

# WORDS FROM

# THE WETLANDS



WINTER

2007

NEWS FROM THE KLAMATH BASIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX

## Klamath Marsh Planning Meetings February 6 and 7

The Klamath Basin Refuges is starting work on a management plan for Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. The plan, known as a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), will serve as a guide for managing the Refuge over the next 15 years. The process will provide an opportunity to involve individuals, organizations, and local communities in the future of the Refuge. You can play a significant role in developing this far-reaching plan by submitting comments and participating in public meetings.

Initial planning meetings for the 41,000 acre refuge in the north central portion of Klamath County, will be held at the Shilo Inn (Klamath Lake Room) on February 6<sup>th</sup> and at the Chiloquin Community Center on February 7<sup>th</sup>. **Both meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. and are expected to last about 2 hours.** The meetings are intended to focus on developing a vision and goals for the future refuge management and a discussion of significant refuge issues. Refuge planners will seek public input concerning wildlife and habitat, public use and cultural resource issues and programs among other topics.

To date, two planning documents have been developed to provide background information about the refuge and allow interested participants an opportunity to express ideas for managing refuge wildlife, habitats, and visitor services in the future. To receive these planning updates contact Dave Menke at (530) 667-2231, Carol Damberg at (541)783-3380 or Mark Pelz at (916)414-6504.

**## Continued on Page 2 ##**

## WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL Soars February 15-18

The Klamath Basin of Northern California and Southern Oregon is home to over 350 species of birds throughout the year. It is world famous for spectacular flocks of waterfowl on the lakes, rivers and nearby Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges. The Upper Klamath Basin is home to the largest concentration of wintering Bald Eagles in the lower 48 states.

The Winter Wings Festival coincides with the Basin-wide peak of eagles and other raptors, so participants can enjoy these magnificent birds on tours and learn more about them at workshops. Birding experts bring alive the magnificence of a hawk in flight, the majesty of eagle wings, and awe inspiring sight of huge flocks of waterfowl seen in the Upper Klamath Basin each winter.

**## Continued on Page 3**

**## Dates to Remember ##**

### KLAMATH MARSH PLAN (CCP) MEETINGS

February 6<sup>th</sup> Shilo Inn (Klamath Lake Room)  
February 7<sup>th</sup> Chiloquin Community Center  
Both meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. and are expected to last about 2 hours

### WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL

February 15-18

### PUBLIC HUNT MEETING

April 14th Tule lake Fair Grounds  
Meeting at 3:00 pm expected to last about two hours

### TULE LAKE MIGRATORY BIRD FESTIVAL

May 19<sup>th</sup>  
Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges Headquarters

## Klamath Marsh Meetings Cont'd

### Klamath Marsh Wildlife Refuge

#### *Fast Facts:*

The Refuge was established in 1958 centered on a large marsh within the former Klamath Indian Reservation with rich cultural resource ties which are still significant to Tribal members.

Wildlife of special significance on the Refuge include: Yellow rail, Sandhill crane (nesting), White-headed woodpecker, many species of migrating waterfowl, Rocky mountain elk, Black-backed woodpecker, Black tern, Red-naped sapsucker, Western spotted frog, red-band trout and Miller Lake lamprey.

Klamath Marsh is renowned for its scenic beauty and is one of the largest relatively intact marshes remaining in the Western U. S.

Although there are relatively few visitors to Klamath Marsh, all six "priority public uses" (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, interpretation and education) take place on the refuge.

Major wildlife habitats on the refuge include: emergent marsh, sedge meadows, riparian habitats, ponderosa and lodgepole pine forest and aspen stands.



View of Mt. Thielsen across a portion of 41,000 acre Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge.

## New Interagency Recreation Pass Introduced

*Michele Nuss*

*Park Ranger*

A new interagency pass, the America the Beautiful - National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass, has been introduced and is now in effect as of January, 2007. This new pass combines the benefits of existing passes from five federal agencies: National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and Forest Service. The pass applies to federal recreational sites with entrance or standard amenity fees. The new interagency pass replaces the National Parks Pass, Golden Eagle Passport, Golden Age Passport, and the Golden Access Passports. Existing passes will continue to be honored until they expire.

