

# WORDS FROM THE WETLANDS



SUMMER/FALL



2006

NEWS FROM THE KLAMATH BASIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX

## Refuge Visitor Center Has a New Look!

Things have really changed in the Refuge's visitor center and if you haven't visited in the past month you will see lots of new features. Large viewing windows and a recirculating water seep behind the visitor center are providing visitors the opportunity to experience upland species such as quail, orioles and warblers from inside the building. A large wall map and a visitor accessible computer station are available to provide visitors with a wealth of outdoor recreation information which will be helpful in planning outdoor recreation opportunities in the Klamath Basin.

A new 6 minute film features the varied wildlife functions and opportunities available on all six Klamath Basin refuge units. The film is push button activated in a small theater in the center. Another audio visual exhibit features an animated sequence depicting the changing landscape of the upper Klamath Basin over the past 100 years. Not to be missed is a large photo mural of flying geese with a number of mounted white-fronted geese seeming to fly right out of the flock and arching over the heads of visitors.



A computer terminal available to visitors and nearby map of the Klamath Basin will provide visitors information with which to plan outdoor recreation activities.

Other exhibits feature many of the wildlife management challenges faced by wildlife biologists and managers over the past sixty or more years. Finally, a series of exhibit murals depict a number of ways visitors, volunteers and tourists take advantage of the rich wildlife heritage and recreational opportunities found on the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges.



Visitors can trigger a program that shows an animated sequence depicts a hundred year of changing water dynamics in the Klamath Basin



Wall mounted exhibits depict some of the opportunities people may enjoy on the Klamath Basin Refuges.

# Hunt Program Changes for 2006-07 Hunt Season Announced

The upcoming waterfowl hunting season on Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Refuges should feature normal water deliveries this year and we also feel the new fee program changes will be a benefit to both hunters and hunting programs on the two refuges. Both of these topics are outlined elsewhere in this newsletter. Hunting program changes and other information for the upcoming season is outlined below:

**First weekend permit applications** should be mailed to the refuge post marked on or before August 15 naming all party members on the application as has been the case in the past. The first named person on successful applications will be notified by September 10 and will be responsible for submitting permit fees for the entire party prior to October 1. A season pass for each party member will be sent to the first named applicant once pass payments have been received. As has been the case in the past, a \$ 3.00 per person nonrefundable fee must be sent in with the first weekend application.

**Unit 11B will be the grain field on Lower Klamath open to hunting this year.** Unit 7B which has been open to hunting for the past several years will be closed to hunting.

**Due to rotating field flooding in the spaced blinds on Tule Lake Refuge some previous spaced blind areas will be closed and others opened this season.** Hunters should contact the refuge or check the hunting portion of the refuge web site ([fws.gov/klamathbasinrefuges](http://fws.gov/klamathbasinrefuges)) in early September for a map of the current spaced blind locations. In the coming season, Spaced-blinds in the D, F and G areas will be open to vehicle access to the blind site.

**Starting this season, no hunters will be allowed to park or line up in any area including roads within the refuge boundaries prior to mid-night.**

**Unit 9A on Lower Klamath will operate as a seasonal marsh open to hunting this season.** Unit 4C will be a designated motor less hunting unit until December 1<sup>st</sup> and Unit 6B will not be opened to waterfowl hunting. Changes in the hunting status for these two units were discussed as a possibility at this year's hunting meeting.

**Off road vehicle access including ATVs and amphibious vehicles will be permitted only in the following locations:**

Tule Lake Refuge: Designated spaced-blinds (currently D, F and G blinds), the League-of-Nations and the Panhandle.

Lower Klamath Refuge: Sheepy East, Unit 4G, Unit 9D, the Orem/Sterns Units, Sheepy West, Miller Lake, and the Oregon Straits Units. Vehicle access is not permitted on dikes unless the dike is marked as open to vehicle traffic.

If you have questions, feel free to contact David Champine or Dave Menke at (530) 667-2231.

## Klamath Basin Refuges Reduces Some Fees, Eliminates Others

The Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge staff has received approval to restructure its fee programs to implement a single pass option of \$ 25.00 per year for hunters and photo blind users and eliminate entrance fees on two refuge auto tour routes. The fee program changes will be implemented starting July 1<sup>st</sup> 2006. According to refuge manager, Ron Cole, this change will streamline fee programs by cutting collection costs in half and eliminating the cumbersome process of collecting fees using remote drop boxes. The refuge will continue to sell passes by telephone, credit card transaction and in person at the refuge visitor center. Once the new fee program is fully implemented, refuge hunters and photo blind users will be able to make on-line purchases and buy passes from local vendors.

