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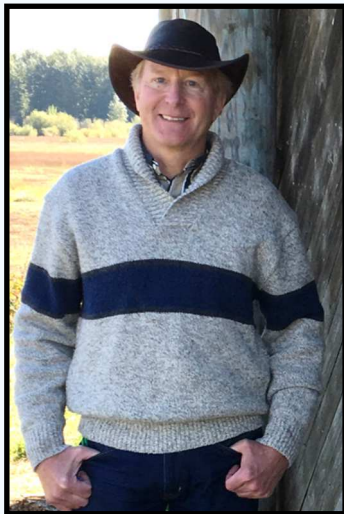
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President's Column



Dave Landkamer

We are experiencing extraordinary times since our last newsletter in March, which by now seems like a long, long time ago (if not in a galaxy far, far away). Since the last issue of the Wild Goose Tales, the Covid-19 virus has spread across our world and profoundly altered the ways we live and interact. More recently we have witnessed the unnecessary death of George Floyd, and a remarkable local and worldwide response to racial and social injustices in America. These important realities demand our attention and response; with our compassion we can and will change to guide our

human world toward improvements and a better direction. Many are deserving of our respect and admiration for how they have embodied positive response and change during these unprecedented events. I hope that we can all remain safe as we build our mutual biological and social resilience.

I'd like to shift focus for a moment to draw attention to a few very positive things that have continued to happen locally and quietly while we have been so urgently preoccupied.

First of all, I'd like to thank all of our members for continuing your steadfast support of our Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Complex (FWVNWRC) non-profit organization. During the virus pandemic, our store has been closed to help limit virus spread, and this means that we have lost our primary, foundational source of income for our growing portfolio of conservation-related projects. However, our membership has continued to grow through new and renewal

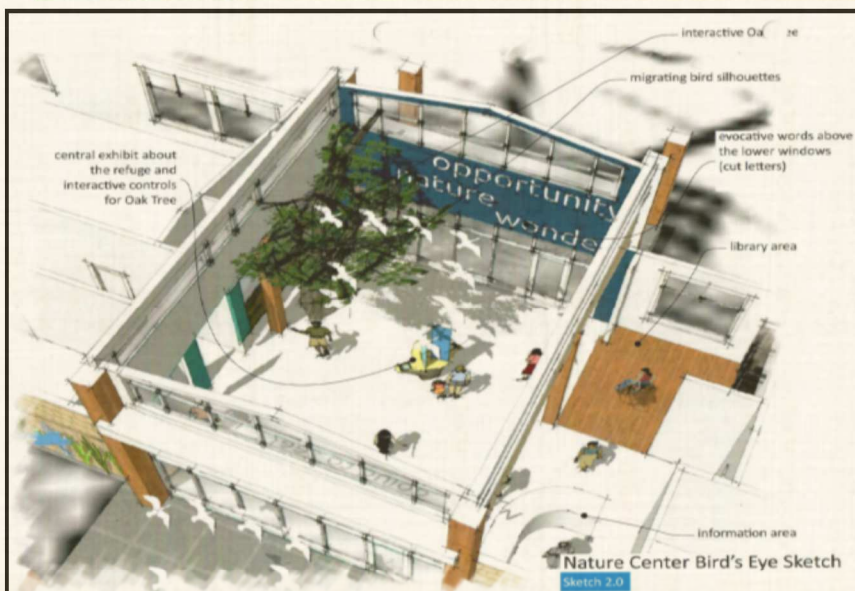
FRIENDS' MISSION

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.*

memberships, and generous donations continue to be sent to us by our devoted members. This support and funding is essential for our survival during these difficult times, and encourages us to keep our eyes on the bright conservation future we have together. Thanks to each and every one of you who has joined us and donated to the Friends, especially since March.

