

WILD GOOSE TALES

SUMMER QUARTER 2018



President's Column

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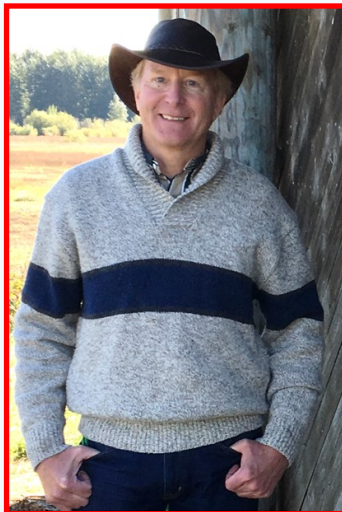
DOUG SPENCER

DEBBIE MAYNARD

KATIE BERNSTEIN

KRIS EBBE

JILL SCOFIELD



Dave Landkamer

We just celebrated our 12th year as an organization a couple of weeks ago, at our Annual Membership Meeting barbecue at Finley NWR headquarters. Looking back a decade, it is truly remarkable how far this small, local, grassroots, all-non-profit organization has come in such a short time. At the BBQ, it was my pleasure to highlight the outstanding accomplishments of the 2017-2018 fiscal year. These are some of our recent achievements:

1) We had another record-setting year for the Wild Goose Nature Store, thanks to the oversight of Jeanne, Lena, and Liz

2) We recently achieved the highest membership level in organization history, under Brian's astute Membership Committee guidance

3) We had our best year ever of beautiful newsletters, thanks to our talented editor, Debbie

4) With our partners, the Salem Audubon Society and the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the long awaited construction has started on the Ankeny Hill Nature Center building

5) We completed our second full year of elk surveys, more than 250 (thanks to Azizah's leadership)

6) We completed the new Woodpecker Loop Environmental Education (EE) Shelter, and the EE elements along the trail are in progress, thanks to everyone and Samantha, USFW Visitor Services)

7) We recently reconvened our Outreach and Education Committee under

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.*

Kris Ebbe's enthusiastic leadership, and have implemented a new series of monthly on-refuge activities on the first Sunday of each month, beginning with the Oct 7 off trail refuge hike starting at the Finley headquarters building

All of these accomplishments are happening because **we have an outstanding Board of Directors and core group of dedicated volunteers and members!**

(continued on pg 16)



Ankeny Hill Nature Center Construction Update

Doug Spencer (9/8/18)

Ground breaking and construction of the new Ankeny Hill Nature Center commenced at the end of this past July. Dalke Construction Company and Carlson/Veit Architects, both from Salem are the companies responsible for the construction and design of this facility. This building is the first phase of a larger facility that will be constructed once funding is retained by our partners. Salem Audubon Society is funding the majority of this first phase and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is providing additional funds where needed. The Service is also funding the future construction of the parking lot, access road, gate and volunteer shed. The Friends of the Willamette Valley NWRC, through a cooperative agreement with the Service is funding the interpretive facilities, such as the new overlook, kiosk and interpretive panels.

At present, the concrete foundation, floor joists and insulation, support steel beams for the outdoor classroom, drilling of the well, boring for the underground utility lines and the start of erecting the walls have been accomplished. By October, the building should be framed in and the roof will be installed. The timeline for the completion of this first phase of this facility is scheduled by the end of December. By the beginning of the New Year, Salem Audubon Society hopes to present to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service their first environmental/interpretive classroom facility for these complex of national wildlife refuges in the mid-Willamette Valley.

Even though this building will be completed by the end of the year, this facility will not be opened until the parking lot and access road is completed. The Service expects to have this completed by next summer, so the partners are expecting to have a grand opening for the Ankeny Hill Nature Center next fall. Keep reading future Friends' newsletters for updates.

Please note that during the construction of this facility and the parking and access road at the overlook site, no public access is allowed for your safety. A restroom is being provided at the Pintail Marsh overlook area.



Graham, Doug, Ray, Monique, and Matt



Coming Events.... Volunteer Appreciation Day!

We want to celebrate all that you do for the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges. *Thank you, volunteers!*



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT: Enjoy a catered lunch and let's cheers to you and your amazing work. You make a huge difference for the critters (and people) that love and depend on the Refuges. Let's celebrate! RSVP to samantha_bartling@fws.gov. Afterwards enjoy an off-trail hike from 2 pm—4 pm.