## Klamath Basin Refuges Reduces Some Fees, Eliminates Others Cont'd

One provision of the new fee program will reduce the previous \$ 50.00 season pass fee to \$ 25.00 per year. As in the past, all adult hunters and photo blind users will be required to purchase a permit prior to participating in these activities. Seniors with a golden age pass and full time students 21 and under will be able to obtain permits for half price. Permits will be valid for one year from the date of purchase. Despite the reduction of the annual pass cost, the refuge staff is anticipating a modest increase in fees collected each year as well as reduced collection costs. Fee collections are used to support and improve the programs for which they are collected.

In response to a letter and mail back form sent out this spring to about one thousand refuge hunters and photographers, nearly 88 percent of the 300 respondents favored the new single pass option.



**Remote fee collection boxes** (like the one pictured) will be eliminated on Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Refuges a part of the refuge's fee program changes.

## Featured Invasive Weed – Poison Hemlock

*By: Marco Buske  
Refuge IPM Specialist*

Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is an invasive weed that enjoys widespread distribution throughout the upper Klamath Basin. The Klamath Basin NWR is widely infested with this weed and in some management units, particularly on levees, it is often the dominant plant species.

It is a biennial native to Europe that typically grows 6 to 8 feet tall although it can reach 10 feet in stature. Stems are erect, stout and purple-spotted in all growth stages with distinct ridges and extensively branched. Leaves closely resemble parsley, poison hemlock is a member of the parsley family, are shiny green and delicate-looking with a fine pinnate leaf type. Small white flowers are borne on many umbrella-shaped flower clusters with each supported by a stalk. It reproduces by seed which can remain viable in the soil for about 3 years.

Poison hemlock is a very competitive plant often crowding out all other vegetation where it becomes well established. It grows rapidly in the early spring before most plants have broken winter dormancy and green up. It often forms a tall, wide spread and dense plant canopy shading out other plants. The tall dense canopy also interferes with public viewing of marshes, wetlands and associated wildlife. This has been most noticeable along the Lower Klamath NWR Auto Tour where in the past marsh and wetland management units have been completely obscured from the road.

Proper identification of the target pest is essential for any pest management program. An easy way to remember how to identify poison hemlock is, if it looks like parsley and the stems are randomly covered with many small purple spots it is likely poison hemlock.

## **Featured Invasive Weed – Poison Hemlock Cont'd**

The Refuge has made considerable progress over the last several years to reducing the presence of this weed. Fortunately, this weed is relatively easy to control using herbicides. It is very sensitive to growth regulator type herbicides including 2,4-D (many trade names), picloram (Tordon) and dicamba (Banvel, Clarity). Also tebuthiuron (Spike) applied preemergence and chlorsulfuron (Telar) applied preemergence or postemergence are reportedly very effective. Biological controls are generally considered ineffective, although the introduced European palearctic moth will feed on poison hemlock. This insect may provide some level of control where it occurs; Colorado, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Poison hemlock can be controlled by digging, repeated mowing and pulling, but the utility of such effort is limited to small infestations or relatively smooth and level terrain.

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## **Fire management welcomes new employees, releases new website**

*By: Scott Swanson*

*Assistant Prescribed Fire Specialist*

The fire management office is pleased to welcome three new employees to our program. Dave Cantrell, Bret Buxton and Kyle Ellis joined Klamath Basin's Division of Fire Management in early spring, just in time to participate in our annual lease land farming prescribed burning activities.

Dave Cantrell hails from the Bureau of Land Management, where he has served since 2002 as a member of the agencies local hand crew. Just returned from a firefighting assignment in south Texas, Dave is quickly transitioning into his new position as engineer on the Tule Lake NWR fire engine. His fire line experience will complement this seasons crew and add a new perspective to the safe and efficient operations at the Tule Lake station.

Joining our Klamath Marsh fire crew are Bret Buxton and Kyle Ellis, both seasoned wildland firefighters. Bret is entering his tenth fire season, having worked on a combination of fire engines and hand crews over the years. His experiences have taken him from southern California's Angeles National Forest and Sequoia National Park up to the Klamath Basin. Bret's familiarity with and knowledge of fire engine operations are great assets he brings to the program.

