

# Friends *Forward*



SPRING 2008

## Friend of the Year, Other Awards Are Announced

The Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota were named Friends Group of the Year while **Kevin Brennan**, manager of the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District (WMD), is the 2008 Refuge Manager of the Year. The awards were presented by the National Wildlife Refuge Association on April 6 during the *Friends for the Future* Conference, co-sponsored by the Association and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Other winners were **Clyde Morris**, recently retired manager of Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, named Employee of the Year and **John Bertrand** from Friends of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico as Volunteer of the Year.

The Friends of Sherburne Refuge is active on many fronts. The Friends co-sponsor six special events each year,



**Bosque del Apache Refuge Friend John Bertrand was named Volunteer of the Year for his myriad of accomplishments.**

including National Public Lands Day as well as a wildlife film festival and a Christmas bird count. The group also maintains memberships in four local chambers of commerce and partnerships with the Rapids Archer Club, National Camera Exchange, the University of Minnesota Raptor Center and others.

The Sherburne Friends are extremely generous with their time, talent and funds. With grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Friends purchased 40 acres of wetland habitat that were donated to Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. In 2007 the group provided financial support for an intern in the Student Conservation Employment Program and has just launched a capital campaign to raise \$5 million for a new visitor center.

Employee of the Year Clyde Morris “has a unique ability,” said San Francisco Bay Refuge Complex project leader Mendel Stewart. “He knows how to get things done.” Stewart says Morris brings to his work a rare combination of natural science knowledge, effective leadership skills and common sense.

Morris’ openness to innovative solutions, his entrepreneurial spirit and his courage in the face of the “way it is”  
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## Pass the News Around

*Friends Forward* newsletter is available online so you can pass the word around to everyone in your Friends organization and to prospective members. Due to financial constraints, a limited number of newsletter copies are mailed to Friends organizations and refuge staff at the national wildlife refuge address. Once you get your copy, send your Friends to <http://www.fws.gov/friends/home/frontpg-blue-600.asp> to get the latest edition. 🌱

## From the Chief

### The Next 100 Years

The face of America is changing quickly and dramatically. Whether you look at your own community or at Census Bureau statistics, you can see change happening almost in front of your eyes. What does it all mean for the Refuge System and Refuge Friends?

First, let’s look at a few statistics that some of you heard from Dr. Emily



Geoff Haskett

Sheffield of the University of California/Davis, who spoke at the Friends for the Future Conference April 5-6. By 2100, American is projected to have 571 million people. Our population is growing by about three million people each year.

Between 2000 and 2030, 88 percent of the U.S. population growth will take place in southern and western Census regions. By 2030, 20 percent of national

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# For the Birds – and People

National wildlife refuges are great places for birds, which is why they are at the core of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Refuge System Birding Initiative. Now, a major partnership that grew out of the Initiative will bring new ventures for those who love both birds and national wildlife refuges.

The Service signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the nonprofit Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology on February 20, forging a critical partnership with one of the nation's leading ornithological resources. Among the joint ventures already under discussion include new feeder and nest watch programs on refuges, opportunities for visitors to participate in citizen science projects, and eBird Tracker – an online, interactive network of computer kiosks where visitors can

record sightings, consult video field guides and check bird lists.

"Bird watching has never been more popular. With so many people across the country enjoying the wonders of birds, we are committed to providing them with great wildlife viewing opportunities at national wildlife refuges across the country," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director H. Dale Hall.

The Birding Initiative was launched in 2006 with the appointment of 14 individuals to a Birding Team. The team includes Service employees and members of the birding community, including birding industry executives, nonprofit organizations and state fish and game staff.



**Hundreds of national wildlife refuges have been established along flyways.**

The *Friends for the Future* National Friends Conference in April featured sessions on birding. The Birding Team is hoping that Refuge Friends will help launch and evaluate pilot projects, train interpreters, introduce refuge visitors to new programs and help raise funds for computer kiosks and other resources. 🌱

## Preserving Old Timbers Lodge

Big Oaks Conservation Society (BOCS), the support organization for Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge in Indiana, has taken on a new challenge – assuming stewardship of Old Timbers Lodge, built in the early 1930s by Alexander Thomson, CEO of Champion Paper and now on refuge land.