The four types of new passes are as follows: 1) The Interagency Annual Pass. This pass replaces the National Parks Pass and the Golden Eagle Passport. Cost is \$80.00 and is valid for twelve months from the date of purchase. It offers unlimited coverage of entrance and standard amenity recreation fees. It does not cover campground fees. 2) The Interagency Senior Pass. This pass replaces the Golden Age Passport. This is a lifetime pass for age 62 and older. Cost is \$10 and identification is required to verify proof of age. 3) The Interagency Access Pass. This pass replaces the Golden Access Passport. It is a free lifetime pass for those who have been medically determined to have a permanent disability. 4) The Interagency Volunteer Pass. This is a new pass that is now available to volunteers. It is a free annual pass for those volunteers who provide at least 500 hours of service. Volunteers may officially begin to accrue hours on or after January 1, 2007. Once the 500 hour requirement is reached, the pass will be issued and will be valid for one year from the month of issuance. Only one pass may be issued per year.

All new interagency recreation passes are good at vehicle-based entry sites for all occupants in a single, non-commercial vehicle. At walk-up sites where a per person fee is charged, the pass is good for the pass holder and three adults. Children under 16 are admitted free.

For more information regarding this new pass system, you can visit [www.recreation.gov/recpass.jsp](http://www.recreation.gov/recpass.jsp).

# Winter Wings Festival Cont'd

After 25 years as the Klamath Basin Audubon Society's Bald Eagle Conference, this event has spread its wings to become the **Klamath Basin Winter Wings Festival**, a four-day event that takes place annually on President's Weekend with most activities based at the Oregon Institute of Technology campus. The purpose of the Festival is to share information, increase awareness of community resources and gain an understanding of our wildlife, especially birds of the Klamath Basin.

The festivities begin Thursday evening in downtown Klamath Falls. From 5-8 pm, museum and art gallery tours, food, music, vendors, and store specials will give families and tourists the opportunity to enjoy downtown as part of the Winter Wings Festival. A complete festival brochure with a schedule and description of Festival events and registration information is available on the web site:

"winterwingfest.org." Friday through Sunday, the Festival will offer workshops, tours, vendors, displays, and activities attractive to families. Many Festival events are either free or available at a modest cost.

## **Festival highlights include:**

**Art/Photo Contests, Displays and Sales**

**Beginning Birding in Klamath Basin**

**Children's Activities (offered throughout the Festival weekend)**

**Vendors**

**Live Bird Demonstrations**

**Silent Auction and Raffle**

**Live Music** (including "**The Lettermen**" Friday evening at the Ross Ragland Theater)

**Ice Skating at the Klamath Ice Sports arena**

**Workshops for Families and Interactive Booths for Kids**

**A Taste of the Arts, a Wine and Art Reception**

**Refuge Open House (Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge – Sunday 10:00 to 3:00)**

**Bird Slide Show and Eagle Talk**

## **Special Workshops and Field Trips (Fees and reservations required) Include:**

Bald Eagle Flyout at Bear Valley Refuge (Bus trip offered Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings)

Bald Eagle Natural History (An Aerie Afternoon)

Beginning Avian Rehabilitation

Beginning Optics

Bird House Building

Birding by Ear

Bats of the Lava Beds

Digital Photography

Digiscoping

Early Birding

Extreme (dawn to dusk) Birding in the Klamath Basin

Frostbite Flyout and Feathered Friends, Raptor Repast and Bear Valley Breakfast (see Festival brochure for description of these three events)

Introduction to Falconry

High Desert Museum Birds of Prey Children's Program

Klamath Refuges Birding and Banding

Klamath Region Bird Banding

Knowing the Birds (Children's workshop)

Lava Beds Rock Art and Cave tour

Leave No Trace

Leisurely Birding in the Klamath Basin

Nature Cards

Partnering Wetlands and Agriculture

Pine Needle Basket Making

Protecting Raptors in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Running Y Wetlands History

Snowshoeing at Crater Lake

Tule Duck Decoys

Volcanic Legacy Byway Tour

Water-Wise Naturescaping in your Backyard

Wetland Restoration on the Williamson River

Wildlife Habitat Restoration in the Klamath Basin

Wildlife Refuge Photography

To receive a Festival information packet, call the Great Basin Visitor Association at 1-800-445-6728, or visit the Winter Wings website at:

