

Friends Forward



Spring 2009

National Wildlife Refuge System

The Long Arm of Washington

The Omnibus Public Lands Act, signed by President Obama on March 30, is considered by some to be the most important and comprehensive piece of natural and cultural resource protection legislation in recent times. The Act, PL-111-11, creates four National Heritage Areas, which will include refuges in North Dakota, Colorado and Mississippi. NHAs provide opportunities for new partnerships and promotion of refuges within those areas.

The legislation instructs the Secretary of the Interior to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for a gravel road within the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge wilderness area as part of an authorized exchange for wilderness lands owned by the state of Alaska and the King Cove Native Corporation. The Secretary is also required to determine if the land exchange is in the public interest.

The Public Lands Act also:

- Establishes four new national trails near refuges in Massachusetts, Virginia and Washington;
- Designates the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail from Montana to the Pacific Ocean;

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A new Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail will pass near Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge in Montana.

From the Chief **Your Work Is Priceless**



Spring came early for me this year, and it had nothing to do with the weather.

Spring is a sense of reawakening,

of fresh possibilities and new beginnings. For me, that came in late February, with the National "Friends Unite!" Conference, a gathering of the conservation spirit. There, 300 members of Refuge Friends organizations filled the hallways and conference rooms of a Washington, DC, hotel with their buzz, their ideas, their excitement, and their passion for

conserving National Wildlife Refuges. That pretty much always happens when refuge Friends get together.

Yet, enthusiasm can only carry a nonprofit group so far. What I heard at the conference was practical advice from Friends, who know they can't go it alone, and yet are determined to get support from diverse groups, who often have to be reached in non-traditional ways.

So Friends groups are getting local wineries to name new vintages for refuge birds—and then getting part of the sales revenue. Some are offering

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USFWS

Friends as Far as the Eye Can See

More than 500 people gathered in Washington, DC, in February for the largest-ever national Friends conference, including 300 representatives of Friends organizations, just over 150 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service employees, and more than 70 presenters and exhibit staff.

There were multiple sessions for both well-established and brand new Friends organizations, addressing Refuge System resource challenges, tools and strategies for success and Friends capacity building. The only complaint was the inability to get to every session, but many Friends organizations partially solved that problem by bringing multiple representatives.

Former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Lynn Greenwalt looked over the crowded ballroom, noting that there were “Friends as far as the eye can see.” Greenwalt took the Friends back to a simpler time on refuges, when there were “no computers, no Blackberries and if you were lucky, no phone calls... you were forester and tractor operator and duck veterinarian.”

There were no Friends organizations early in Greenwalt’s career either, so now he says, “You are remarkable simply because you are here.” He charged Friends with helping to make the stimulus spending on refuges successful, because it is an “opportunity to show what we can do with this once in a lifetime chance.”

More than 500 people gathered in Washington, DC, for the largest-ever national Friends conference.

Diane Borden-Billiot, outreach coordinator for the Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges, echoed Greenwalt’s amazement at the growth and value of Friends: “We really need them and they are here.” Gene Hilton, president of the new Friends of the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge in West Virginia, sees the great wealth of Friends members as “nodes of a larger organization, increasingly functioning like a corporation and behaving like volunteers.”

Networking

Larry Klimek, project leader at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge in Iowa, found the conference very focused this year with many opportunities for networking. “Friends organizations don’t compete with each other so it’s easy to share ideas,” said Klimek. Betty Cain, a board member for Friends of the Ohio River Islands, already has 15 programs planned for 2009 but is going home with even more ideas for projects and activities. Tina Watson from the Friends of Bombay Hook

National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware went home with a long “to do” list, from sending electronic news releases to creating a video of the refuge.

Energy, Landscapes, Youth

The Conference closed with remarks from William Shafroth, special assistant to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. Shafroth said Salazar has three priorities in identifying ways to spend the unprecedented amount of money in the stimulus package:

- Energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Preserving treasured landscapes — “These are one-time dollars that we won’t see again in our lifetime, so let’s do something special with them.”
- Incorporating the next generation

The crowd of Friends applauded loudly when Shafroth noted that in his first month on the job, Salazar had already visited three national wildlife refuges. 