Where: Finley Refuge Office

When: Sunday, October 7th from 12—2



American White Pelican



Great Egret

Photos by Chris Quinn



Coming Events..... Fall Nature Hikes!

Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Invites you to the following Fall events:

Last Hurrah!

Sunday, October 7th, 2-4pm
William L. Finley National Wildlife
Refuge

This a wonderful opportunity for a nature hike to the wetlands in Finley Refuge before the wetland trails close at the end of the month. Hike led by Friend's president Dave Landkamer.

The Birds Have Landed!

Sunday, November 4th, 1-3pm
Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge

The Salem Audubon Society will share information about migration patterns, behavior, food sources and other fascinating facts about birds who winter at Ankeny Refuge.

Calling All Elk!

Sunday, December 2nd,
Time:TBD
William L. Finley National Wildlife
Refuge

Learn about elk calls, behavior, and habitation with hands-on artifacts , then take a hike in search of Finley's resident Roosevelt elks.

For details, including meet-up location and to RSVP, please visit our Facebook page @FWVNWRC

We hope to see you there, rain or shine!

Photo credit: George Gentry, US Fish and Wildlife Service



Prescribed Burning Season Is Here

A common saying, seen on the bumper sticker on one of the fire trucks is: "good fires prevent bad ones."

It means that prescribed (controlled) burns do a lot of good for native plants and wildlife and prevent bad wildfires. Controlled fires that occur at frequent intervals help maintain fire-adapted habitats such as open prairie and oak savannah, preventing the encroachment of trees and shrubs.

They also reduce flammable "fuels" such as small trees, fallen branches, dried grasses and forbs, etc. that can build up in forested areas. Habitat maintenance using prescribed burning ideally happens on a 3-5 year cycle. This fits with historic disturbance regimes.

The Willamette Valley Refuges prescribed fire team started conducting prescribed fires for habitat restoration and benefit, as well as fuel reduction (flammable vegetation) to mitigate wildfire risk throughout the valley beginning on Monday, September 17th. There are 40 potential habitat units - both on and off the Refuge Complex - to burn over a two week period. Prescribed fires will be conducted through a partnerships between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, The Nature Conservancy, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Grand Ronde Tribes, and various Rural Fire Departments. Prescribed fire days, times, and locations will be based on resource availability, weather conditions, and smoke management forecasts.



Northern Harrier

by

Chris Quinn



Celebrating a Successful Year

Friends members gathered for our Annual Meeting on Sept. 15th at Finley Refuge Headquarters, where we celebrated our accomplishments of the past year. We also feasted on succulent BBQ and sides, scrumptious baked treats and a mega ice cream sundae bar.

We did some business, too. Congratulations to Kris Ebbe, Steve Suckow, and Jill Scofield, who were unanimously voted onto the Friend's Board of Directors, and to Doug Spencer and Brian Wachelka, who had their terms extended.

Dave Landkamer spoke to us about this year's accomplishments. The Woodpecker Loop Environmental Education Shelter was built, and construction has begun on the Ankeny Hill Nature Center. Our memberships have increased to 132, and our members continue to assist Refuge personnel by surveying the Finley elk (and other animals). Our Wild Goose Nature Store has made more money than ever, which we use to fund refuge improvements.

Samantha Bartling of Visitor Services presented the commemorative plaque that will grace the Woodpecker Loop E.E. Shelter. She also thanked the Friends for their help in repairing the gazebo near Finley Headquarters that was damaged by a falling tree.

The Friends, the Refuge Complex staff of the US Fish and Wildlife Dept., and our organization partner, the Salem Audubon Society, have joined together to make this past year a success for conserving the wildlife and habitats of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex.





Calling All Bird Enthusiasts!



Come experience one of nature's most amazing wonders - birds. With over 10,000 species of birds from pole to pole, and birds migrating up to 44,000 miles every year, they are a truly amazing animal. See Corvallis's local birds, some of which will have recently arrived from their breeding grounds in Alaska.

Chickadee and hummingbird feeder making, meet live raptors, go on bird walks with some of Corvallis's expert birders, make bird crafts, and see one of the most iconic bird documentaries ever made - BBC's Life of Birds narrated by David Attenborough.

Come join us on **Sunday, November 11th from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm. at Flicker & Fir Farm at 1470 SE Alexander Ave, Corvallis, OR 97333**

This is an event for all ages and levels of experience.