**[www.winterwingfest.org](http://www.winterwingfest.org)**

# UPCOMING MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

*Mark Carlson,  
Engineering Equipment Operator Supervisor  
&  
David Champine  
Park Ranger/Interpretive Specialist*

## **Project:**

The maintenance crew (Rod McCollam, George Simmons, and Steve Huhnke) fabricated two osprey nesting platforms in January to be installed this month south of Unit Sump 1B on Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The platforms will be mounted on two 30 foot power poles and installed by the maintenance staff. The poles will be buried 4-5 feet in the ground the nest platforms will be about twenty feet above the ground. The platforms are 4 feet square with 6 inch high sides and made of steel tubing and expanded metal. They will be bolted 2-3 feet below the top of the pole with a horizontal perch attached to the top of the pole to give the male a place to watch the nest.

## **Project:**

In March, the maintenance crew will install 5-8 water control structures in lots 27-33 and lots 21-26 to manage water in the latest flood fallow projects on Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

## **Project:**

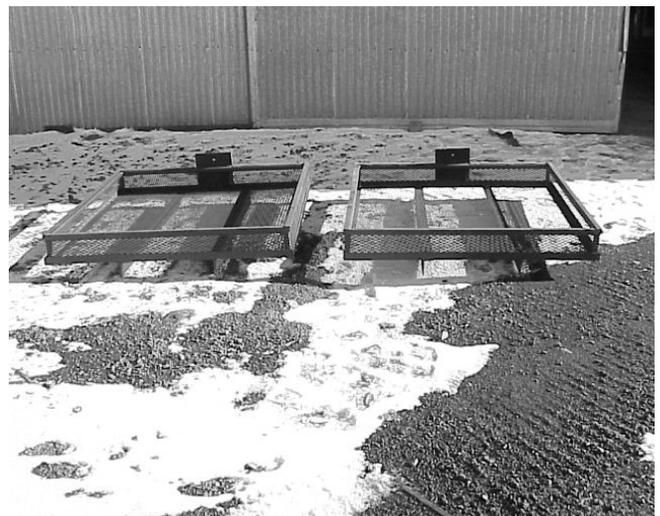
During the summer months (June – September), the maintenance crew will be focusing its efforts on rehabilitating existing water management structures on Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. The primary units receiving this rehabilitation will be Stearns Fields 6 – 8, Unit 9B & 9C, and Unit 1 Fields 1 – 8. The maintenance crew is currently fabricating the water control structures and walkways that are needed for these projects. Efforts will focus on replacing water delivery and shutoff mechanisms with new, more effective structures, cleaning existing drains, and repairing existing levees. These projects will improve public and employee safety, water management, and require significantly less staff time to manage.

# Tule Lake Refuge Osprey Nesting Platforms:

*John Beckstrand  
Wildlife Biologist*

Osprey will soon find brand new nesting platforms to build their nest on and raise their young in. The goal of the project is to entice a pair or two of osprey to stay as they pass through the area searching for nest sites. Luckily, osprey readily take to artificial nest platforms, and piling some dead sticks on top of the platform in the form of a nest is said to be irresistible to the soon-to-be parents.

Late in the nineteenth century a colony of several hundred nesting ospreys was located just north of Tule Lake; and although the lake is smaller and shallower now, it contains large numbers of Tui and blue chub which should be more than adequate to sustain the raising of osprey young. Ospreys are locally common in the lakes in northwest Klamath County and southwest Deschutes County, especially on Crane Prairie Reservoir, so enticing a pair or two away very possible. The platforms will be placed one west and one east of the new observation kiosk located south of Sump 1(B) on Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Both platforms will be observable from the kiosk. If you find yourself in the area this spring, check out the nesting platforms for activity. If the occupants look like either a Canada goose or a great-horned owl, we won't evict the new tenants. If however, you happen to see an osprey on the nest then you'll know we got it right.



Osprey nesting platforms ready for placement

# Winter At Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge

*Carol Damberg  
Refuge Manager*

Early morning sunrises and evening sunsets warmly reflect hues of yellow and orange in the blanket of pure white snow that has covered the Refuge since early December. This time of year the winter solitude is almost eerie and the landscape views full of contrast and beauty. Snow capped Mt. Thielson and Mt. Scott provide majestic backdrops to the level snow swept landscape of the Refuge.