TODD HARLESS / USFWS

Getting to Green

Faced with what it considers the greatest challenge to conservation of fish and wildlife species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has drafted a strategic plan for responding to climate change that has already gone through an internal comment period. One important response underway is identifying and reducing the carbon footprint of national wildlife refuges.

Carbon footprint measures carbon dioxide emissions and their impacts on the environment. Any use of gasoline or electricity generally comes from power plants that burn fossil fuels and so accelerate climate change. The Conservation Fund offers a carbon footprint calculator on its Web site <www.conservationfund.org/gozero>.

For an individual, the estimated annual carbon footprint is the sum of the carbon dioxide produced by home energy use, auto transportation and air travel.

Carbon Neutral by 2025

The goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to be carbon neutral by 2025 through:

- Greater use of vehicles powered by an alternative fuel source
- Linking refuge trails to community hiking/biking trails to promote walking
- Reduced travel to meetings
- Incentives to encourage individual refuges to reduce their carbon footprint
- Increased use of carbon sequestration
- Refuge energy audits

The energy audits can result in three tiers of improved energy efficiency, ranging from programmable thermostats to replacing a furnace to installing renewable sources of energy.

Martin Brockman, branch chief for facility and equipment management for the Refuge System, suggests starting small—converting lights from regular bulbs to compact fluorescents, or perhaps installing a parking lot light powered by a solar panel. “For now, more efficient use of energy is the best way to reduce our carbon footprint,” says Brockman.

Carbon Sequestration

Reforestation is considered a key tool in carbon sequestration since trees absorb carbon dioxide. But reforestation also has huge benefits for wildlife. “Healthy habitats themselves sequester carbon,” explains Andy Loranger, chief of the Refuge System Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning.

A lot of research remains to be done on the precise value of carbon sequestration. “We need to know how much carbon will be sequestered by a particular project,” says Loranger. “We don’t yet know the sequestration potential of particular habitat, wetlands restoration or organic soils like peat.”

The Conservation Fund often works with refuges and Friends organizations to implement its GoZero® carbon sequestration program. Funded by donations from individuals and corporations, GoZero® plants trees in protected places like refuges. It is currently restoring 150 acres of bottomland hardwood at Red River National



Refuges can reduce their carbon footprint by using more alternative fuel vehicles like this electric tram, operated by the Friends of Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.

Green Transit

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is researching alternative fuel technologies for trams and tram-like vehicles. The research project was inspired by the all-electric tram at Patuxent Research Refuge in Maryland. It will identify what options are available and what the market is for low-environmental impact tram vehicles on federal lands. Patuxent Refuge’s prototype tram has been operating since 1994.

Thirteen national wildlife refuges currently operate trams or similar vehicles. Friends groups operate many of the tours using refuge-owned vehicles.

Findings and results of the tram study will be available in summer 2009.

Contact <TramStudy@dot.gov> to learn more, provide information on vehicles used to give tours on refuges or express interest in being a test refuge for a prototype low impact vehicle.



from friend to friend

share your
success
stories

Sustainability

Sustainability is not only applicable to conservation issues; Friends organizations also need to sustain themselves. (See “Succession Planning” *Friends Forward* Fall 2008). The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society (Friends of J. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge in Florida) implemented a sustainable idea — an emeritus board.

President Susan Cassell said the Society wanted to honor people who had made a significant contribution while providing a way for retiring board members to remain active. About 10 years ago, the Society established term limits: no more than three consecutive terms of three years each. “We wound up having a large number of board members retire,” explained Cassell, “yet we wanted to encourage them to continue participating. We needed their expertise.”

So the Society created the “emeritus board member.” Nominees must have given at least six years of significant support and made a strong impact. Nominees may be active or retired board members and they may even be nominated posthumously to acknowledge their years of service. The nominating committee includes the Society president, a board member chosen by the president, an emeritus board member and the refuge manager (non-voting).

Six former board members were selected as emeritus members in the first year (including one posthumously). Last year, two more were elected. Emeritus board members are welcome at board meetings and may serve on committees; they do not vote. Of the eight emeritus board members today, four are still active on committees and two come to board meetings. Cassell says, “I am thrilled to have their continued support and counsel.”

Fashionably Green

Eco-friendly clothing is a far grander concept than hemp t-shirts. The Arthur R. Marshall Foundation invited guests to an EcoChic Luncheon and Fashion Show to raise funds for its Everglades education programs, many conducted in collaboration with the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in South Florida.



