

# WILD GOOSE TALES

APRIL 2020



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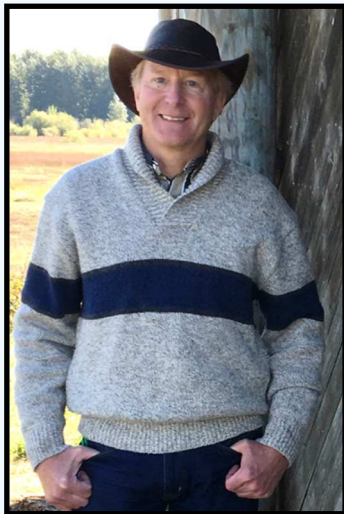
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## President's Column



**Dave Landkamer**

Spring is upon us here in the northern hemisphere, and we have much to celebrate in the world around us. There's the warming sunshine and the longer daylight hours that energize Oregonians after our long gray winter, bring the profusion of plant growth, and renew the cycles of energy and life. As I look at my calendar, I also see a profusion of local, national, and worldwide celebrations happening this spring in honor of our natural world.

In the first place, let's celebrate the special significance of March 19th, the first day of spring. Always an important celestial marker,

the first day of spring is the Vernal Equinox, when the sun crossed the plane of the equator into the northern hemisphere, bringing the fresh warmth to our "top" side of the planet.

Earlier in the month, on March 3, the world celebrated the United Nations World Wildlife Day in commemoration of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This treaty has been a powerful tool for biodiversity conservation since its adoption in 1973. In recognition of this year's event, the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, said emphasize the importance of "Let us remind ourselves of our duty to preserve and sustainably use the vast variety of life on the planet. Let us push for a more caring, thoughtful and sustainable relationship with nature."

Next came World Water Day on March 22, another UN observance day to emphasize the

## 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.*

importance of sustainable freshwater resources around the planet. This year's theme is Water and Climate Change.

One month later, we look forward to the Golden Anniversary celebration (50 years) of Earth Day, on April 22nd. On April 26th, many of us will be celebrating John J. Audubon's birthday in 1785. Audubon was an ornithologist, naturalist, and painter, famous for his depictions of all kinds of birds in their natural habitats. (Continued on Pg.6)



## The Peace of Wild Things Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.



*May we all stay safe and well during this difficult time.*





## **The Refuges Welcome the Spring ...and Us**

**The three refuges – Ankeny, Baskett Slough, and William L. Finley - are all open to the public. The only road that is gated off is Finley Road, but you can still walk past the gates and go to the trails if you want to hike. Bruce Road, at the southern end of Finley is open, and there are three trails that begin there. For now, the refuge offices and the Wild Goose Nature Store at Finley Refuge remain closed, and most scheduled events have been postponed.**

**When you visit the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges, please follow CDC guidelines. Maintain adequate social distancing (keep at least 6 feet apart), avoid overcrowding and exercise good hygiene. If a parking lot or pullout is full when you visit, please do not stop. We understand that the outdoors can help relieve stress, support mental health and provide comfort, but these guidelines must be followed for everyone's public health and safety**

**Be safe and take good care (of you, your family, community and Refuges).**

**Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to work through a really challenging and quickly evolving situation.**





## Refuge Happenings from Earlier This Year

### Updates from Eddy Pausch

#### Impressive Planting at Snag Boat Bend

The Snag Boat Bend Unit, a 341-acre unit in Linn County near Peoria, is being restored back to a woodland riparian corridor along the Willamette River. Employees of R. Franco Restoration planted **120,000 trees and shrubs on 78 acres in 4 days. On the first day a crew of 18 planted 29,000 trees and shrubs in 6.5 hours. This equates to approximately 1,600 trees planted per person at a rate of 4 per minute.** You can see in the pictures that there are herbicide-sprayed strips of grass with a trenched line down the middle. The dead grass reduces competition for the trees, and the trench keeps the planting in a straight line. We will be able to mow in between the planting lines in the future. There were 12 varieties of trees and shrubs planted, including Oregon live oak, Oregon grape, big leaf maple, black cottonwood, Willamette Valley ponderosa pine, Pacific ninebark and snow-berry. Over the last 5 years, planting activities are significantly transforming the Snag Boat Bend landscape.



Ismael Pimtale chooses a plant

**Restoration Partners: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Long Tom Watershed Council**

**Granting Agency: Oregon Water Enhancement Board**

**Supervising/Coordinating Biologists: Brian Root (US F&W), Jed Kaul (Long Tom) WC**

**Restoration Company: R. Franco Restoration**





### **Bilingual Preschool Program at Ankeny NWR**

It was a beautiful, sunny day at Ankeny NWR's Pintail Marsh for the February session of the Bilingual Preschool Program "Hawks Overhead!" Eleven preschoolers learned about the hawks that live at Ankeny through stories, photos and specimens, we observed 3 bald eagles, a great blue heron and lots of geese, swans and ducks. A couple garter snakes also made an appearance!