No stranger to fire engines himself, Firefighter Kyle Ellis comes to the fire management program from within the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. During his time at Pittsburg State University, and since his graduation, Kyle has served with Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Kansas and Havasu National Wildlife Refuge in western Arizona. Kyle will serve as the seasonal firefighter on the Klamath Marsh fire engine during the 2006 wildfire season.

In mid June, the Division of Fire Management released its new website at <http://www.fws.gov/klamathbasinrefuges/fire>. This fourth version of the site has a number of new features, content and redesigned navigability. The multimedia section is flush with pictures from our prescribed burns throughout the refuge complex and images from our fire suppression activities. Our recently completed Wildfire History, 1936 - 2005, examines the wildland fires of the past 75 years and offers opportunities to download maps of fire locations. You can also work on earning your Junior Firefighter badge or explore the lease land burning program in detail.

Our centralized Download page makes it easy to find any of our available documents you might see on an individual page. Fire posters, fuel moisture readings, maps, facts sheets and more are now all available in one easy-to-find place. Of course, a must for all visitors is to watch any one of our numerous prescribed fire videos, located on the Multimedia page. You won't find these videos on any other fire management website, so be certain to stop by and watch some of our amazing fire behavior from the fields of Tule Lake refuge.

## **Fire management welcomes new employees, releases new website Cont'd**

The fire management website is updated regularly, so be sure to visit us frequently and read about all of our exciting happenings around the refuge and the outdoors throughout the summer fire season. The images, information and products available on the website are all the work of Klamath Basin's own fire crew, fully authentic and available nowhere else. Check out our Contact page and let us know what you think as well as what else you would like to see.



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### **NEW FACES... CHANGING PLACES**

*David Champine  
Park Ranger/Interpretive Specialist*

#### **Michele Nuss:**

Michele joined the Refuge June 19 as Park Ranger with duties that include visitor center services, fee collection, interpretation and outreach programs. She has worked previously with the Forest Service in Outdoor Recreation/Interpretation in Montana and Interpretive Park Ranger with the Park Service in Arizona. Michele and her husband love to travel and have made numerous personal and research trips to Mexico and Central America. They both enjoy

the outdoors and spend as much time as possible birding, hiking and camping. She is looking forward to many future adventures exploring this region of the country.

#### **Loren Ruport:**

Loren comes to the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges as a Private Lands Biologist. He will be working with local Private Land owners to develop Fish and Wildlife Habitat on their lands. The program enjoys wide government support, including budgetary funds for the program. He was last stationed at San Luis National Wildlife Refuge in Los Banos, California. There he administered a large Private Lands Easement Program. He was there seven or eight years before coming to Tulelake. Loren is no stranger to the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges, he worked here as a volunteer involved with disease control in the 1990's. Loren is a University of California Davis graduate. He and his wife Sharon and their horses are looking forward to settling into the area.

#### **Carol Damberg:**

Carol will come to the Klamath Basin Refuges as the new Refuge Manager of Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. She is coming from the Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge in South western Wyoming. There she was also the Refuge Manager. Carol has been with the Fish and Wildlife Service for fifteen years.

#### **Doug Damberg:**

Doug will be coming to the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges as a Wildlife Refuges Specialist. He will be splitting his time and duties at the Klamath Marsh and Tule Lake Refuges. He comes from Cokeville Meadows National Wildlife Refuge where he was also a Wildlife Refuges Specialist. Cokeville Meadows and Seedskaadee are sister refuges. Doug has eighteen years of Fish and Wildlife experience.

Now if you were wondering about the same last names? They have been married for thirteen years. They are both avid fisherman and would probably love to hear about any good fishing spots. Both Doug and Carol are Law Enforcement officers.

# SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

## Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*

*By Michele Nuss — Park Ranger*

The Spotted Sandpiper might well be one of the best known of American shorebirds, and breeds along the edges of nearly any water source throughout the northern half of the continent. They are easily identifiable with distinctive bold, dark spots on their undersides during breeding season. However, in non-breeding plumage, a Spotted Sandpiper loses most of its spots.

The flight pattern of a Spotted Sandpiper can aid in identification, as they typically fly low over water with short bursts of rapidly vibrating wing beats, alternating with brief glides. On occasion, especially if flying high, they have been known to maintain a steady wing beat, in which case their flight pattern matches that of any other sandpiper.