An organic cotton gown by Tammy Apóstol whose eco-friendly designs will be featured at an EcoChic Luncheon by the Arthur R. Marshall Foundation in Florida.

The fashion show featured designs by Tammy Apóstol, < tacouture.com > who has a line of high fashion clothing made either of organic fabrics or without the use of pesticides. A fashion show featuring evening gowns and party dresses of organic cotton sends the message that people don't have to sacrifice high fashion to show concern for the environment. “High style can still be green,” says Nancy Marshall, president of the Marshall Foundation and board member of the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

Birdwatching at J. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge (FL), where the Wildlife Society has just created an emeritus board to honor people for significant contributions.

GEORGE GENTRY / USFWS



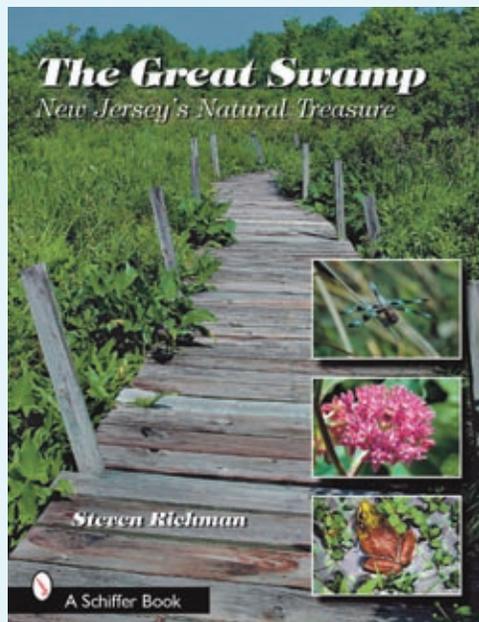
Books Books Books

The Great Swamp: New Jersey's Natural Treasure

By Steven Richman
(2008: Schiffer Books)

Steven Richman, an attorney from Princeton, NJ, visited the Friends Bookstore and Gift Shop to sign his new book about Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. He has been taking photographs at the refuge for many years, but the idea for a book about Great Swamp was born during a trip to Florida's Big Cypress National Preserve, where he happened on Clyde Butcher's awesome photographic exhibit in a local museum.

Richman visited the Swamp frequently to obtain photos from every public area of the refuge;



he came in all seasons to record the wildlife and habitat. It took several years for him to gather the photographs he wanted for this new book. His vision was to create a photographic essay to capture the area visually and convey a sense of the beauty and isolation of the swamp. He included much of the familiar to give readers a chance to look really closely at things too often taken for granted.

Although Richman did considerable research in preparing the book, he did not intend it to be a field guide. His objective was to give readers a sense of this special place, showing the diversity of animal and plant life within a relatively confined area.

Richman talks about one of his favorite spots, the small pond along Long Hill Road, where he visited so often he felt he got to know the frogs. His favorite photo in the book is a tree in autumn with a single leaf blowing off in the wind: a chance shot, there one second and then gone.

He also talked about his photo of a crane fly laying eggs. Doing his research later, he learned that this gangly-looking insect, resembling an oversized mosquito, has a very short life span and he realized that he had captured a single moment in the life of a tiny creature, which was living her entire life right here.

Reviewer Laurel Gould is a member of the Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (NJ).

Backyard Birds: How to Identify and Attract the Top 25 Birds

By Bill Fenimore (2009: Gibbs Smith)

Bill Fenimore, owner of a Wild Bird Center in Utah, leads birding field trips, workshops and seminars and has won awards for dramatically advancing ornithological awareness. Now he has launched a series of bird guides focused on the top 25 birds in 11 states.

There is a full-color, full-page photo of each bird accompanied by a short description of its behavior, song, habitat, nesting habits, range and size—with silhouettes of various birds along the bottom of the page for comparison. Each page includes a map and the type of foods and feeders that will attract a particular species. So far, the series includes Georgia, New Jersey, Washington, California, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah and Virginia. 



Welcome!

Cape May National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey has a new Friends organization, thanks in large part to the American Littoral Society. The Society, focused primarily on protecting Mid-Atlantic coastal areas, led a successful effort to block construction of a WalMart on a site within the acquisition boundaries of Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.