**Photograph of Old Timber Lodge from an *Indianapolis Star* article on December 29, 1940. BOCS President Jim Leveille notes that the vegetation in the photograph suggests it was taken shortly after construction in 1932.**

The lodge has been host to songwriter Cole Porter, the founders of Procter & Gamble and the Johnsons of Johnson & Johnson, who are believed to have tested floor waxes on the floors of the lodge's soaring, 68-foot by 36-foot Great Room. The lodge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is currently open to visitors only through special arrangement and escort by Service or BOCS personnel.

Old Timbers Lodge and the surrounding 2,300 acres became federal property before World War II with the establishment of Jefferson Proving Ground, a munitions testing site. The U.S. Army still owns the lodge. Until BOCS became involved, upkeep was the responsibility of the Indiana Air National Guard.

"Neither the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service nor the Air Guard have the means or mission to preserve old buildings, so we felt well within our mission to step in to take on preserving the lodge as an important cultural asset of the refuge," says BOCS president Jim Leveille.

The group is taking a two-pronged strategy. First, they are tapping the considerable expertise and enthusiasm of BOCS volunteers to spruce up the building and make cosmetic repairs. BOCS member Dave Bear, who teaches building trades at the local high school, will lead 50-75 volunteers during "Lodge Makeover Weekend" in early May. The volunteers will clean, caulk, scrape, paint, unclog gutters and evict boring bees. "A major infusion of elbow grease," explains Leveille.

The second part of the effort will be raising money to cover major repairs and needed maintenance equipment. For that, Leveille and his wife Sara have put together a CD presentation for public showings. In addition, BOCS is exploring both local grant opportunities and the potential for corporate donations.

Once the preservation work on the lodge is complete, BOCS plans on using it to provide a location for refuge support activities and to educate the public about the cultural past of the surrounding land. 🌱

# Small Wetlands Program Celebrates Golden Anniversary

If you revel at the sight of a flock of ducks flying across the sky, you should join the celebration to thank a program you may not even know – the Small Wetlands Program. A model conservation success story, the Small Wetlands Program is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

The program has conserved about three million acres of wetlands and grasslands that today compose nearly all of the 36,000 Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) within the Refuge System. WPAs are heavily concentrated in states within the Prairie Pothole region, a

300,000-square-mile area stretching from northern central Canada to the upper Midwest and northern Great Plains of the U.S.

You may not live in that part of the country, but land acquisition through the Small Wetlands Program has benefited anyone who values waterfowl and grassland birds.

The Prairie Pothole region accounts for just 10 percent of North American waterfowl breeding habitat. Yet, it produces nearly half of the continent's waterfowl and such migratory species

as the bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, American white pelican, black tern, yellow rail, Sprague's pipit, chestnut-collared longspur and Baird's sparrow, among others.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service uses sophisticated Geographic Positioning Systems and habitat assessments to target WPA acquisitions that maximize the number and diversity of birds. Beyond the three

million acres already protected, the Service has identified another 1.4 million acres of wetlands and 10.4 million acres of grasslands that need to be protected to keep up the current waterfowl production capability.

But repeating the success of the Small Wetlands Program won't be easy. Growing demand for ethanol and other biofuels has led to a sharp increase in the cost of both land acquisition and conservation easements.

## Bucks for Ducks

The Small Wetlands Program was established through an amendment to the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. It authorizes the Service to use proceeds from the sale of Duck Stamps to purchase WPAs.

Friends groups can help people understand that the Duck Stamp is far more than a hunting license. Instead, it has been an important source of revenue for all types of land conservation within the Refuge System. Since 1934, the Duck Stamp has raised more than \$700 million, used to acquire about 5.2 million acres of land within the Refuge System. Refuge Friends interested in selling Duck Stamps and Junior Duck Stamps in their bookstores should contact Amplex Corporation at 1-800-852-4897, or [www.duckstamp.com](http://www.duckstamp.com). 🌱



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## Awards

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usually done" saved literally millions of dollars in the restoration of Bair Island in San Francisco Bay. He also reaches out to the public effectively, leading public participation efforts for the South Bay Salt Pond Project and working with residents to explain a new hunting plan and reduce the threat of wildfires to an adjacent housing development.

