



News from the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

January 2016

Volume I

No. 1



Our volunteers are an integral part of the National Wildlife Refuge system. With their combined efforts, +6,000 hours were recorded in fiscal year 2015 at Bear River Refuge. We couldn't accomplish all we do without their dedication! Credit: USFWS.

Outreach event at Box Elder County Fairgrounds

Student Conservation Association (SCA) Jen and Alyssa, with federal employee Andrea (not pictured) captivated students at the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Fair. We were able to contact over 3,600 students! They had an enjoyable experience teaching the value of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. They were able to show some of the tools that wildlife biologists use, such as, calipers to check bill length, and a spotting scope to count waterfowl.



Spotlight on – Maintenance/facilities Volunteers

The Refuge has four categories of volunteers: Assistant ranger/tour guides, maintenance/facilities, bookstore, and biological volunteers. At the Refuge we have 80,000 acres of habitat and facility sites. This involves significant maintenance. Our volunteers help mow vegetation, build brochure boxes, pour cement, build structures, maintain walking bridges, garbage pickup, and even change lightbulbs. These volunteers have diverse backgrounds. Combined, our volunteers forge an intricate network of skills and knowledge which contribute to the well-being of the Refuge. Some of our volunteers have backgrounds in natural resources, others learn on the job about wildlife on the Refuge. We strive to create a learning environment where conservation is central to every aspect of the volunteer effort. Our maintenance/facilities volunteers gain a wide variety of skills, ranging from hand tool use to birding identification skills.

Our volunteers develop an ethic for and practice of stewardship over the resource. We thank our volunteers for their hard work and dedication at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge!



ADA accessible hunt blind was finished by our maintenance/facilities volunteers.



Gadwall wing



Caliper used to check bill length on waterfowl.

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mountain Wilds to Wetland Wonders ten year milestone, with approximately 100,000 students taught!

Every year a tremendous effort is coordinated through Refuge staff and volunteers, partner agencies, and schools. Every spring and fall, our education team teaches the Mountain Wilds to Wetland Wonders program. This includes Box Elder County School district fourth grade. *In 2015, the Environmental Education team and volunteers taught over 10,000 students, teachers and visitors.* MWWW teaches students the importance of connecting with their natural environment. Subjects such as, identifying signs of wildlife, utilizing a dichotomous key to classify aquatic macroinvertebrates, watershed and plant identification are taught. This program plays a key role in teaching students the impact they can have upon the Bear River watershed. This phenomenal program is funded by grants that pay for all busing and transportation costs for the school district. A special thanks to our Friends of Bear River Refuge group who make it possible to have an Environmental Education Specialist who helps coordinate and facilitate this program.

February Bridging Activity

We begin teaching season early in the year. February is the jumpstart to the Mountain Wilds to Wetland Wonders program. Refuge educators travel to each school during the month of February and teach students the importance of keeping their environment clean. Utilizing neat tools like the enviroscape, we teach students the impact of pesticides, fertilizers, garbage and pollution upon our environment. We demonstrate what can happen to our watershed with increased pollutants. We encourage any educators who would like to volunteer with us to contact the Refuge at 435.723.5887. We are also looking for volunteers to help teach during the month of April for the Mountain Wilds to Wetland Wonders program.



Ron Welker

As adults, monarch butterflies feed on the nectar of flowers. The monarch will always return to areas rich in milkweed to lay their eggs upon the plant. The milkweed they feed on as a caterpillar, is actually a poisonous toxin and is stored in their bodies.



Alyssa showing students how to use a kick-net to catch macroinvertebrates during Mountain Wilds to Wetland Wonders program.



Enviroscape Model used in Bridging Activity.

Wetland Wings

Wetland Wings is sponsored by Ogden Nature Center. Every Wednesday, Susan from ONC comes to the Refuge and teaches preschoolers about wildlife. The Refuge is a great learning environment and engages children in using all their senses. Susan will be teaching about Bald Eagles and symbols in January, animal tracks in February, and owls in March. The "Wetland Wings" program will be the focal point of Susan's presentation at the statewide Utah Early Childhood Conference in Salt Lake City, March 5th. Call Susan at the Ogden nature center for more information 801.621.7595.



Susan teaches preschoolers about the wetland habitat at the Bear River Refuge.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Upcoming Event

The Annual Eagle day open house is February 13th, 10am-3pm. From 11am-11:45am we will have a live eagle from Ogden Nature Center visit us! This will be a meet and greet. Come learn all about eagles, create eagle crafts and check out our Junior Ranger backpacks. Sign-up for our Refuge auto tour with a ranger-naturalist today, call 435.734.6426.

Wildlife Education Center Closure Dates:

January 18th: Martin Luther King Jr. Day—CLOSED!

February 15th: President's Day—CLOSED!



We will soon be selling National Park Passes!

Interagency Annual Pass: \$80

Interagency Senior Pass (+62): \$10

Interagency 4th Grade Pass: FREE

Interagency Access Pass: FREE

Interagency Annual Pass US Military: FREE



Junior Duck Stamp 2016

Each year, students in kindergarten through grade twelve compete in a free wildlife art contest. The object of the contest is for students to show what they have learned about waterfowl and wetland conservation by drawing or painting a native North American duck, goose or swan. The national best of show artwork provides the design for the Junior Duck Stamp, which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sells for \$5. All proceeds from stamp sales are invested to fund scholarships and other recognition for program participants and to produce and distribute Junior Duck Stamp Program environmental education materials and resources. This year judging for the Junior Duck Stamp contest will be held March 24th at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. A panel of judges will be chosen to critique and vote. The award ceremony will be held on International Migratory Bird Day, May 14th, 2016 at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Winners will receive prizes and recognition for their achievements.