“It takes enormous resources to get into these land use fights when there are different visions. That’s not strategic. What’s more strategic is to create public support around protecting sites before they are threatened,” says Matt Blake, Delaware Bayshore project manager for the Society. That means engaging local decision makers, reaching out to landowners around a refuge, becoming better stewards of the land—all the typical work of a Friends organization.

With the encouragement of Howard Schlegel, manager of both Cape May and Supawna Meadows Refuges, the Society went on a road tour that netted almost three dozen interested citizens and the Friends of Cape May National Wildlife Refuge was born. It now has a board of directors, including the Wetlands Institute, the American Littoral Society and New Jersey Audubon, and is working on its official nonprofit designation. 

Water, Water Everywhere — or Not

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has an explicit legal mandate to acquire and maintain the quantity and quality of water needed for refuges. However, the Service is the only major federal land management agency that lacks a comprehensive, dedicated program to manage its water resources. Management Systems International (MSI), in its independent evaluation of the National Wildlife Refuge System, recommended development of a water strategy, including the appointment of a water resources coordinator.

A Water Resources Team, chartered in May 2008, will provide national coordination and technical advice on water resource issues. The team's recommendations will help the Service develop procedures and policies to manage water issues effectively.

Water is the lifeblood of the Refuge System. Competition for limited supplies has long been intense in much of the west and increasingly so in the east. Conflicts are expected to increase as cities grow, domestic energy development expands and climate change increases the variability and timing of the water supply.

Michael Higgins, Refuge System aquatic ecologist, notes that, "The Service must actively manage its available water resources to provide the maximum benefit for fish, wildlife and habitats. Our ability to recognize when refuge water supplies are impaired in quantity, quality or timing depends on high quality data to support near real-time decision making."

Managing Water Strategically

The Water Resources Team identified six objectives to manage water strategically in the Refuge System. Several are already underway:

1. *Inventory Refuge System water resources* at every refuge in order to evaluate water rights, quantity, known issues and threats to the water supply.

The Service must actively manage its water resources to provide the maximum benefit for fish, wildlife and habitats.

2. *Increase accessibility of water resource expertise:* All regions should have in-house hydrological expertise. A full-time national water resource coordinator should be appointed to represent the Refuge System in multi-regional and national policy and budget initiatives.

3. *Develop a system for prioritizing water supply acquisitions* in order to identify the highest priority needs.

4. *Develop a system for prioritizing and addressing water quality issues* in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey.

5. *Integrate water resource management* in refuge planning through Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs).

6. *Provide consistent guidance for managing water resources.*

As Higgins added, "To protect water quality, quantity and timing requires constant vigilance. Water resources work, like species and habitat protection, is never truly finished, only advanced by continuous effort."

Brittany Peterson, SCEP student in the National Wildlife Refuge System Marine Program, contributed to this article.

Grizzly bears play in the water at Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

STEVE HILLEBRAND



Refuge Birding Guides—Easy and Valuable

By Mike Carlo

Creating a site-specific bird finding guide is one of the easiest and most important amenities refuges can provide to birders. Refuge staff would really appreciate help from Friends. So, in three easy steps, here's what you need to create the guide:

Think About the Birds

- Which species does the refuge want to highlight and do birders wish to see? Ask Friends who are birders or local birding groups for suggestions.
- Highlight birds that are common and relatively easy to see. Mention uncommon or rare birds if visitors have a somewhat reliable chance to see them.
- Think of birds that are fun and interesting to see, accessible to visitors and cause minimal disturbance to wildlife. There should be possibilities to see nesting, migration, roosting or feeding spectacles (heron rookeries, snow geese feeding in old fields).
- Consider specialty birds such as seabirds visible on offshore islands or an endangered species.

Location, Timing and Seasonality

- Use a map in your guide to show when and where visitors can see specific birds.
- Identify the best times of year and day as well as locations where visitors are likely to see particular species. The more specific the details the better.

- Use descriptive words like 'morning', 'dusk', '...at the north end of Gadwall Pond', 'in winter, scan the shoreline for....'