Kevin Brennan was one of the first managers in the nation to aggressively promote the Wildlife Habitat Easement Program. More than 4,180 acres of productive, privately-owned wetland and

grassland habitats in the Fergus Falls WMD are now perpetually protected. Brennan also led the effort to create and manage the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, a cooperative effort involving the City of Fergus Falls, the State of Minnesota and the Friends of the Prairie Learning Center. The center hosts 50,000 visitors a year, including 100 fifth graders who attend classes at the center every day. Minnesota officials took note of the program's excellence and funded a \$2 million expansion, which will double its capacity by this fall.

Volunteer John Bertrand, praised as a convincing and avid spokesman for refuges, founded *Habitat!* 14 years ago

as a professional-quality news magazine for Bosque del Apache Refuge. *Habitat!* is a paid insert in four local newspapers as well as among another 50,000 readers statewide and state and national legislators.

Bertrand has recorded 11,651 volunteer hours at Bosque del Apache Refuge, but he also contributed to the success of the Grand Opening of the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center at Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge and served as a full-time resident volunteer at Selawik National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. (See more about Bertrand's accomplishments on page 8.) 🌱

# From Friend to Friend

## Five Recruiting Tips

By Dan Dziekonski, president,  
*Friends of Tennessee*

Adding new faces and fresh ideas to your organization is key to keeping it vital and dynamic. That's why recruiting and membership growth should always be a priority.

Here are five tips Friends of Tennessee have used to keep membership growing:

**1. Make your membership drive personal.** Ask friends, family and those with like interests to join your group. It is hard to say no face to face.

**2. Hold events that will attract public participation** and then recruit new members.

**3. Reach across many interest groups.** The Refuge System supports the "Big Six" wildlife-dependent recreation – hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, wildlife observation, environmental education and interpretation – not one single purpose.

**4. Partner with other groups.** Birding groups, hikers, photographers and hunters are all groups that are interested in your refuge. They are a source of new members.

**5. Keep your name in front of the public.** People are more inclined to join when your group's name and events are constantly repeated by the press and word of mouth.

Success will come in different forms for each group. Friends in support of rural refuges could view a gain of 10 members as a grand success while a group in a major city could view it as a poor result. To determine your own success, ask yourself, "Are you achieving your goals in support of your refuge?" If you can say that you are, then your Friends group is a success whether it has 10, 100 or 1,000 members.

## Talking History

Dean Nelson remembers the struggle to keep his livestock healthy through the frigid Minnesota winters on what is now Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. A hole cut into the pond ice was the only drinking spot for his sheep.

This and other stories about life on the land – including a Civilian Conservation Corps Camp – are being captured as part of the Oral History Project, a joint effort of the Tamarac Interpretive Association (TIA), the refuge and the County Historical Association. Members of the TIA's history working group are videotaping people who once lived on what is now the refuge. "We are gathering stories that paint a picture of how the land and the people used to interact," explains refuge visitor services specialist Kelly Blackledge.

TIA members will lead interpretive history walks on the refuge. Videotaped interviews will be the focus of an educational program both in the visitor center and on the Web. Transcripts of all oral histories will be available through the County Museum.

## Snap Up More Visitors with Photo Contest

A number of Friends groups have given the local wildlife paparazzi another great reason to visit their refuge – holding a photography contest. A photo contest can build support for a Friends group while also promoting national wildlife refuges. Here are some tips from three Refuge Friends groups that have run successful contests.

### Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (NJ)

This year marks the 8th Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge Photo Contest. The 2007 event attracted 48 photographers who submitted 207 images. A Friends member who is also a professional photographer serves as the judge.

Highlights and Tips:

- Cross pollinate: The judge not only picks the winners, but critiques submitted photos during the Friend's Annual Fall Festival – helping bring out the photographers.
- Go digital: A big jump in entries occurred when digital photos were allowed.



Much of the landscape that is now Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge was extensively logged in the late 1800s.

Courtesy of Becker County Historical Society



Steve Byland's photograph of a Northern Harrier hawk took first place in the Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge Photo Contest.

- Lump: Instead of separating entries into different categories, images are compared together so the judge can pick the best overall.
- Word of mouth: During the migration seasons, Friend volunteers patrolling the boardwalk target camera-toting visitors to tell them about the contest.

