

WILD GOOSE TALES

OCTOBER 2020



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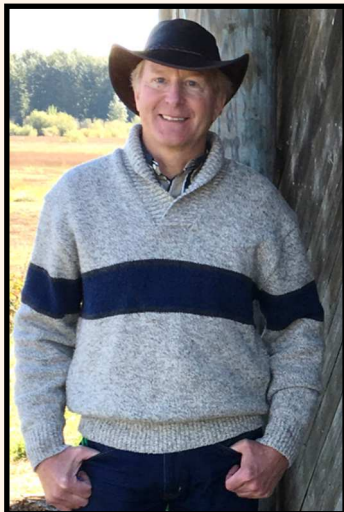
KATIE BERNSTEIN

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President's Column



Dave Landkamer

Friends Receive an Amazing Endowment Gift

In spite of the extraordinary challenges that we all have faced this past year, the Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Complex (Friends) also received an extraordinary gift. In December 2019, we were given an amazingly generous \$500,000 donation by an anonymous donor to establish an endowment fund.

We have partnered with Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) to create the Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex Fund of Ore

gon Community Foundation. OCF's stewardship and long-term investment program will maintain our endowment fund in perpetuity, providing us with a stable stream of income that will support our growing non-profit organization and mission, our local wildlife and their habitats, and natural resources conservation in our valley forever.

OCF is a grant-making public charity dedicated to improving the lives of people in Oregon through the combined powers of philanthropy and prudent financial management. Our endowment fund is managed and invested by OCF in global equity, private equity, inflation hedging, marketable alternatives, and fixed income to maximize annual distributions while also maintaining the purchasing power of the endowment into the future. In other words, the endowment now provides us with revenue of \$20,000 to \$25,000 every year to fund our priority conservation projects. In addition, the endowment is designed

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 grow, so that the annual revenue we receive will also grow over time.

Our Friends mission has three key components, all centered on supporting the wildlife and natural resources of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex (WVNWRC), which includes Ankeny, Baskett Slough, and William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuges:

(continued on Page 11)



https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Ankeny/Wildlife_and_Habitat/TEE_Species.html

We wish to thank our members and volunteers for your continued support this year. It has not been the easiest of times, yet you have still supported your Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex with your time and your membership renewals and donations.

We always strive to spend your contributions wisely and conservatively as we are small in number but large in conservation ideals. Some of the projects we chose to fund this year may not have been completed without your support. Pat yourself on the back, give yourself a hug, and smile kindly upon yourselves. Your action and support does not go unnoticed.

One of our favorite projects, which you contributed to, was helping USFWS complete the Streaked Horned Lark Survey. This threatened species, pictured above, was listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges provide many acres of habitat for these birds to breed, nest and thrive. William L Finley and Baskett Slough NWRs are choice habitats for them in the Willamette Valley. They are a ground nesting bird that prefers a disturbed but secluded prairie habitat that has not been mowed, plowed or maintained by mankind. Your USFW partners were up early these summer mornings scouring the fields in search of this reclusive bird. They were not disappointed and reported nesting and breeding pairs. I'm sure a longer report will come out later which I will try to share.

You also helped to fund the ongoing Cabell Marsh Restoration Project at William L Finley NWR. This project involved some heavy lifting in removing invasive reed canary grass that chokes out our native plants. Mowing, disking, spraying, and bulldozers were needed to complete this back-breaking task. Once removed and before our autumn rains begin, native seeds will be sowed for a healthier habitat. Habitat Restoration is one of the Friends forever goals.

This last winter a set of new environmental education stations were installed on the Woodpecker Loop Trail at William L Finley NWR, adding an important educational element to the new Woodpecker Loop shelter and other improvements that your support has made possible.