(continued on Page 11)



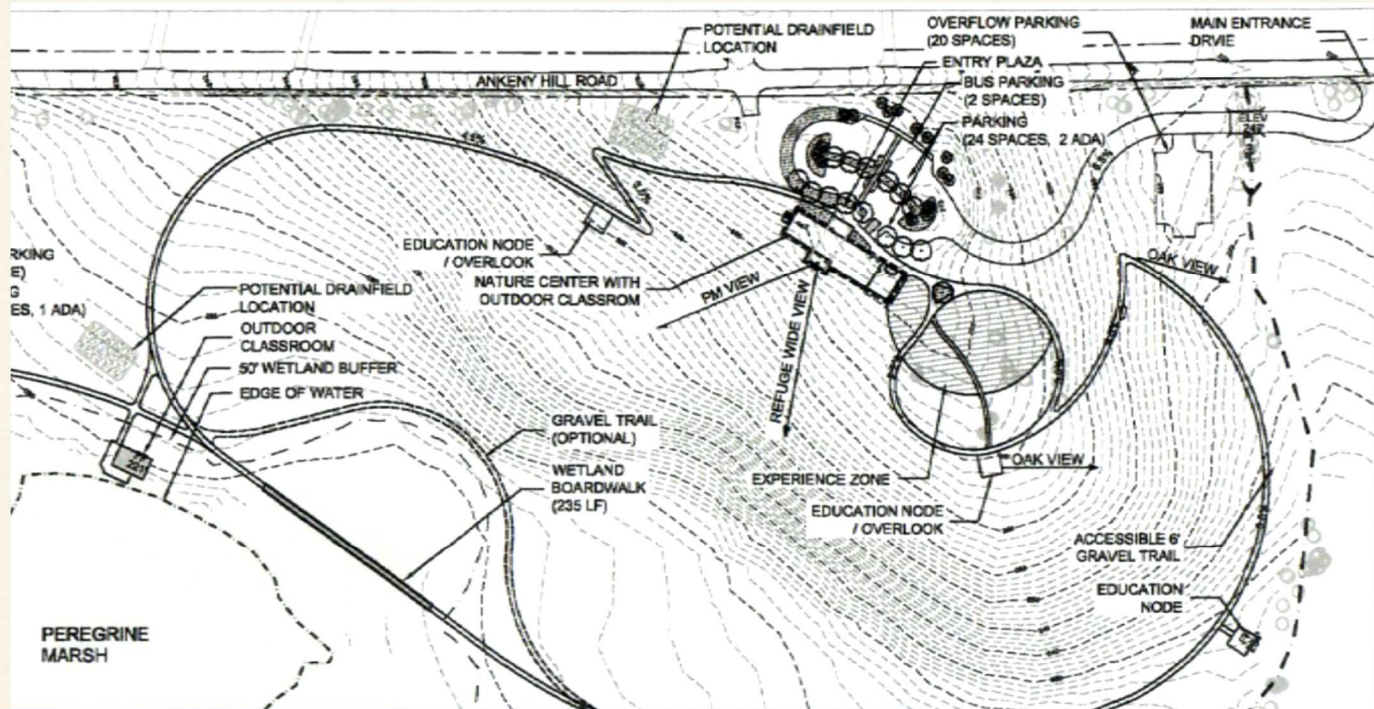
Ankeny Hill Nature Center Construction Continues

Many of you know that the Friends of the Willamette National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Salem Audubon Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partnered together nearly 10 years ago to develop a nature center on a 25-acre section of Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge.

Since this time, the first phase of the nature center has been built and Conway Construction out of the State of Washington is in the process of constructing the parking lots, access road, volunteer building, outdoor lighting and the walking trails. They plan to have this work completed by September. Alchemy of Design has also signed a contract to construct the outdoor overlook, entrance sign and kiosk to begin work in August. Presently, the water system has been finalized, windows have been bird strike proofed and an "open house" event committee is in the process of making plans for the opening of the Center. This area is closed for public use while this construction is taking place, but hopefully sometime this fall everyone will have an opportunity to experience the Center and all of its facilities. Remember that part of the vision for the Center is to "Connect People with Nature".



Help the Friends Fulfill the Vision of the Ankeny Hill Nature Center



When completed, the Center will include indoor and outdoor classrooms, an exhibit room, trails with educational stations, a nature exploration area, an outdoor classroom at nearby Peregrine Marsh, and meeting and office space.