Tips for an Enjoyable Visit

- Tell birders what to bring that will help them have a good experience: water, map, insect repellent, cellphone (a safety precaution), hat, sunscreen, sturdy footwear; time needed for a good visit; programs and facilities available, associated fees, best ways to locate birds (by foot, vehicle), and contact information.
- Include multiple opportunities for diverse audiences to find birds. Some visitors are unable or uninterested

in hiking 10 miles to see a neat bird and would prefer sitting in front of a feeder or birding by car.

The Refuge System birding Web site <www.fws.gov/refuges/birding/birderFriendly.html> provides other ideas to connect birders with your refuge, including sample birding guides from Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas and Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware. 

Michael Carlo is a member of the National Wildlife Refuge System Birding Team from Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.

LEE KARNY



The great blue heron is fairly common along the Pintail Lakes Trail at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.

Honors

The National Wildlife Refuge Association has named **Marie Springer** Volunteer of the Year. In 2008 alone, Springer logged more than 2,000 hours of volunteer time for Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey and the Refuge System—equal to a full time employee.



Marie Springer, Volunteer of the Year

An artist and also a skilled researcher, Springer collected and documented more than 5,000 native bees and educated the public about the importance of Wallkill Refuge's recently discovered endangered Indiana bat population. She has served as the president of Friends of Wallkill River and has also been helpful at Supawna Meadows (NJ) and Shawangunk Grasslands (NJ) National Wildlife Refuges.

The Friends of Pool 9 in Iowa have been named Friends of the Year. Three years old and 400 members strong, the Friends of Pool 9 are making a difference along their 31-mile stretch of the 261-mile Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

The Friends' annual Pool Wide Clean-Up Day and Leave No Trace program serve to rid the refuge of trash.

Each fall, their Rivers and Bluffs Fall Birding Festival brings more than 300 people to enjoy and invest in the region and in the refuge. The Friends also showcase the refuge for young people with programs such as The Mississippi River Adventure Day. The Friends of Pool 9 are spearheading efforts to revitalize the original Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges (FUMRR) into an alliance of Friends groups.

In other awards, NWRA named **Greg Siekaniec**, Refuge System chief and formerly refuge manager at Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, as the Paul Kroegel Refuge Manager of the Year.

Refuge System Employee of the Year is **Baron Horiuchi**, the only horticulturalist in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He works at Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge in Hawaii.

CARE (Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement) honored Representative **David Obey** of Wisconsin, chair of the House Appropriations Committee and Senator **Dianne Feinstein** of California, chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies.



Friends of Pool 9, Friends of the Year

Senator Feinstein and Congressman Obey were recognized for helping to secure \$434.1 million for the Refuge System budget in FY 2008. In the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, they helped ensure green jobs would be created on the National Wildlife Refuge System by securing \$10 million to construct roads, \$115 million for facilities construction and \$165 million for resource management within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Feinstein has also supported the 15,100-acre restoration of San Francisco Bay's salt ponds to wetlands and other projects of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

Obey has also worked to protect native fish, wildlife and habitats in places such as the Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge in the wetlands near Lake Superior. Accepting his award during a Capitol Hill reception on February 24, Congressman Obey said, "Some things are too precious to ignore." 

The Value of a Barn

The barn at Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey—old and listed for demolition—has been home to nearly 2,000 big and little brown bats from April to October each year. And Friends want it to remain that way.

The barn, also home to a pair of barn owls, is in a state of serious disrepair. With the cost of restoration estimated at \$20,000-\$25,000, the Friends began looking for money. The group received \$10,000 from nearby Carneys Point Generating Plant, which provided the seed money for the Friends group itself and also contributes time and resources to maintaining the barn. Volunteers and workers from Carneys Point also gather at the barn each fall to count the bats.

The Friends raised an additional \$5,000, enough to add structural reinforcements in the barn before the bats return this spring. After the bats leave in the fall, the Friends will seek additional funding to complete the project.

Saving History

A little further west, the Friends of the 500th also had concerns about a barn slated to be demolished at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge in West Virginia. Friends did not want the barn to disappear. While attending a cultural resources course at the National Conservation Training Center, one member joined a field trip to Antietam National Battlefield in Maryland and had a brainstorm. The battlefield needed materials for restoration projects; Canaan Valley Refuge had materials in the barn from roughly the same historic period.

A donation was arranged and part of Canaan Valley's barn is now in use at Antietam National Battlefield.