If you have more questions please contact us at:

adayofbirds@gmail.com



The 2018 Big Sit Team: Jacob Mathison, Tye Jeske, Isaac Denzer, Ben Frueh, Kai Frueh, and Joshua Galpern.

Cabell
Marsh
Blind



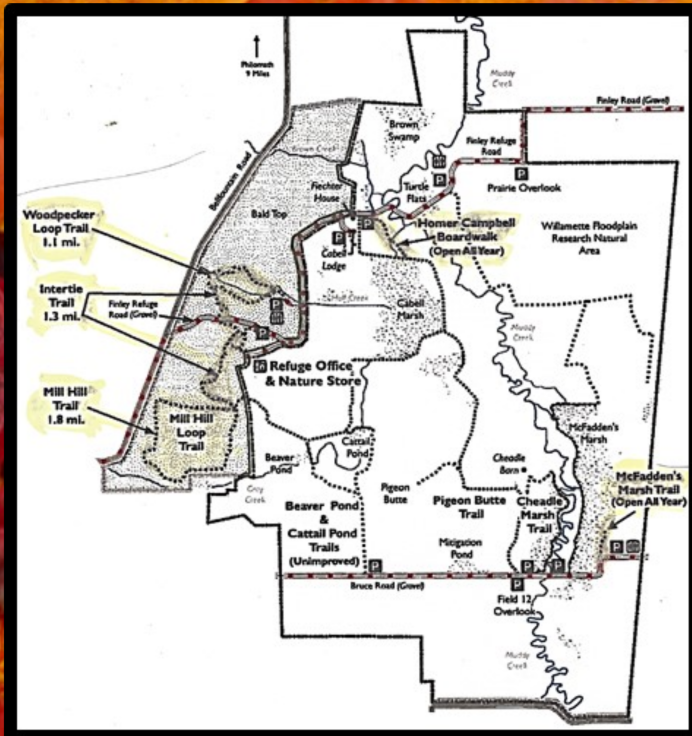
Photo from <http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/homer.shtml>

The 3rd Annual Benton County Big Sit

For fifteen hours on September 22nd, the six members of the 2018 Big Sit team, using binoculars and telescopic lenses, scanned their surroundings. Their eyes swept the sky to see the flash of wings, and the distinctive markings of the feathered inhabitants of William L. Finley Refuge. They attuned their ears to the cackles, cries and songs in the forest and marsh around them. And although they were confined to the 17-foot diameter space of the Cabell Marsh blind, when it was over, they had identified 80 different species of birds. Their sustained efforts, a fundraiser for bird conservation, will be evenly divided between the Friends of the Willamette Valley NWR Complex, Friends of Malheur NWR, Corvallis Audubon Society, and Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



Photo by Ben Frueh for the Friends of Malheur NWR



Sanctuary Season is coming soon:

Ankeny: October 1 to March 31
Baskett Slough: October 1 to March 31
William L. Finley: Nov. 1 to March 31

It is the time of year when we restrict access to some of the refuge trails to give migrating birds a stress-free place to rest during their long migration.

Use the maps to guide your hikes:

Trails marked in yellow: These trails are kept open. (All other trails are closed.)

Red circles: These observation points will stay open.

Places marked "P": At these spots you can pull off the road to observe the animals. They also stay open.

The months during Sanctuary Season provide some of the best opportunities of the year for viewing wildlife. Come out and enjoy one of nature's most splendid events, as thousands of birds call the refuge their temporary home.





Acorn Woodpeckers



Great Blue Heron
Great Egret

*Birds of
William L. Finley NWR*

*Photos by
Chris Quinn*



A Day of Nature and Clay

On July 29th, local children had the opportunity to learn about the animals and plants of the Refuge Complex and unleash their creativity during the free "Critters in Clay" event at Finley Refuge. Potters Sandy Houtman and Anthony "Ant" Gordon instructed the children about molding the clay, and when the sculptures were finished, Sandy and Ant fired them. The children were able to bring home a lasting keepsake of a wonderful afternoon at the refuge.



Sandy Houtman and Anthony (Ant) Gordon





Poaching Steals Something from All of Us

by Dave Landkamer

Early on Sunday morning, the last weekend of August, a father and son were watching a large herd of elk moving across an open field of grass as dawn began to break on the eastern horizon. Suddenly, the tranquility was ruptured by the sound of gunfire nearby, and several elk in the herd staggered and fell to the ground. The remaining elk herd ran over a hill as two hunters emerged from cover to dispatch the wounded animals and claim their kills.