How can you help fulfill this vision? The Friends and Salem Audubon Society have begun a campaign to raise donated funds to complete the final phase of the Ankeny Hill Nature Center, the construction of the Nature Explore Area and the Dave Marshall Outdoor Classroom facility. So far

nearly \$400,000 has been pledged from dedicated donors, but we will need at least twice this amount to complete everything. Plans are to contract the construction of the Dave Marshall Outdoor classroom off of Buena Vista Road by next summer. Any amount of donations will help; plans are that everyone that pledge \$500 or more will have their names inscribed on the wall of the Center. Yet, anyone that donates any amount will be gratefully honored for your help. Thank you for considering in helping out on a pledge and donation.

Donations can be mailed to:
Friends of the WVNRC, P.O. Box 2238 Corvallis, OR 97339
with AHNC in the memo line.

American White Pelican



Legacy Oak Becomes Part of the Ankeny Hill Nature Center

By Samantha Bartling, US Fish & Wildlife Service

There was a large oak tree standing near the Nature Center building years ago. We wanted to keep it as a centerpiece of the new Nature Center, but it had been in decline for years. After an arborist evaluated the tree, we found it had a very small percentage of living material remaining and was a hazard tree.

We wanted the tree to live on, so it was taken to Zena Forest, a local family-owned mill. There it was cut and dried for over two years to ready the wood for furniture making. The picture you see here shows George Essaides of Willamette Valley Fine Woodworking's beautiful craftsmanship. The oak tables are the centerpieces of the new indoor classroom. The tables can be configured as a conference table or wheeled apart for stations or desks for classrooms.

The oak stump is visible from inside the Nature Center so folks using the classrooms can see where the furniture came from.

New Oregon white oaks will be planted on the knoll and the first education node, or interpretive stop, along the new trail system will be the Oak Overlook. It is a glimpse into the past and future from the vantage of a legacy oak.



You will Be Missed!

WALT HAMMOND

How does one properly honor and thank someone who has taken care of a Refuge, its critters, habitats and people for more than 26 years? After a 37-year career with USFWS, Engineering Equipment Operator Walt Hammond has retired. Many of you know Walt and if you don't, you have traveled the roads he has graded, trails he has kept clear, boardwalks he has fixed, and watched waterfowl on the marshes he helped create and maintain. He's the silent magician and master craftsman behind so much at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge. THANK YOU, WALT! You are a legend.



ISABEL JUSTINIANO

Isabel joined the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge team on November 1st, 2018 as an intern working on the Complex's Latino Engagement Program. From family nature crafts to the bilingual preschool program and trivia night, she brought new events to the Complex, in both English and Spanish and in new formats, that helped introduced more of our communities to their Refuges. Not to mention the bilingual programming, outreach, environmental education, Visitor Services program support, and so much more! June 4th was her last day and soon she'll be starting her master's degree at Oregon State in the Fall. On behalf of the Complex, Friends, partners, Winter Wildlife Field Day team - and all she worked with - THANK YOU!!!



The Woodpecker Loop

Environmental Education Experience

By Samantha Bartling, US Fish & Wildlife Service

A new addition to Woodpecker Loop is here! The new features create an environmental education experience, or Discovery Trail. The introductory sign with maps is not up yet but all of the stanchions are! Walk along the Woodpecker Loop trail at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge. They are six in number, to match the different habitats hikers encounter as they hike the loop – Oak Woodland, Oak Savanna, Upland Prairie, Mixed Forest, Riparian Area, and Seasonal Wetland. Each of the stanchions has a door; open it, and you will find a laminated card that has more information about the habitat and its plants and animals. The cards are in English and Spanish, and refuge staff will change them periodically to cover different themes, and to appeal to all ages. So there will be something new to discover and learn on your next hike. Stroll around the Loop and check them out!



Photos by Diane Young
and Samantha Bartling



The Elk Bugle: Stories from Elk Spotters in the Field,

by Dave Landkamer

Sometimes, all you have to do is slow down, look, and listen, and good things happen. That was my experience on the first Saturday evening of June when I was doing our Friends elk survey at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge.