Another helpful clue for identification is the habit of a Spotted Sandpiper endlessly bobbing its tail. The bobbing gets faster when the bird is nervous, but stops when the bird is alarmed, aggressive, or courting. When foraging, they teeter and bob almost constantly. Young Spotted Sandpipers begin their life-long custom of teetering within 30 minutes of hatching.

Breeding grounds extend from northern Alaska and Canada across most of the continent to southern United States. It is the female who arrives at the breeding grounds earlier than the male and is the one who establishes and defends the territory. However, it is the male who takes the primary role in parental

care, incubating the eggs and taking care of the young. Spotted Sandpipers are polyandrous in that the female might breed with more than one male.



**Spotted sandpiper**—Spotted sandpipers are found in widely scattered locations throughout the Upper Klamath and Tule Lake Basins. Unlike many shorebirds they are seldom seen in flocks but typically may be observed singly or a few at a time feeding along rocky shorelines of lakes, marshes or flowing water during the spring or summer months.

## **Species Spotlight Cont'd**

Four brown-spotted buff eggs are usually laid in a saucer-shaped hollow or a ground depression lined with grass, moss, twigs and feathers and might be partially concealed by a log or a rock or hidden in vegetation. Incubation lasts for 19 to 22 days and the young leave the nest soon after they hatch. At around 18 days they are able to fly. When feeling threatened, chicks are capable of swimming and diving to escape danger but often prefer the method of suddenly becoming motionless on the ground, where they are extremely difficult to see.

When foraging, Spotted Sandpipers will walk or wade, picking up items from the surface of the ground or shallow water, but will also grab insects out of the air. In addition to insects, they eat fish, worms, mollusks, crustaceans and spiders. Often they will dip their food in the water before eating.

So wherever your adventurous spirit might lead you on your outings this summer, whether it be to the refuge, to the lake, along a river, or possibly to some ocean shores, chances are you're likely to encounter a spotted sandpiper at one time or another during your outdoor excursions.

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## **NEW FACES Cont'd**

### **Bret Buxton:**

Bret is a permanent Fire Fighter here on the Refuges stationed at Tule Lake Wildlife Refuge. He was last with the National Park Service at Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Park. Bret has been on many fire assignments already since arriving at Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges.

### **Dave Cantrell:**

Dave is also a Permanent Fire Fighter here at Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges. Dave transferred from the Bureau of Land Management in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

### **Kyle Ellis:**

Kyle is a temporary Fire Fighter here at the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges. He comes from Kansas where he is a native of that state, and he had also worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Kansas.

### **Walt Ford:**

Due to an oversight in the last issue of "Words from the Wetlands" it was not mentioned that Walt Ford has moved to Minnesota. Walt came to the Klamath Basin Refuges in 2000 where he was the Manager of the Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. He left the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges in November 2005. Walt is now the Manager at Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Walt, his wife Tammy, and their son Carson seem to be enjoying themselves in their new location. Even though they have only been gone a few months, they are missed very much.

### **Ben Iverson:**

Ben will be going just down the road to Lava Beds National Monument to work on an Inter-Agency fire Engine.

### **Dave Knight:**

Dave will be transferring to the Maintenance Department from the wild land fire fighting crew. So, he will not be leaving the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges, he will just be taking on different duties.

### **Fran Maiss:**

After 30 plus years of Government service, Fran decided to take on the duties of Retirement. So, he now enjoys the part of life that so many strive for. He still lives in the area and has even checked in with the refuges a time or two.

### **Carl Millegan:**

Carl will be leaving Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges to go to Cokeville Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. That is the location that Doug Damberg is from. Carl will be taking on the duties that Doug will be leaving behind. That will include being the person mainly in charge of Cokeville Meadows and also working towards the day that the refuge will be open to the public and offering many recreational opportunities. Carl and family are looking forward to the change and beginning of a new chapter in their lives.

**KLAMATH BASIN WILDLIFE REFUGE ASSOCIATION**  
Membership Application / Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Single \$15

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$20

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Sustaining \$35

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Benefactor \$50

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

*Mail to: Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge Association  
4009 Hill Road, Tulelake, California 96134*

**USDI US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Klamath Basin NWR Complex  
4009 Hill Road  
Tulelake, CA 96134-9758  
(530) 667-2231**

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