(continued on page 8)



Muddy Valley USFWS and landowner



Muddy Valley Easement Wetland



Muddy Valley Easement

FANTASTIC PARTNERS

by Cameron King

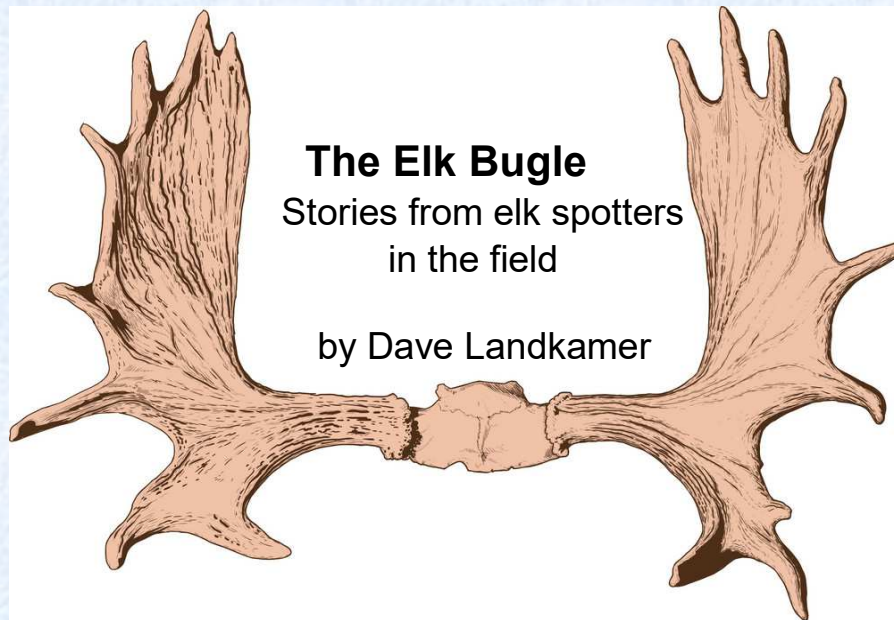
Here in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, the Partner's for Fish and Wildlife program benefits greatly from a strong conservation community and generous, hard-working partners. This was demonstrated for the past decade in the Muddy Valley of Yamhill County, where a conservation easement had succumbed to significant weed pressure and substantially altered hydrology, but the hard work and cooperation between numerous partners has led to the final phase of wetland restoration at the complex nearing its completion.

Throughout the phased restoration process, drain tile lines were disabled, old infrastructure and defunct berms were replaced with new and improved berms and spillways, weed control and site preparation measures were instituted, and native plant materials including bulbs, plugs, seed, trees, and shrubs, were used to uplift the plant community.

The outcome of these efforts is more than 150 acres of contiguous restored habitats, including wetlands, Muddy Creek floodplain, wet prairie, riparian forest, upland prairie, and mixed forest/shrubland.

This restoration site is adjacent to or nearby more than 1,000 acres of other private lands that are currently being restored or in the process of developing restoration plans.

Partners for the project are NRCS, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Yamhill Soil and Watershed Conservation District, The Nature Conservancy, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.



The Elk Bugle

Stories from elk spotters
in the field

by Dave Landkamer

Before sunrise on the first Saturday of September, I was conducting the elk survey at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, and the universe seemed to be unfolding as it should. The wildlife was abundant and active, and a few people were awake to be a part of the landscape of interactions.

I started the survey on Finley Road around 5:30 that morning when it was still too dark to see much more than shadows, so I parked at the Prairie Overlook and waited on the deck for the dawn to arrive. Great horned owls hooted their presence from the Muddy Creek forest below a setting moon, and a V of Canada geese flew south against the orangy eastern sky.

I could see dark movements in the prairie grass far to the south, and hear constant, interactive mewing that confirmed the presence of an elk herd. As the morning dawned, I could make out about 45 elk; cows, calves, and a few bulls, moving gradually west into the shelter of the Muddy Creek riparian corridor. I watched and listened to them in the morning quiet for half an hour or so.

Further west along Finley Road, I encountered more of the usual suspects: multiple rabbits (brush rabbits and eastern cottontails), California quail scuttling into blackberry brambles, acorn woodpeckers laughing in the oaks, and another early morning wildlife watcher cruising the road in an SUV.