Wild animals and birds are hunted legally all around the world, for food and sport, and especially during the fall season. Natural Resources management agencies everywhere go to heroic efforts to balance the hunted wildlife populations and the actions of the people who hunt and strive to protect and conserve them. Sometimes a delicate balance is achieved. But this hunt was different, and close to home. It didn't happen in a distant foreign country, or in the wild mountains of Wyoming, Idaho, or Montana, but right here in the Willamette Valley near Finley National Wildlife Refuge; right in our own backyard. This was illegal hunting; it was poaching. And it took something from each one of us.

Poaching in Oregon is an ongoing problem that probably won't be resolved any time soon. Since 2012, an average of 764 poaching investigations a year have occurred in Oregon. For example, in 2016, reported poaching incidents involving deer (388), elk (236), bears (15) cougars (9), bighorn sheep (9), wolves (2), moose (1), and other animals were investigated. But this is just a small portion of the poaching incidents that go unreported. Law enforcement estimates that only about 10% of all poaching incidents are detected.

Continued on page



Wild Goose Nature Store at Finley Refuge Headquarters Open Fri, Sat, Sun All Year 10 AM to 4 PM



It is now fall and we are all anxiously awaiting the return of the water fowl. Meanwhile, do you need a book, gift idea or a souvenir? Come in and browse the Wild Goose Nature Store. Be sure to look for the handmade seasonal table runners now appearing in the store. Afterward, take a hike on the Mill Hill trail and enjoy the fall colors (from a safe distance! It's poison oak!)

Want to be a part of our team? Store volunteers are essential refuge partners. If you'd like to volunteer at the store, please stop in at the store, fill out the Friends form and check the box that says Wild Goose Nature Store. Because the store is entirely volunteer-run, all the funds generated by sales in the store are funneled back into refuge projects. This fall some of those funds will repair the damage done to the viewing gazebo that was hit by the oak that fell last winter.
Lena & Jeanne, store managers





The Elk Bugle: Stories from Elk Spotters in the Field



Photo by Chris Quinn

Since the elk survey project began two years ago, our volunteers have completed more than 250 surveys to count the elk bulls, cows, and calves on William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, to record where they are, and to watch what they are doing. On more than half of the surveys thus far, the volunteers haven't see any elk. However, the best part of the survey may be the unexpected things they *always* see.

During this last summer, I have done a few surveys where I have seen very few waterfowl, But I can always count on the herons and egrets to provide a splash of color and a burst of action on the otherwise tranquil scene. These adept stalkers are often hunting in McFadden or Cheadle Marshes where fishes and other prey are being gathered by the diminishing waterways, but sometimes they concentrate on the open fields. One morning I watched a Great Blue Heron snatch a writhing garter snake from the tall grass, and fly off with it to enjoy a serpentine breakfast. Great blues aren't very social, and prefer to hunt alone. They remind me of cranky old curmudgeons, especially when they voice their disapproval at being disturbed as they fly off from a favored hunting location.

Great egrets, on the other hand, are often in clusters of ten or more, perhaps hunting communally to increase success, or at least sharing the concentrated prey items gregariously. With their pure white plumage, they often speckle the refuge landscapes with bright white flashes, and strike photogenic, reflected poses on the still waters of early morning. It amazes me to see how successful they are at picking fish out of the water.

If you'd like to join the elk spotters in recording valuable information about our local herd, please contact our biology chair, Azizah, at Azizahmohd@yahoo.com to learn more about the survey. It's another way to enjoy our local wildlife, s if we need another reason to visit the outstanding wildlife resources to be seen on our nearby refuges.



CHOKING THE WATERS: These aquatic weeds are beautiful but dangerous invaders. Refuge staff make a sustained effort to control these plants at Baskett Slough and Ankeny Refuges.



Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

With up to 50 stems and millions of seeds per plant, and its ability to re-sprout from stem / root pieces, Purple Loosestrife can quickly form large clumps up to 10 feet tall in shallow waters and surrounding areas, such as shorelines or the stream banks. Native vegetation is crowded out and displaced, and the many benefits it provided for wildlife – food, shelter, nesting areas, spawning grounds - are decreased. Birds, mammals, and fish can all be affected.

<https://www.refugeassociation.org/advocacy/refuge-issues/invasive-species/purple-loosestrife/>

<https://www.swcd.net/invasive-noxious-weeds/purple-loosestrife-on-the-loose/>

Water Primrose (*Ludwigia* spp.)

