hosts must also contend with damage from herbivores like deer and especially voles.

Over time an equilibrium is established between plants sprouting and growing and other plants dying. Whether the numbers of paintbrush plants will stabilize is not known yet.

This is an ongoing project at the Refuge Complex.



#### Citations:

1. [https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/anthropogenic\\_fire/#.Wx1\\_DyBlAdU](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/anthropogenic_fire/#.Wx1_DyBlAdU)
2. Oregon Department of Agriculture. Golden paintbrush (Castilleja levisecta). (PDF). [http:// www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/PlantConservation/CastillejaLevisectaProfile.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/PlantConservation/CastillejaLevisectaProfile.pdf)
3. <https://appliedeco.org/painting-the-prairie-following-golden-paintbrush/>
4. <https://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/species/data/goldenpaintbrush/>



### The President's Message (continued from page 1)



stop before reaching the parking lot because a pair of killdeer was performing their full-blown broken wing distraction display routine in the middle of the road. I watched them for awhile, then got out of the car to cautiously explore the side of the road thinking I might find a cluster of their speckled stone-mimicking eggs. Instead, a golfball sized killdeer chick scuttled out of the grass nearby and bugged along the edge of the road and into the bushes.

Departing from the refuge headquarters later that morning, the air was cool and the sun was shining. As I skirted the southern edge of Bald Top above North Pond, I came upon a four foot long gopher snake basking in the sun on the road gravel. As gopher snakes often do, this one stayed still in the middle of the road, counting on its stillness and cryptic mottled coloring to hide it from my sight. I stopped the car, approached the snake, and gently slid my hand underneath it to lift it off the road to a safer place. The snake remained calm until I had set it down, when it tried desperately to slide under some matted vegetation, but was mostly unsuccessful. It then turned toward me and performed a classic rattlesnake imitation; lifting its flattened head in a threatening coil ready to strike, emitting a startling hissing noise, and shaking its upright tail like a rattler would.

Encounters with the natural world like these happen to all of us regularly, especially if we take the time to notice and enjoy them. These encounters remind me that life moves around me in numerous circles of birth, death, energy, adaptation, and renewal, and that I am ultimately an inextricable part of those multiple cycles. They also remind me to slow down and take as much of it in as I can, for my own enjoyment and enrichment. And also, by slowing down, I am less likely to inadvertently squash a squirrel, step on a nest or nestling, hit a bobcat, or flatten a snake. We all belong here as part of the natural world, and I'd like to think that our caution, and our conservation efforts, will help to keep us all in the conscious half of that circle to enjoy the beauty and wonder of it all. Visit your refuges soon for a close encounter of your kind.

## Phi Delta Theta Honors Elk Spotter Relationship

Sometimes our Friends projects connect our Refuges with unexpected partners. Our Elk Survey at Finley National Wildlife Refuge is a good example. Over thirty brothers of the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity at OSU with visiting the refuge multiple times to observe, count, and collect data on the resident elk herd. The fraternity brothers also adopted the Woodpecker Loop Trail at Finley, participated in additional trail maintenance projects, met with Refuge Complex Project Leader Damien Miller, and helped out at our outreach booth at this year's Beyond Earth Day event at OSU. In recognition of this productive partnership, our Biology Chair, Azizah Mohd, who fostered this relationship, was invited as an honored guest to the fraternity's Centennial Grand Celebration Dinner, held on April 21st at the Club Level in Reser Stadium. At the dinner, the brothers of Phi Delta Theta acknowledged their gratitude to the Friends for the opportunities to volunteer and serve their local communities. The Friends, in turn, are grateful to the fraternity for their many hours of volunteer work in support of our conservation efforts, and those of our local Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex. We look forward to continuing our excellent partnership with Phi Delta Theta.



# Membership Form

☐ New Membership    ☐ Renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please check this box if you **DO NOT** wish to share your information directly with the Refuge Volunteer Coordinator for additional volunteer opportunities.

I am interested in these volunteer opportunities:

- ☐ Work Parties    ☐ Special Events    ☐ Wild Goose Nature Store  
☐ Education Programs    ☐ Board Member  
☐ Habitat Restoration    ☐ Grounds Maintenance  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Annual Membership Categories

- ☐ \$10 Senior / Student  
☐ \$15 Individual  
☐ \$25 Family  
☐ Volunteer\*

**All contributions in excess of membership fees are tax deductible under corporation guidelines.**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Tax deductible donation

**Please make checks payable to FWVNWRC.**

\* Please contact the Friends Volunteer Coordinator to see if you qualify.



Friends of the Willamette Valley  
National Wildlife Refuge Complex

P.O. Box 2238  
Corvallis, OR 97339

secretary.friends@gmail.com

Phone: 541-757-7236 Ext. 224

**VISIT US ONLINE AT**  
**WWW.FRIENDSWVNWRC.ORG**