Heading south along Belfountain Road, a large bobcat was standing on the shoulder, and quickly disappeared west into the fir trees. Turning east onto Bruce Road, past the tree farm and into the recent clearcut, I passed a black tailed deer doe shadowed by a still-spotted fawn, a jackrabbit, and a small raft of red-snooded turkeys. South of Pigeon Butte, I pulled over and stepped out of my car to watch a pair of coyotes hunting the flanks of the refuge high point.

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Wild Goose Nature Store Begins Online Sales

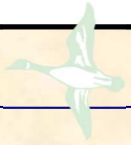
by Lena Proebsting
Co—Manager

Have you missed the Wild Goose Nature Store these past 6 months? We certainly missed opening our doors to you. During the COVID closure, we have been busy working on some items for the store, like table runners, table mats, hot pads, etc. If you are thinking about the changing season and home décor, we can offer an online sale of these items. Depending on responses, we may be able to offer other items in the store in this manner.

If interested, contact: secretary.friends@gmail.com . Please include your name and email address (or phone number) so the store manager can answer questions and provide specific information. Currently, the nature store is not authorized to make credit card sales off – site so payment will have to be by check, money order or cash.

Table Runners (13" x 46") are \$35, Hot Pads (8.5" square) are \$5.50 and Table Mats & Wall Hangings vary in price from \$20 - \$28 depending on size and amount of stitching involved.





Refuge Reports to the Friends

By Samantha Bartling, USFWS, Visitor Services Manager



Goodbye Until Next Year (we hope)...

MOUNTAINS of thanks to **Paul and Janet Hart**, our superstar resident volunteers, as they leave at the end of their third season. Completing more than 960 volunteer hours, they absolutely obliterated the original work list we gave them within just a few weeks.

Many of you saw them out picking up trash, restocking brochures, staining benches, clearing trails, mowing, painting and removing graffiti and weeds. Thanks for your kind words - they really enjoyed interacting with visitors.

They have become an incredibly important part of our Refuge team and we are beyond lucky to have them. We hope to see them next year!



Snag Boat Bend Unit

(William L Finley NWR)

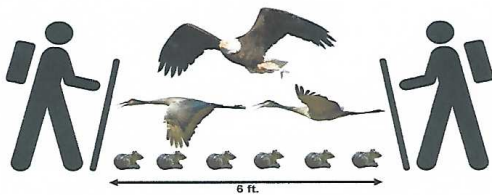


The corona virus is still with us!

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**

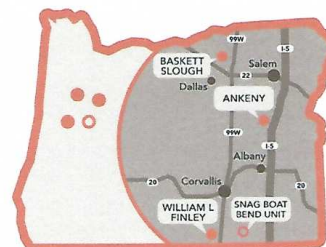


FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.fws.gov/refuge/William_L_Finley

www.fws.gov/refuge/Ankeny

www.fws.gov/refuge/Baskett_Slough





(Your Support Makes All the Difference, continued from page 2)

Your contributions also support our longer term, ongoing projects at the refuges. Our Wild Goose Nature Store at William L Finley NWR provides valuable visitor services contacts during weekends, and generates profits from sales for conservation projects. This year we completed our fourth consecutive year of elk surveys.

We also finished our first full year of monthly, first Sunday outreach event across all of our refuge units, on topics from geology to fish.

We currently have a new brochure in the works (targeted for completion this fall/winter) that will help to promote our organization and important conservation work.

And, thanks to your support, we were able to upgrade our computers to improve administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

Finally, your contributions have helped us to support the creation of the new and exciting Ankeny Hill Nature Center. Thank you once again! We were able to contribute to classroom furniture including a set of beautiful oak tables, crafted from an ancient oak tree from the site (that sadly was dying and had to be removed for safety reasons). We also helped to provide a water filtration system for safe drinking water for the Nature Center. Stay tuned for more updates regarding the completion and opening of this welcoming new Nature Center.

Together we are making many positive changes for conservation, even during these challenging times, and it's all because of your generous support.