Battlefield restoration staff was particularly interested in the iron pieces used in the barn (nails, fasteners, etc.) but hauled away some of the wood as well. The Friends group kept some of the barn's materials for future projects.

And there could be many future projects. The Friends of the 500th support a refuge that is particularly rich in history. Several members with a personal interest in cultural resources created the Tucker County Highlands History and Education Project a few years ago. When the refuge needed information on historical sites within its acquisition boundaries for the Comprehensive Conservation Plan, the Friends obliged with a survey of 76 sites, including old homesteads, timber and hunting camps, splash dams, railroad grades, fire towers, quarries, cemeteries, schools, World War II military training fortifications and abandoned bridges and roads.

Wood and hardware from this barn at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge (WV) are being used for restoration projects at Antietam National Battlefield (MD).

JUDY OSHIPP



Little brown bats stay in a barn being repaired at Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NJ).

The survey gave the Friends of the 500th a deeper appreciation for the founding of Canaan Valley, the first families who arrived in the late 1860s, and the hearty timber men, miners and families who arrived with the railroads in the 1880s to brave the deep winter snows, sub-zero temperatures, dense forests and wild animals to work and live on this beautiful, but unforgiving land.

For more information about cultural resources courses at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV, contact Eugene Marino at <Eugene_Marino@fws.gov> or 703-358-2173. ✎



CINDY PHILLIPS

Calendar

May 27–29

NCTC Training Course: Developing and Working with a Friends Organization. Course Code: FWS-OUT8113

August 11–14

NCTC training course: Introduction to Volunteer Recruitment and Management Course Code: FWS-OUT8114

August 17–20

NCTC training course: Advanced Volunteer Management. Course Code: FWS-OUT8120

All course details at doilearn.doi.gov/CourseCatalog/index.cfm

August 24

Deadline to submit refuge photos or videos for the Families Gone Wild Alaskan Refuge Sweepstakes sponsored by Barbara's Bakery — grand prize is a trip for four to Kenai National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Details at www.barbarasbakery.us/alaska

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discount coupons for their bookstores in local newspapers, while others are asking local utilities to include Friends membership information with the bills. A few Friends groups are creating their own Facebook pages, while others are getting links on other organizations' pages — all building paths to the alternative media outlets that are collectively known as Web 2.0.

In short, what I saw during the conference was the bounty of leadership — scores of organizations doing their everyday work in extraordinary ways. And we in the Refuge System stand ready to help.

In coming months, we will be inviting Friends to the next Friends Academy — another great learning and networking opportunity — along with mentoring visits as well as grant and other training opportunities. We hope you received the special issue of *Friends Forward* that details transportation programs and funding programs that can help your refuge.

If you did not get a copy, write to Martha Nudel <Martha_Nudel@fws.gov>, or find it online at www.fws.gov/refuges/friends/publications.html.

We are always interested in learning what you need from us: what works now and what you would like to receive. We hope you will keep in close touch with the National Friends Coordinator Trevor Needham at <Trevor_Needham@fws.gov>. We know that many of you are active on the National Wildlife Refuge Association listserv, which we also find useful. The work of the Association is irreplaceable for the Refuge System and Friends alike.

What motivated me to join the Service 24 years ago is just what motivated you: the chance to leave a legacy that can't be calculated financially. One benefit I never anticipated was the level of expertise, imagination and sheer drive donated by people who have come to be known as Friends — with a capital F. Your work is hugely valued, and priceless. 

Washington, continued from page 1

- Designates the “Votes for Women History” auto tour route crossing part of Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in New York;
- Expands protection of paleontological resources, most likely resulting in a permitting system for researchers who want to engage in field work and penalties for activities that are not permitted on federal lands;
- Makes permanent the Preserve America and Save America's

Treasures grant programs enabling refuges to continue developing projects that focus on important historic resources; and

- Authorizes the Bureau of Reclamation to implement water rights settlements that could affect refuges along the Lower Colorado and San Joaquin Rivers.

The Service is strongly supporting H.R. 1612 to re-invigorate and re-name the Public Lands Service

Corps, which would provide service-learning opportunities for young people on refuges and other public lands.

Congress completed action on a \$463 million FY 09 appropriation for the Refuge System, an increase of \$28.7 million above FY 08 funding. The Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus is seeking \$514 million for the Refuge System in FY 10. 