I started out the survey driving west from Highway 99 on McFarland road along the southern edge of the refuge and crossing Muddy Creek. As the road left the forested riparian corridor and started to cross the field, I couldn't see very far because the grass on both sides of the road was 5 feet high or more, and my small car doesn't have monster-truck shocks or a periscope. I continued on to the southwest corner of the refuge, parked my car, and stood on the hood to see beyond the tall grass. Back toward Muddy Creek, not far north of the road, I could see some objects poking up above the grass and moving back and forth.

I trained my binoculars on the action, and sure enough, there was a group elk moving through the tall grass. I could barely see a few sets of spike antlers and ears sticking up above the grass seed heads as the elk slowly moved to the northwest. I hope they're not allergic to grass pollen like I am.



<https://boolie.me/tag/elk/>

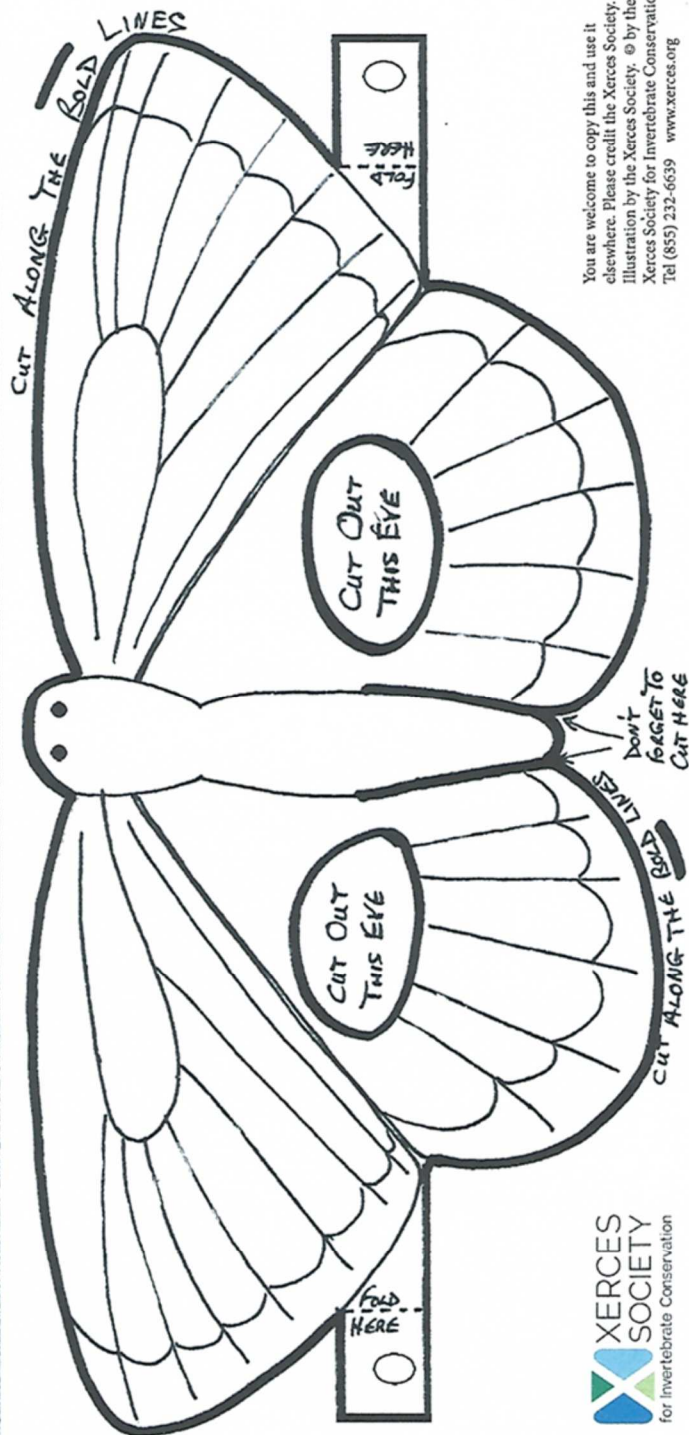
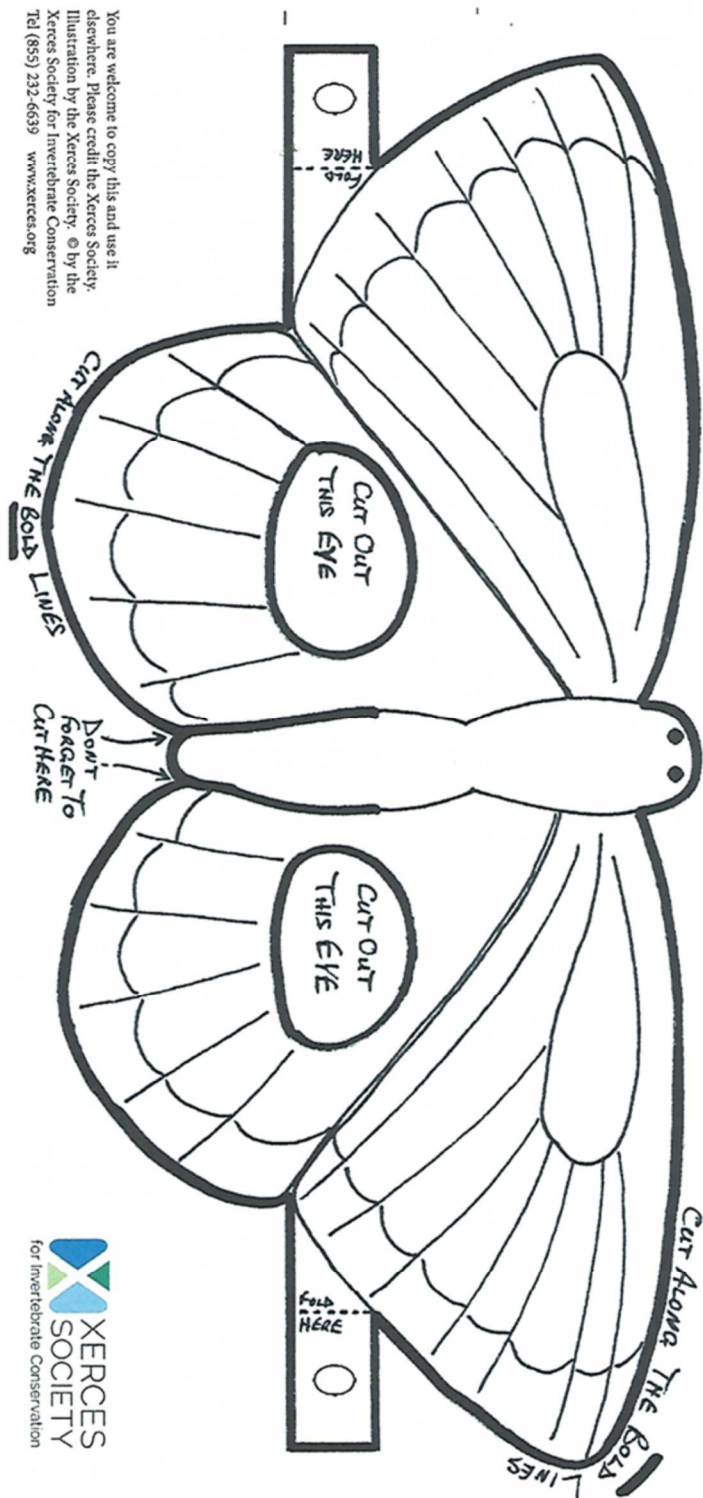
To get a better look, I drove halfway back to Muddy Creek along McFarland Road to park next to a large bush for some cover and climbed back up on my hood again. The elk were just starting to bed down in a patch of somewhat shorter grass about 100 yards away. I counted 16 elk, three with sprouting antlers, and I wondered if I was looking at the new local bachelor herd. I enjoyed watching them for a long time, especially since I hadn't seen them for a few months since the Covid-19 virus arrived in our area.