Joe Staff



(The Elk Bugle, continued from page 4)



<https://www.dreamstime.com/>

Just then a classic old blue pickup pulled up alongside me and the congenial driver rolled down the window to chat. He had a bow and quiver of arrows in the cab, and a refuge permit to hunt a cow elk. We talked for quite awhile about elk behaviors and trails across the refuge, with a few pop culture topics mixed in. As he pulled away, I wished him luck, and noticed that I had left my lights and heater on in my car, so I turned them off, and returned to watching the coyotes. They gradually moved into cover to the west and out of sight. I got back in my car to discover that the car battery was completely flat. I'd never done this before on an elk survey. I opened up the hood, and hauled out my jumper cables to wait for a rescue.

It wasn't long before a local man in a small sedan came along and stopped to give me a jump. As we hooked up the cables, he told me that cougars were killing his neighbor's sheep west of the refuge, and we talked about various, dynamic interactions between humans and wildlife. Soon my car was recharged, I was mobile again, and driving east. At McFadden Marsh, I stopped to watch 17 great egrets, a few great blue herons, and a family of ten nutria gathered in and around the water below the bridge. The adults were busy munching vegetation, while several kits chased each other on land and in the water, wrestling and squealing all the way.

Altogether, it was an excellent elk survey. I had to conclude that I got a real charge out of watching wildlife and their interactions this morning.



The Friends Expand Into Video



Would you like to sit in your living room, and at the same time take in the sights and sounds of some of the beautiful trails of our refuges? This winter, you will be able to enjoy our beautiful natural refuge environments over the internet. Kai Frueh, who has organized Big Sit birdwatching events at William L. Finley refuge, has agreed to produce a series of videos focusing on different refuge trails. The first video will highlight the Rich Guadagno Trail at Baskett Slough NWR, followed by trails at William L. Finley NWR, and finally, Ankeny NWR. The Friends will post the videos of our website (<http://friendswvnwrc.org/>), our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FWVNWRC/>), YouTube and Instagram. So, some winter night, you will be able to transport yourself to some of your favorite hikes.



(President's Column, continued from page 1:)

PROMOTE the conservation of the natural resources within the Refuge Complex.

FOSTER awareness and appreciation of the Refuge Complex through educational and recreational opportunities.

PARTICIPATE in activities that help the Refuge Complex achieve its goals.

This focused mission has led to a long list of our notable conservation accomplishments since organizational beginnings in 2006. For a summary of our projects this last year, please read the article in this edition of our Wild Goose Tails Newsletter.

Up until now, our projects have been funded by income from a growing list of vital sources. First, we collect dues for memberships in our organization, from a wide base of grassroots supporters in our valley and across the country, as far away as Hawaii and New England. Our members, and non-members as well, give donations generously throughout the year and during our regular funding appeals. We also operate the Wild Goose Nature Store at the William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge headquarters building, as most of you already know. The profits from this creative volunteer-managed and operated nature store have been essential to our capacity to deliver successful projects. We also leverage our regular income sources to apply for grants from other organizations that offer financial support for our conservation work. Each of these sources will continue to provide the lifeblood of our local, all-volunteer, non-profit conservation organization.

And now, because of the amazing gift we received this year to establish the OCF Endowment Fund, our annual income has nearly doubled instantly, and our organization has been transformed into a permanent conservation force in our valley for all time. What does this endowment gift mean to us and our greater conservation community? Immediately, it means that the Friends have much greater financial sustainability, can accomplish even more, and can dream bigger than ever before in support of our local natural resources. It means that people in our valley (especially one particular anonymous donor or family of donors) care deeply about our National Wildlife Refuges and the precious natural resources and wildlife they protect. It also reminds us that our members and donors value and trust our mission, our accomplishments, and our positive impacts enough to so generously invest in our future conservation efforts and successes.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I wish to publicly acknowledge our anonymous benefactor for the gift to establish this remarkable OCF endowment fund. I also wish to express my gratitude to all of our members, donors, and volunteers for your crucial support of our conservation mission and accomplishments.

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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Corvallis, OR 97339

secretary.friends@gmail.com

Phone: 541-757-7236 Ext. 224

VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.FRIENDSWVNWRC.ORG