#### Friends of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge (MD)

The Youth Photo Contest is part of the refuge's 75th anniversary festivities. Entrants were divided into the Fox group (aspiring photographers, ages 12 to 16) and the Cubs (the 11-and-under set). Winning images were displayed during the 8th Eagle Festival March 15. A panel of judges includes refuge staff and Friends volunteers.

#### Highlights and Tips:

- Kickoff with an event: A youth photo class held during the Friends' annual Christmas Open House kicked off the contest. The class was led by a local professional photographer who donated his time.
- Spread the word: Advertising consisted of a flyer handed out on the refuge and a press release.
- Be specific to your refuge: entries were evaluated for technical and artistic quality as well as how

well they "convey the essence" of Blackwater Refuge.

#### Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (OR)

The contest was a natural outgrowth of establishing a database of local photographers who wanted to be notified about photo opportunities. When the database grew to more than 60 photographers, the Friends knew a contest would attract a lot of attention. Winning entries (1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes and nine honorable mentions) were used to create an online calendar on the Friends Web site.

#### Highlights and Tips:

- Find a sponsor: A local photography store sponsored the contest, providing gift cards to the top three winners. The store also printed and framed 12 winning images for unveiling at the award ceremonies. The prints are displayed in the store.
- Use Technology: An online database allowed the judges to review entries from remote locations. This turned out to be a real lifesaver when one judge, a photographer from the local paper, was sent on a long assignment.
- Network: The judging panel was put together from personal contacts of Friends board members and contest committee members.

## Regional Conference Calls Connect Friends

Quarterly conference calls among the Northeast Region Friends coordinator and Refuge Friends groups, started in 2006 amid concerns about the Refuge System budget, continue to help Friends understand issues to better explain them to the public. Equally important, the conference calls are a great communications tool among Friends groups.

During the calls, participants are updated about regional and national activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Friends provide updates about their own activities and events. A representative of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is usually connected as well.

Kathy Woodward, with the Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey, says, "The calls give us the opportunity to share the successes and stresses of our Friends groups, get questions answered and make suggestions. The calls remind us that we are in the company of Friends, especially during financially tough times."

The calls are a chance for Friends groups to support one another. In New Jersey, for example, Friends groups are meeting in March, 2008 for a work day on Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, which recently lost its on-site staff.

"These calls are a lifeline," says Barbara Volkle, of the Friends of Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge in Massachusetts. "It's easy for a group to become very focused on their local refuge or refuges. The support and information we get from other Friends groups, the Service staff and the Refuge Association helps us see how our work makes a difference, both regionally and nationally." 🌱

# See It Live

## Webcams Generate Huge Interest

The Web has made catching a glimpse of an osprey mother delivering fresh-caught fish to her chicks as easy as checking e-mail. Wildlife Webcams are catching on among Friends groups that seek new ways to connect with potential members and the next generation of Refuge Friends.

“During the height of nesting season, we had so many people checking our eagle and osprey cams that our local ISP (Internet Service Provider) nearly crashed,” says Tom Hook, treasurer and Webcam project manager for the Friends of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Maryland. “We switched ISP so we could use a high-usage server to accommodate our soaring demand.”



Friends of Blackwater

**Blackwater's Eaglecam is feeding lots of interest.**

Webcam visitors from Russia, Germany, Austria, Finland, Denmark, Holland, Italy, England, Wales, Canada and throughout the United States logged in, reports Blackwater Friends Web master Lisa Mayo. “We’ve had a Boy Scout troop, several classrooms and home-schooled children monitoring the eagle cam. Teachers tell us they use it to illustrate lessons on everything

from wildlife biology to time zones, geography, American history and environmental law,” she said.

Mayo recently opened a YouTube account to upload clips, an easy, low-cost way to share videos. The process, she noted, consisted of creating a user name and channel, and then uploading the videos. No video file can be larger than 100 megabytes, but there are few other restrictions.

Blackwater Refuge’s first Webcam opportunity came in 2001, when the local power company asked for advice on making utility poles less attractive to nesting osprey. Refuge personnel suggested taking advantage of the

birds’ preference for using the tallest structure around. So, the company installed a tall pole and nesting platform on the refuge, a safe distance from the nearest power lines.