It's always good to see the elk and the other occupants of our natural ecosystem on our refuges and be reminded that they all still have a few relatively wild and secluded places in our valley to live, as they have since long before we were here. The wild spaces in our three local National Wildlife Refuges become more precious and important every day as more and more people come here to live. Now, in this moment, is a great time to slow down to enjoy and appreciate it.



Wikipedia.org

NATURE GAMES FOR YOUNG NATURALISTS: MAKE A MASK



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Butterfly Glasses

Easy to make, and fun to wear!

- Color the butterfly in any colors.
- Carefully cut around the glasses, following the bold line (—). Don't forget to cut the sides of the body.
- Cut out the eye holes.
- Make two holes in the head and add pipe cleaner antennae.
- Punch a hole in the ends of the arms, and fold the ends back. Then attach pipe cleaner, and fold it around your ears.

Butterfly Glasses

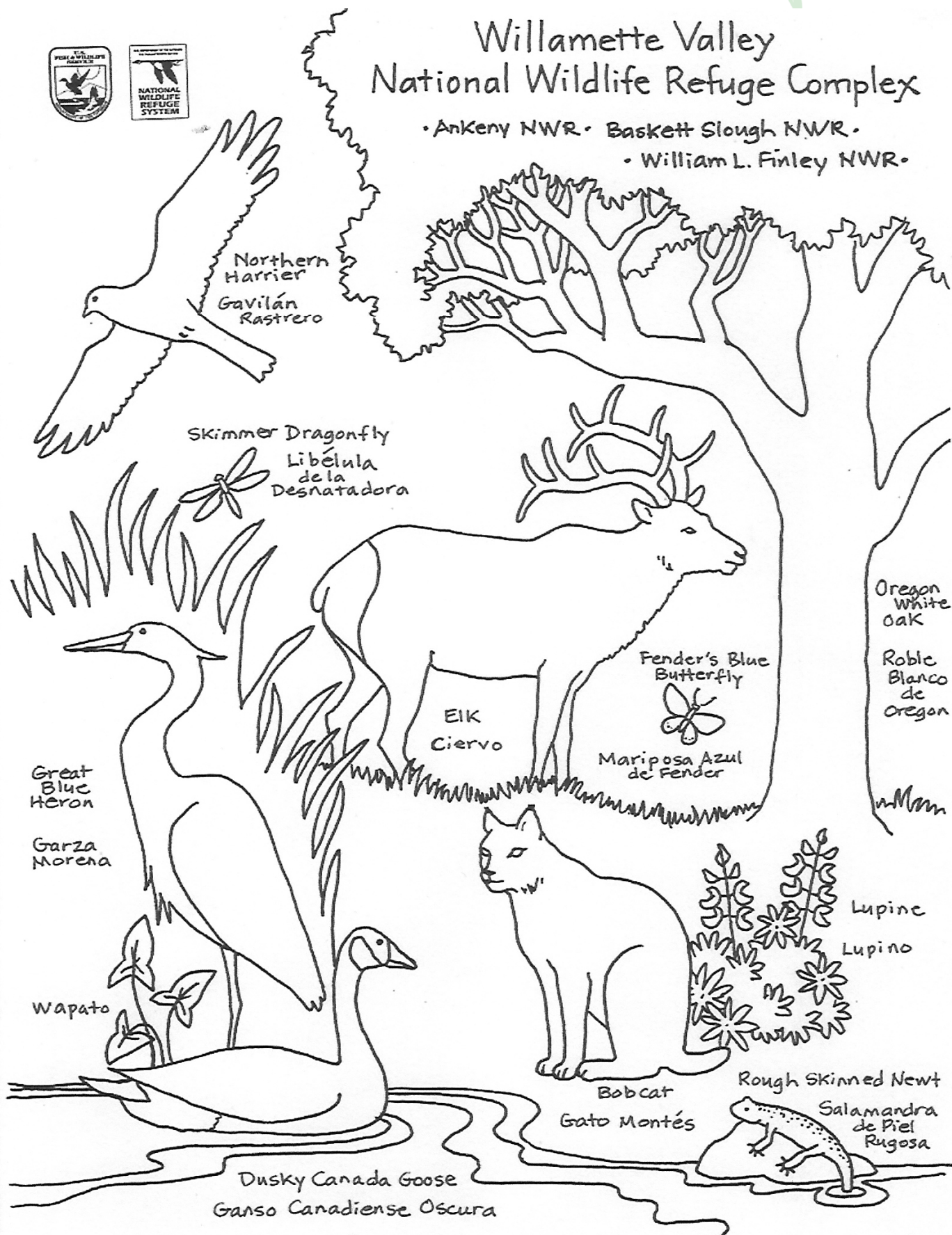
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Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex