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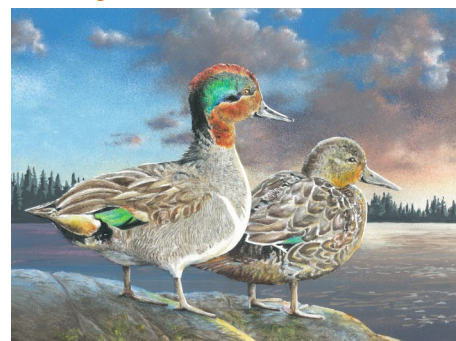
Upcoming Event

The Annual Swan day open house is March 12th, 10am-3pm. Thousands of Tundra Swans return to the Refuge in March. Come drive the Refuge auto tour route to see if you can spot some swans. Our event day will be filled with coloring pages, crafts and Junior Ranger backpacks. Take a 1/2 mile wetland walk or sit back and watch films on our big screen. Sign-up for our Refuge auto tour with a ranger-naturalist today, call 435.734.6426.



Honkers playing pin-the-beak on the swan at the annual swan day open house.

The 2015 JDS winner was 17 year-old Andrew Kneeland of Rock Springs, Wyoming. With over 24,000 entries his depiction of woodducks done in acrylic won 1st place.



Artwork by Bradley Gray, third place, National Federal Junior Duck Stamp winner. Submitted and won the Utah Junior Duck Stamp contest. 3

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Friends of the Bear River Refuge

We are a not-for-profit support group whose members are wildlife enthusiasts who care about nature and wild places. We feel an obligation to learn more about the natural world, share that knowledge with others and preserve the refuge as a place for future generations to experience and learn to care about. **Our Mission:** We are devoted to the promotion, appreciation and conservation of the wildlife, birds and habitat of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Officially established as a not-for-profit, charitable organization in 1998, we are partners with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Current Projects: *The Friends group is involved with the operation of the James V. Hansen Wildlife Education Center, assisting with public education programs and other projects.* The Friends have been partners in this endeavor since the early planning phase. Serving as a national example, fundraising by the Friends made the project possible. In total, a match of \$1.5 million in cash and in-kind services was donated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assist in construction of the center. Their most recent project is to reconstruct a wildlife viewing tower on the Refuge.



Example of tower to be built on Refuge.

What Can You Do?

You can participate solely with your annual membership, but we encourage you to become an active member by assisting with a variety of the organization's activities.

- ◆ Assist with special events or meetings
- ◆ Volunteer to staff the bookstore

Membership Benefits:

Members will receive a 10% discount in the bookstore. Pick up a membership application today in the Wildlife Education Center, 2155 West Forest Street Brigham City, Utah 84302, or visit our website at www.fobrr.org.



Welcome to the Avocet Corner Bookstore!

The Avocet Corner Bookstore is operated by Friends of the Bear River Refuge. The store offers a wide variety of items to purchase. Books on subjects from environmental conservation to traveling and a plethora of field guides on birds, wildflowers, hummingbirds, butterflies, dragonflies and more, are available to peak your interest. Reading books from Terry Tempest Williams, and other authors, that share their stories of birding adventures abound. A wide selection of children's books are available as well as a resource area for educators and home schoolers. Gift items range from logo T-shirts and hats to pins, coffee mugs and the ever so popular Audubon singing birds. We also feature specialty items from local artisans. Wildlife photography from Brian Ferguson, art prints from Debbie Goodman, and hand designed soaps and lotions made from goat's milk by Becky Yeager.



At the Avocet Bookstore you will have the ability to purchase Federal Duck Stamps and Junior Duck Stamps. Buying a Federal Duck Stamp provides 98 cents

out of every dollar directly to purchasing vital habitat for protection in the National Wildlife Refuge System. We are located inside the James V. Hansen Wildlife Education Center.

Store Hours:

Tuesday-Friday: 10:00am to 5:00pm

Saturday: 10:00am to 4:00pm

Closed Sundays, Mondays and Federal holidays.



Love birds? Wildlife? Conservation? Sharing with others?

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge



We're looking for friends to become volunteer team members!



"My favorite part of volunteering at the Refuge is seeing the birds and meeting new people."

~ Marilyn Perry, Volunteer



Above: Ranger Les teaching students at Hardware Ranch in the fall.

Volunteering is one important way that you can participate with the Bear River MBR – It's a great way to get outside, get involved with wildlife conservation, learn about birds and their habitats, educate visitors, and meet other enthusiasts.

Bear River Refuge is currently seeking committed volunteers to fill positions at its world-class wildlife education center. Interested? Call us at 435-723-5887.



Left: Paul and Carolyn, residential volunteers for the summer, helping with the bookstore and front desk.

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge was established in 1928. It provides feeding, resting, and breeding habitat for millions of birds annually.

Join our team! We're looking for:

- Asst. Ranger-Naturalist
- Environmental Educator
- Avocet Corner Bookstore Asst.
- Data Entry Specialist
- Social Media

Junior Ranger Backpack

Check out our Junior Ranger program! Come visit the center anytime during business hours and check out a Jr. Ranger backpack for FREE! Go to our website and print off the activity workbook with 15 fun activities and earn your Jr. Ranger patch today (available for purchase in the Avocet Bookstore). Explore the trails at the Refuge using items found in the Junior Ranger backpack. Included items are: binoculars, butterfly net, critter catcher, various wildlife field guides, water cycle wheel, cloud window and a raptor guide.



Visit our website to print off the Jr. Ranger packet:

http://www.fws.gov/Refuge/Bear_River_Migratory_Bird_Refuge/visit_just_for_kids.html

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