Winter is an amazing time to visit the Refuge if roads are open for travel. Winter enthusiasts who enjoy snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are welcome to use the Wocus Bay road or adjacent Forest Service roads to view the Refuge's winter wildlife and scenery. Tracks in the snow show the Refuge is filled with activity despite the cold and stark winter landscape that appears to prevail across the marsh. Test your track identification skills by looking for prints of coyote, rabbit, bobcat, and elk. Listen for the coyote serenades, the breeding calls of great horned owls, the occasional call of a red-tailed hawk, and the unique vocalizations of woodpeckers, juncos, spotted towhees, and Steller's jay. Watch carefully as you drive along Silver Lake Road for foraging rough-legged hawks and bald eagles that may be perched on a post or soaring over the Marsh. Even the occasional bobcat or elk may be spotted if you're lucky.

## Animal Tracks at Klamath Marsh



## Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge

Winter is a stressful period for wildlife and conservation of energy reserves is most important. Please be respectful not to flush birds and mammals you might see and instead use binoculars or spotting scopes to observe them from a distance. Dusk and dawn are often the best time to view wildlife or photograph that special view. Please pick up a Refuge brochure and review it for regulations prior to enjoying the Refuge. Visitors are reminded that the only areas open for public travel on the Refuge are the roads indicated in the Refuge brochure. Off-road walking, snowshoeing or skiing is not permitted. Questions about winter conditions or Refuge opportunities - Call the Refuge office at 541-783-3380 M-F 7:30-4:30 p.m.

## Tule Lake Migratory Bird Festival Set for May 19<sup>th</sup>

Planning is in its initial stages for the Tule Lake Migratory Bird Festival which is expected to take place on May 19<sup>th</sup>. As in the past the Festival will feature airboat rides and Refuge tours, live bird banding and demonstrations food and family activities. Depending on scheduling of the Dedication of the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway which is expected to take place the same weekend, some events including dedication of the new visitor center exhibits may be held the afternoon prior to the Festival. Additional information will be mailed to newsletter recipients as plans for the Festival are finalized.

# SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

## Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* Michele Nuss

The Eared grebe is one of the most abundant grebes in North America and can readily be found in the Klamath Basin, with largest concentrations occurring from March through October. So look for it to arrive in ample numbers soon! In March and April, the Eared grebe trades in its non-descript winter gray and white coat for more colorful plumage. During the breeding season, this small slender bird with its deep red eye also sports golden feathered tufts on both sides of its head. The feathers transition in a striking contrast between its dark neck and crest and its cinnamon-brown flanks and white underparts.

Eared grebes are rarely seen out of water. Because of its small wings, short tail, and leg placement towards the back of the body, the Eared grebe finds it difficult to maneuver on land. With this body structure, it has adapted as an excellent swimmer and even better diver, able to stay underwater for up to 60 seconds. Most other diving birds have webbed feet, but the Eared grebe has broadly lobed toes that help propel it through the water.

Eared grebes feeds almost exclusively on aquatic insects and small crustaceans caught by diving and capturing with its slender bill. Like other grebes, it eats feathers by the hundreds.

### Eared grebe in breeding plumage



An Eared Grebe can eat so many feathers that balls form in the stomach and pack the digestive tract. This protects the stomach from sharp food items such as bones or shells. Grebe chicks begin swallowing feathers fed by their parents when they are only a few days old.

Typically social in nesting season, Eared Grebes live in colonies that sometimes number thousands of individuals. Both parents help build a nest, which is a floating platform of reeds and algae, usually anchored to vegetation in shallow water. Three to four eggs are incubated, and both parents share nest sitting duties for about three weeks. After hatching, the young are continuously carried on the back of a parent for the first week. Chicks are fed by the noncarrying parent. After ten days, the young half the young are cared for by each parent. In ten days, the chicks have grown enough to care for themselves.

So when you visit Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Refuges this early spring, keep an eye out for the grey and white winter plumage of Eared Grebes and watch as they transform into their more colorful golden-feather “eared” breeding colors. Soon after, their floating nests will dot the edges of the marsh waters. In late spring and early summer, witness young grebes traveling atop the backs of their parents. Have fun, and we’ll see you out on the refuges!