The company also had a few poles with platforms too low for their purposes, so they offered to set one within sight of the Visitor Center. Hook and the Friends

of Blackwater seized the chance to add Webcam capabilities.

### Low Cost Communications

“A local tree service agreed to bring its bucket truck to help us reach the platform to install the Webcam,” says Hook. The least expensive equipment is probably the Webcam itself, a small digital camera like those used for video conferencing or low-cost surveillance. A line from the camera runs down the nest pole to a microwave transmitter that beams images to a receiver inside the Visitor Center. A small solar panel and a rechargeable battery supply the power. Hook estimates the entire setup cost about \$1,500.

Although the system is pretty durable, maintenance issues do crop up. The eagle cam went out mysteriously last spring. The problem? A hungry squirrel had chewed clear through the wire. Because the microwave transmitters run a bit warm, they occasionally attract swarms of ants.

The eagle cam has spurred some financial benefits for the Friends of Blackwater. Mayo put together a video to show in the visitor center when the eagles are not at the refuge and the cam goes dark. The show was so popular that visitors wanted copies. Mayo assembled a DVD with 17 minutes of highlights, which sells for \$15.95 at the bookstore and through the Friend’s Web site. A tee-shirt and postcards are also available.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Webcam site, <http://www.fws.gov/offices/featurewebcamsites.html>, features eagle and kestrel cams from Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, New York, and a murre cam from San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex. An eagle cam at the Service’s National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia is also featured.

For information and advice on starting a Webcam, e-mail Tom Hook ([tomhook@shoren.net](mailto:tomhook@shoren.net)) or Lisa Mayo ([webmaster@friendsofblackwater.org](mailto:webmaster@friendsofblackwater.org)). 🌱

# A Case Study of Strategic Communications

by Angela V. Graziano

“We’re going to build one of the best visitor centers in the Refuge System,” vowed John Schroer in January 1997, when he was refuge manager at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia. He saw his dream come true in October 2003.

As a supervisory outdoor recreation planner, I absorbed his unbridled passion. For us, strategic communication was critical because poor planning and staff turnover in previous years had contributed to a negative community view of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The communications plan, implemented from 1998 to 2003 by refuge staff, Friends and volunteer groups, included a multi-faceted approach to show the community how they and about 1.5 million annual refuge visitors could benefit from a \$10 million educational and administrative center on a barrier island.

Refuge Friends and volunteers were key because, as members of the community, they understood how others in the community got information. One especially popular technique was agenda-free “Stump the Manager” meetings. John Schroer’s brainchild, the meetings were sessions when anyone could ask the refuge manager or his staff about issues of concern. More than a dozen sessions were conducted over two years. The Friends group not only helped to publicize the meetings, but they also spoke knowledgeably in the face of real and perceived community adversity.

## “Buy a Bear, Build a Center”

The Friends group also developed the “TR Bear,” a stuffed toy sold as part of the “Buy a Bear, Build a Center” campaign. During the campaign, the Friends group, Chincoteague Natural History Association, marketed the bear to other refuges and even to the National Conservation and Training Center. The “limited edition” bear sold for less than \$25 and generated thousands of dollars to support refuge exhibits. The Friends group advertised the bear on its Web



USFWS

**Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge’s Visitor Center is a big hit. A multi-faceted strategic communication plan helped build community support – and raise funds – for the center.**

site, newsletter and at special events. The bear became a terrific gift for Congressional members and staff and local and state officials when the subject of the center was discussed.

Strategic communications also helped the community understand how the center would benefit the local economy. Refuge visitation was responsible for nearly one-third of private sector jobs within the refuge’s zip code. Yet, refuge staff and support groups had not communicated that benefit in a meaningful way.

Here are some key points in a strategic communications plan:

- **Know your audience.** We worked with support groups so the community could communicate their values to us. We willingly answered questions. We attended community events and meetings to learn who the community respected and then we invited those groups or people to the refuge.
- **Use the electronic and print media** – including local cable stations. Repeat your message often. Use press releases, editorials and media tours.