Parents were hands-on with their children for the February's Bilingual Preschool Program at Ankeny NWR, 2/20/20



### **Rail Trail Power Wash at Ankeny NWR.**

Wooden boardwalks in the Pacific Northwest can be a challenge at times because our climate can make a walkway into a slip-n-slide. For two weeks, Equipment Operators Matt With-ee and Jeremy Depiero pressure-washed the entire ½-mile long elevated wooden boardwalk called the Rail Trail at Ankeny NWR with mobile water tanks and long hose lays. They did an excellent job! We hope you find your next walk along this trail an enjoyable and sure-footed experience.





### **Volunteer Planting Party at Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge**

On Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> we had over 45 volunteers out at Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge helping with all sorts of projects for a work party. We've been working on the riparian restoration next to the Rail Trail parking lot for 4 years now. It's getting there! The trail got cleaned up, hundreds of cuttings planted, some mature milkweed went into the ground over by the upcoming Ankeny Hill Nature Center, and lots of pullouts were cleared of trash. The turnout was incredible! Such a fun day in the sun with amazing people helping the Refuge. Ankeny Refuge felt the love!



Thank you, Volunteers! A group picture with some of the volunteers at the Ankeny Refuge volunteer work party on February 22nd.

**President's message, continued from Page 1:** I'd like to salute our local partners in conservation that are named after this prominent naturalist; especially the Audubon Societies of Corvallis, Salem, and Portland. The Friends are currently closely partnered with the Salem Audubon Society and the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex to build the Ankeny Hill Nature Center at Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge.

The final celebration I'll mention here is World Migratory Bird Day, celebrated in North America this year on May 9th (and on other dates around the world during bird migrations). This celebration, originated by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center in 1993 and now managed by Environment for the Americas, recognizes the vital importance of migratory bird conservation in habitats and flyways around the world.

All of us, as members of the Friends and as partner members of the earth's astonishing ecosystem, have every reason to celebrate our planetary co-inhabitants; interdependent animals, birds, plants, and natural resources. I encourage everyone to join in the enjoyment and protection of all in our natural world that we depend upon.





## Photographing the Wild

Many people who visit the Refuges want to capture the beauty they see while they hike, and bring it home with them as images. To help people do this, our monthly event in March featured Mark Larsen, a nature photographer and volunteer for the Refuges. He gave a presentation at Finley Headquarters to an audience of thirty people. Mark explained how the camera functions and how to maximize both your photos and your photography experiences in the outdoors. To illustrate his lecture, Mark brought some of his pictures and explained how he had taken them.

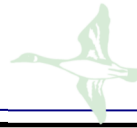


## Where am I?

This distinctive tree is at the side of a popular trail in the Refuge Complex. Where would you see it?

Answer: Along the Woodpecker Loop trail at William L. Finley Refuge.





### 120 Elk Enthusiasts Attend Talk at Finley Refuge

Biologist Nancy Taylor and Friends President Dave Landkamer (pictured above) gave an overflow crowd an in-depth look at our Willamette Valley elk.



The Finley herd ranges from Monroe to South Corvallis, with some bulls going into the Coast Range to Alsea. The plentiful food sources on and off the refuge have led to herd reproductive rates of 55%, at least 25% higher than in the wilder Cascades, where browse is less plentiful. Recent counts of elk in Finley and adjacent properties yield approximately 325 animals. About 180 elk have been observed on the refuge by volunteers of the Finley Elk Survey, led by Friends Biology Committee Chair Azizah Mohd. Threats to the herd include Chronic Wasting Disease ([https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/health\\_program/chronic\\_wasting/](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/health_program/chronic_wasting/)) and predation of calves by coyotes, cougars and bears.







# The Elk Bugle

## Stories from elk spotters in the field

by Dave Landkamer

If you haven't seen your local Roosevelt elk herd lately out at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, now might be the perfect time to go for a drive and have a look. They're looking strong and healthy, and your chances of seeing them are pretty good too.

Now is a good time to see them for several reasons. First of all, the leaves on trees and shrubs have started to come out, so the vegetation doesn't yet give the elk much cover to hide in. The elk are also coming out onto the fields more often now, to graze on all of that fresh, nutritious, sprouting grass that's pushing up toward the spring sunshine. They can be seen any time of day, but most often they like to graze the fields just after sunrise, and just before sunset.

The bulls have dropped their antlers. When the female elk stop emitting pheromones as their estrus cycles end in winter, testosterone levels in the males drop off precipitously, and this causes their antlers to break off at the base, often with a loud "crack". This typically happens in March. Each bull will be starting to grow a new set off antlers for the next rutting season in late summer/fall.

At the end of winter, I saw a total of 168 elk in three separate herds along the Finley Refuge Road, including a group of over 20 bulls that were still playfully sparring with each other with their full antler racks. For best sighting opportunities this month, I recommend the fields and prairies south of the Prairie Overlook, and the big fields southeast of the headquarters building. Bring your binoculars and get ready for a thrill.

Bobcat



Male elk practicing social distancing



## SIGNS OF SPRING AT FINLEY REFUGE

Fairy Slipper Orchid  
by  
Brendan Carver

Baby Coots  
By  
Paul Rentz







Meantime...while the humans are in lockdown...



From the Facebook page of World Wildlife Defense. Thanks to Diane Young for sending it.



## 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.



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