- Ankeny NWR • Baskett Slough NWR •
- William L. Finley NWR •



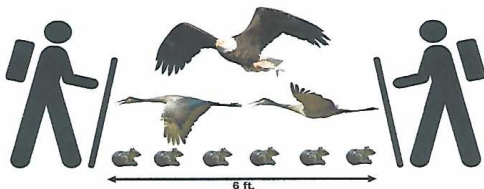


Remember! The corona virus is still with us. For everybody's health and safety, please observe Refuge Complex rules:

Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Please Do Your Part

REFUGE VISITORS



Practice Social Distancing
Keep 6 feet of space at all times



**Pack Out
Your Trash**



**Stay Home if
You're Sick!**



Share the Trail



Alert other visitors you
are there and step
aside to let them pass



**Do Not Gather
in Groups**

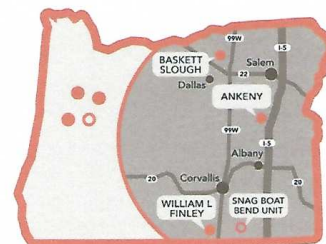


FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.fws.gov/refuge/William_L_Finley

www.fws.gov/refuge/Ankeny

www.fws.gov/refuge/Baskett_Slough





Baskett Slough Tree Frogs

by Azizah Mohd



President message continued: Second, although we have had to indefinitely postpone our outstanding series of First Sunday Outreach Programs at our local refuges due to social distancing requirements, we are looking forward to getting them back on a regular basis as soon as circumstances allow, and will keep you all notified of our progress to do so. Meanwhile, six new environmental education stations were installed along the Woodpecker Loop trail in March. Station helps visitors to relate to the different native residents and habitats encountered along the trail through themed, interactive information at each station. And, the information will be swapped regularly so it will provide fresh experiences for new and return visitors all the time. This exciting project was the result of a grant we were awarded from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Third, our partnership project* for the development and construction of the Ankeny Hill Nature Center continues to move ahead. Phase one of the main Nature Center building has been completed, and the well and water treatment system for the facility are in place. This summer, the new access road and parking area are slated for completion, and interpretive elements around the center are in progress. Oak tables fashioned from the wood of a majestic white oak that had to be cut down at the site have recently been delivered for use in the Center. Next will be an Outdoor classroom for future educational programs, and an interpretive trail joining all the elements together. We hope to have an open house to celebrate this progress when circumstances allow. Finally, phase two of the main building construction will add a central entryway, an exhibit area, and offices to complete the Center.

The scale and scope of this ambitious project were initiated by a \$1.3 million gift from Mark Gehlar to the Salem Audubon Society. In addition, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has contributed another \$1.5 million for roads and other necessary infrastructure. When complete, the Ankeny Hill Nature Center will be a community resource for conservation and environmental education that will serve our valley for decades to come. Please be sure to read the article inside this addition of Wild Goose Tales to learn more about how you can support this far-reaching partnership project.

These three examples spotlight the very positive and real progress we continue to make in fulfillment of our conservation mission, with your ongoing support. Together and apart, we are making a big difference!

*The Ankeny Hill Nature Center, at Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge, has been made possible by a three-way partnership between the Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex, the Salem Audubon Society, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

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