### Eared grebe in winter plumage



## 2006-07 Hunt Season Summary

This past waterfowl hunting season featured fairly normal water conditions and some bright spots in hunting success on Tule Lake hunting units compared to recent years. At the beginning of the season boat access into units 6A and 9A on Lower Klamath was restricted due to low water. These two areas were at or near full water levels by the end of October. Hunting in the Sump 1B on Tule Lake and field unit 7A on Lower Klamath were both mostly good to excellent for the first eight weeks of the hunting season. Hunting in the spaced-blinds also improved this past season compared to the poor goose hunting success reported for the 2005-06 season. The new fee program which requires all refuge hunters to purchase an annual pass (at the reduced price of \$25.00 compared to past years) was favorably received by most hunters and has raised funds to support hunting programs. The final totals have not yet been calculated but there has been an increase in funds.

### A comparison of hunter use and success between 2006-07 and 2005-06 seasons:

1) The number of hunters using the **Tule Lake spaced-blinds** increased from about 1350 for the 2005/06 season to over 2100 during 2006-07. The number of geese taken by spaced blind hunters nearly doubled in 2006-07 compared to 2005-06. Some of this increase is undoubtedly a result of more liberal bag limits for dark geese now in effect.

2) **Sump 1B** hunter use nearly tripled in 2006-07 compared to 2005-06 and hunters took nearly fourfold the number of ducks in this unit. There was also a fourfold increase in the number of mallards taken by Sump 1B hunters in 2006-07. These increases are particularly notable considering that this area was frozen with practically no hunter use during the months of December and January.

3) Hunter use of **Tule Lake marsh** in 2006-07 was up modestly with hunting success similar to last year.

4) Goose hunters using **Lower Klamath fields** has remained the same for the past two seasons with only a modest increase in the number of geese harvested and significantly fewer ducks taken this season compared to last.

5) **Lower Klamath marsh** hunters were about the same number in 2006-07 with duck harvest down almost one-third compared to 2005-06 results.

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**Public Hunter Meeting**  
**April 14th Tule lake Fair Grounds**  
**Meeting at 3:00 pm expected to last about two hours**

Words from The Wetlands

## Lower Klamath Centennial 2008 Looking for a Few good Ideas!

On August 8th, 1908, Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge became the nation's first refuge set aside for migratory waterfowl. The Refuge was established as the combined effort of early conservationist, William L. Finley (among others) and President Theodore Roosevelt who signed the Executive Order creating the "Klamath Lake Reservation." Next year, we will celebrate the Refuge's Centennial with some fun, interesting and educational events. We have listed some preliminary ideas that have been discussed to date but we would like to hear from YOU as well. Please let us know what you think might work as a fitting tribute to this hundred year anniversary celebration!

Since two other Refuges (Malheur and Three Arches Rock) also celebrate their Centennials in 2007 and 2008, some of the plans discussed to date would involve all three. Possible combined events include:

- 1) A traveling "interpretive van" such as one used for the Lewis and Clark Centennial to go to schools to conduct programs highlighting the three refuges.
- 2) Republishing a Centennial Edition of a book on the life and conservation efforts of William Finley. This book which is out of print, contains many photos of the refuges taken by Finley and Herbert Bohman.
- 3) Producing a traveling exhibit of then-and-now photos of the three refuges using many of the Finley photos taken in the 1908 time period.
- 4) Plan and host a trip of birding expedition which would travel to all three Oregon Centennial Refuges.

Events which could be used to highlight the Centennial of Lower Klamath Refuge include the following:

- 1) Seasonal tours (winter, spring, fall, summer) for the public highlighting wildlife, habitat management and public use opportunities.
- 2) Conduct a dedication ceremony for the wildlife viewing panels and interpretive platform on Lower Klamath Refuge.
- 3) Produce an historical document book on the history of Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge.
- 4) Do a groundbreaking ceremony for the "Big Pond" project assuming the timing coincides with the Refuge Centennial.
- 5) Create a state-of-the art photo/observation blind on the Lower Klamath Refuge with a dedication ceremony to take place on August 8, 2008.
- 6) Host a refuge "birthday bash" with food, music and invitations for FWS and politician.

Please let us know what you would like to see happen to commemorate this momentous occasion! Ideas may be written up and sent to Dave Menke by email at "dave\_menke@fws.gov."

**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*

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

**Would you or a friend like to be on our free newsletter mailing list?  
Write or call Refuge Headquarters.**