When Water Primrose forms dense mats over and under the surface of shallow water bodies, it can take over. Native wetland vegetation can be reduced or displaced outright. Native plants on the bottom under the water can have the light they need for photosynthesis reduced by the surface mats. Many different kinds of wildlife – turtles, fish, otters, amphibians, beavers find that their habitat has also been reduced. Their ability to move through the water, find food and reproduce is diminished.

<https://www.bentonswcd.org/assets/Benton-SWCD-Turtle-Invasive-Plants-1.pdf>



www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/66724

www.oregonhikers.org/field_guide/Willamette_Mission_Loop_Hike



Poaching Steals Something from All of Us, continued

Worldwide, poaching is very difficult to quantify because few countries provide reliable numbers on poached wildlife, poachers, or conservation officers killed in the line of duty. We often read of endangered species poaching of rhinos, elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, eagles, hornbills, sea turtles and many others, but these high profile animals represent only a fraction of illegal wildlife killings. Illegal wildlife trade is a multibillion-dollar business, with skins, leather, horns, souvenirs, foods, medicines, pets, and other products from animals being marketed for sometimes huge prices.

Poaching has many negative impacts. It harms local animal populations, disrupts ecological balance and sustainability, and can drive species extinction. For traditional native people, it can disrupt local food supplies through both supply reduction and regulatory restrictions. Poaching can also harm local tourist economies as rare magnet species become increasingly difficult to see, or disappear altogether.

The father and son who had watched the elk shooting on that August Sunday morning dialed 911 and reported what they had seen to the responding state police game officer, who investigated the incident and cited the hunters for poaching. Perhaps, in this instances, some kind of justice was served. But after all of the dust settled, what was the real outcome? Several elk from a rare mid-Willamette Valley herd were dead. The hunters did not get to keep the elk they poached, but instead, they ended up with criminal records and had to pay fines (maybe even had equipment like guns and vehicles confiscated). Some conservationists were angry at hunters and wildlife managers over the wanton killings. Hunters, including those who are ethical and obey all of the hunting rules, were stereotyped by some as greedy, destructive law-breakers. Many of those same hunters were enraged by the poaching (Oregon Hunters Association sponsors the Turn In Poachers (TIP) program, which rewards individuals who help catch poachers). Wildlife watchers were stereotyped by some as bleeding-heart tree-huggers. State and federal wildlife agencies renewed their unending efforts to balance elk management efforts and policies. Opportunities to see elk in our valley were diminished, now, and perhaps into the future. Nobody gained from this elk poaching incident, at least in the short term. All of us lost something.

The best we can hope for is that somehow, through all of our efforts, the elk (and birds and wildlife everywhere) will remain in our ever-diminishing natural world for all of us; our children, and our children's children, to enjoy and appreciate in many ways, now and into the future.

If you see any illegal hunting activity, or think it might be illegal, please report it immediately to one of the emergency numbers listed below.

911	Emergency
OSP (677)	Oregon State Police
800 452-7888	TIP (Turn In Poachers) Hotline

The President's Message (continued from page 1)



Photo by Chris Quinn

I can't decide which accomplishment to be most excited about, as each one stands out as something remarkable.

Perhaps the most exciting thing that we can look forward to is the output of a new, productive and talented Outreach Committee, led by new Board member Kris Ebbe, and supported by several creative new committee members. The committee has initiated a series of refuge-based activities for our members and visitors to engage the outstanding resources of our refuge complex. The first event in this new series is a guided hike on Sunday, October 7, at 2 pm (right after the USFW Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon). I will be taking participants on the Last Hurrah, an off-trail loop hike across the Finley Refuge to mark the end of the open hiking season. On November 1st, the off-trail season closes as the refuge begins its sanctuary season for the geese, swans, and other migrating waterfowl that overwinter in our valley.

In November, we are partnering with Salem Audubon Society on November 4, 1-3 pm, to offer The Birds Have Landed, a gathering to share information about the migrating patterns, feeding habits, and behaviors of birds that overwinter at Ankeny NWR. And in early December, our offered activity returns to Finley to focus on our impressive Roosevelt elk herd. More activities will follow on the first Sundays of each month in 2019. Please visit our Facebook page @FWVNWRC for more information, and join us for these new and exciting wildlife refuge opportunities.

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

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