

Update:

Please note the change in closing date for TNOL grant!!!!

Grants are available for environmental education partnerships between a local community and their national wildlife refuge.

Nature of Learning grants are available up to \$5,000 for a first year grant, and up to \$3,000 for a second and third year grant.

This announcement closes June 1st, 2006.

Interested parties should apply at <http://www.fws.gov/efuges/> by clicking on Announcement Details and Application.

For additional information contact:

Kim Chumney,
Project Manager
The Keystone Center
1628 Sts. John Road
Keystone, CO 80435
517-861-6929
kmchumney@keystone.org

“Spotlight” Refuge – Nisqually NWR

By Sheila McCartan

Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge is located at the southern end of Puget Sound, Washington in the Nisqually River delta. The almost 3,000 acre Refuge protects one of the few relatively undeveloped large estuaries remaining in Puget Sound. The Refuge has international significance as a staging area, sanctuary, and migration stopover for migratory birds of the Pacific Flyway. The Refuge also has regional importance as migration and rearing habitat for salmon, particularly the federally listed fall Chinook salmon.

Located adjacent to a major freeway in a rapidly growing urban area, the Refuge is easily accessible to outdoor enthusiasts. More than 150,000 people per year visit the Refuge to participate in a variety of wildlife dependent recreational and educational activities. A 7-mile trail system, Visitor Center and Environmental Education Center, bank



fishing access and photoblinds support these activities. During special events such as the Nisqually Watershed Festival and the Summer Lecture Series people have a chance to learn more in-depth about natural and cultural resource issues.



Managing a Refuge with a small staff takes many partners and partnerships! Refuge volunteers contribute 20,000 hours of time to Refuge activities including visitor services, administration, maintenance and habitat management. Refuge Weed Warriors help to identify and eliminate non-native plants while the Friends of Nisqually NWR provide financial support to the environmental education program. Working together, we can provide quality visitor services programs and wildlife benefit for healthier, well managed habitats.

What do Deer Valley High School and the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge have in common?

By Chicory Bechtel

Both are located in Antioch, California, and both are receiving much-needed resources through the Nature of Learning grant program. An environmental jewel within the city of Antioch, the Refuge is slightly larger in acreage than Deer Valley High School (67 acres vs. 57 acres), and is home to 3 endangered species. Yet most DVHS high school students surveyed through the project had not heard of the Refuge, even though it is practically in their backyard. These same students attend a school that, like many others in California, doesn't have adequate funding to support educational field trips. Teachers often need to pay out of their own pockets for bus transportation and substitute teacher fees if they want to take their students out of the classroom. These costs amount to hundreds of dollars per class, per field trip.

With two consecutive years of funding from NOL, the EarthTeam Environmental Network, in partnership with Refuge staff, has been able to offer DVHS students a unique classroom and field experience not commonly available to many students. And in return, the Refuge has been getting some well-deserved attention and love from these teens.



Beginning in 2004, Refuge biologist Rachel Hurt and EarthTeam's Restoration Projects Director Chicory Bechtel worked with Teresa Trejo-Mejia, an enthusiastic science teacher at DVHS, to organize classroom and field activities at the Refuge for Teresa's AP Environmental Science class. Students learned about the native and endangered species at the site, studied animal tracks, and tested water quality in the adjacent Delta. But the students also gave back to the Refuge during their visits.

EarthTeam Environmental Network is a Bay Area nonprofit organization that offers free environmental programs to middle and high school students and teachers. For more information, visit our website at WWW.earthteam.net.



They planted 120 native buckwheat plants that will provide food and shelter for an endangered Lange's metalmark butterfly population, sowed other native plant seeds, and experimented with various weeding methods to find out how to best ensure survival of native plants.

During the 2005-06 school year, we have been able to continue educating local students about the Antioch Dunes, through similar in-depth class and field experiences with one of Teresa's ninth-grade Earth Science classes. In addition to classroom visits



by Refuge and EarthTeam staff, the students received a PowerPoint presentation about the site from Madeline Burchard, a senior at DVHS who learned about the Refuge last year. Madeline, and two other seniors, Mandisa and Marquisa Cassell, also joined the first field trip in February, pointing out, with pride, the plots they weeded and planted last year. This year's class will continue to give back to the Refuge, as well as receive – they already planted Antioch Dunes evening primrose, an endangered plant species, and will return in May to determine survival rate of their plants.