- **Plan special events.** Each year, during International Migratory Bird Day and National Wildlife Refuge Week, refuge staff and Friends group hosted events that attracted 2,000 to 3,000 people. During these events, the Friends recruited members, educated folks about the benefits of the refuge and spread the word about the legitimacy of the center.

- **Consider creating a slogan.** We used “Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Where People and Wildlife Meet” on virtually every communication.

- **Don’t ask for support, ask for understanding.** Wildlife management can be controversial. So, rather than ask for support on a difficult issue, explain that it would be irresponsible to the resource not to take the action. Ultimately, the Service conservation mission benefits people as well as wildlife. 🌿

*Angela V. Graziano is an outreach specialist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Budget, Planning and Human Resources in Arlington, VA.*

## From the Chief

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population will be over the age of 65, up from the current 12 percent.

Today, a third of Americans are racially and ethnically something other than what the Census Bureau calls “non-Hispanic white.” Sixty-two percent of our fellow Americans speak a language other than English when they are home, and 45 percent of them speak Spanish. Forty-five percent of children younger than five are considered racial and ethnic minorities, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That percentage is projected to increase by 2050. By then, 80 percent of the population is expected to be urban residents.

Americans today live in a cocoon of comfort inside their homes. Does it come as any surprise that people are looking for technological connectivity and personal control when they go into nature?

Yet, the Refuge System has competitive advantages. First, we have outstanding wildlife. We can be hubs of tourism – as refuges already are in Texas, Florida and many other states. We have trails, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography – just a few of our assets that get people to slow down and appreciate nature. As you look to the future, consider that refuges offer people a way to connect with the greater good. Create your Friends programs and your membership messages with that in mind – and we’ll thrive for another 100 years. 🌱

## Friends *Forward*

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## Reaching the Summit

**B**osque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico will soon be reaching new heights – thanks to a big assist from Friends of the Bosque del Apache. The group raised \$63,000 in 2007 for the purchase of 6,272-foot Chupadera Peak and 140 surrounding acres, and is donating the land to the refuge.

Chupadera Peak will be the highest point on the refuge and the natural destination of the popular Chupadera Wilderness Hiking Trail, a 9.5-mile round trip hike. Before the purchase, the trail stopped a few hundred feet from the summit.

“We went all out,” explains Bosque Friend John Bertrand in summarizing the fundraising campaign. “We put together a PowerPoint presentation to share with local civic organizations and any others who would listen,” says

Bertrand, who also wrote letters, press releases and articles for the local print media.

The year-long fundraising campaign attracted 267 donors who collectively contributed \$72,000. New Mexico Tech graduate Katie Devine raised nearly \$8,000 by soliciting donations for running the Phoenix Rock and Roll Marathon. Several thousands dollars were collected in a donation box installed in the refuge’s visitor center.

A cornerstone of the campaign was an appeal for contributors to provide the purchase price of at least an acre of land (\$450). Nearly \$10,000 was contributed to honor the memory of Debra Davies, deputy refuge manager, who made the acquisition of Chupadera Peak one of her top priorities before her sudden death in April 2006. 🌱

## FAQ *Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q:** Are there standard practices for board term limits?

**A:** There is no standard practice for board term limits, but building term limits into your organization’s bylaws is a good idea. An important role for the board is to ensure the long-term viability of the organization by helping it develop new leaders. Most Friends organizations also find that the type of skills and experiences they need on their board evolve over time.

According to BoardSource ([www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org)), the most common length for a board term is three years. Most organizations with term limits allow board members to be elected for a second term. This can provide some flexibility and allows board members to learn their jobs and make meaningful contributions to the organization.

**Q:** Are there strategies for addressing board members who miss meetings?

**A:** Many organizations struggle with the question of what to do with board members who frequently miss meetings. Having your board members engaged and involved with organization activities is important to having them carry out their work for the Friends.

Some organizations include attending meetings as part of a board member job description. Others include a policy about missed meetings in their bylaws. Creating a policy is just one step; conveying the importance of that policy is another. For example, recruiting board members becomes an opportunity to clearly say, “We expect all board members to attend and participate in at least 80 percent of all board meetings. Is that possible for you?”

If a board member has missed several meetings in a row, it becomes an opportunity to see if all is well, bring him or her up-to-date on board business, and ask about their future intentions for committee work, events and meetings. 🌱