Planning a Special Event

by Blaine Eckberg

At Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia, the Okefenokee Wildlife League (OWL) provides funding, volunteers and planning assistance for six special events each year as the refuge works to make special connections to the community. Here are some suggestions for your own event:

- Work closely with the refuge staff to determine a theme, goals and objectives.
- Identify a few Friends to coordinate the event.
- Focus on what your group can do best.
- Involve local groups. Your local chamber of commerce and area businesses can often provide funding and promotional assistance.

The Okefenokee Wildlife League provides funding, volunteers and planning assistance for major events at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia.

- Set up booths or tables along your scenic drive.
- Create activities for all ages, abilities and interests.
- Produce event passport books that visitors can get stamped at each activity or booth to earn a gift.
- Send out press releases and post fliers in the surrounding area.
- Debrief after your event to determine what went well and what you would change for next year's event.

Blaine Eckberg is a refuge ranger at Okefenokee and Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuges, Georgia. You can contact him at <blaine_eckberg@fws.gov>. 

Green, continued from page 3

Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana. GoZero® director Jena Meredith says the Friends of Red River have been a powerful voice to engage the community.

Friends groups also help these carbon sequestration projects meet Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards <www.climate-standards.org> established by an alliance of corporations and nonprofit organizations. These voluntary standards provide rigorous and verifiable criteria on the ability of a project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while delivering lasting benefits for local communities and biodiversity.

There is a climate change toolkit available at <www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/CCWKit2008.html>. The Service will be providing a climate change toolkit on a CD, filled with information and a fill-in-the-blank brochure. The toolkit will be sent to all refuges and Friends groups by early summer.

As your Friends organization discovers new or effective ways to reduce the carbon footprint of your refuge, Friends or volunteers, send your stories to Karen Leggett at <Karen_leggett@fws.gov> or 703-358-2375. 



Q&A *send us your questions*

Q: Are there refuges with successful Junior Friends organizations?

A: This can be an ideal way to help kids build connections with wildlife and the outdoors while they are learning and having fun.

Four years ago, Lori Kendrick started a Refuge Rangers group at **Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge** in Indiana. The group includes 22 youngsters, grades 4–7. Four students who started the program are sticking with it through middle school. Kendrick works at Hayden Elementary School, where meetings are held monthly. The young Rangers also gather one Saturday a month at the refuge.



Outdoor Adventure Campers learn primitive backpacking at Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, AZ.



The Manteo Middle School Sixth Grade Science Club visits Alligator River Refuge, NC, for a digital photo scavenger hunt.

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona has a very active Outdoor Adventure Camp for a core group of 20 youngsters in grades 3–5. Youngsters gather on the refuge two days a month when school is released early. The refuge’s public use assistant Margot Bissell says the children learn about the refuge while practicing to become independent backpackers. There is a “leave no trace” camping trip, beginner training in CPR and revolving learning stations on camping ethics, the Refuge System and the Sonoran Desert.

For Friends groups interested in starting a program, Bissell recommends:

- Write the curriculum before the program begins.
- Identify teachers and funding upfront.
- Make sure children have adequate equipment for planned activities (shoes, backpack/daypack, water bottle).

At **Alligator and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges** in North Carolina, visitor services manager Cindy Heffley writes that: “what started as a pilot program in 2007 at First Flight Middle School in Kill Devil Hills has blossomed into an area-wide initiative. Designed as a Junior Refuge Friends program co-sponsored by the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society, this partnership includes the schools, the refuges, and the Society and offers students at four schools the opportunity to experience the wilds of eastern North Carolina.

“Friends’ members, refuge staff and interns visit schools each month. Two of the schools have ‘club time’ during the school day. The other schools selected students to participate. All groups visit Alligator River and Pea Island Refuges on various school days and Saturdays, usually a total of three times a year.

“The students participate in a variety of activities ranging from digital photography to practicing stewardship while conducting a roadside clean up or weeding the native plant garden. Unlike other school visits and programs, this initiative has allowed us to have repeat access to students who have a specific interest in the refuges and wildlife — possibly the future wildlife biologists and managers.”

FriendsForward

Address editorial inquiries to:

Karen Leggett
 USFWS-NWRS
 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 634
 Arlington, VA 22203
 703-358-2375
 Karen_Leggett@fws.gov

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