

E. Biesiot

The Talon

Rocky Mountain Arsenal and Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuges Volunteer Newsletter

April 2005

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VOLUNTEERS TAKE TIME TO CARE

Thursday, April 21, 2005 Refuge staff will host the sixteenth annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Please join us for an evening celebrating your accomplishments. Festivities will include entertainment, fun interactive activities, great company, and a delicious Mexican feast.

As part of this week long celebration, 30 passes to the Wildlife Experience have been reserved for Refuge volunteers, for Friday, April 22, 2005. Please RSVP to Jeannine no later than April 19, 2005 at (303) 289-0471, first-come, first-served! Please arrive at the Wildlife Experience, located at 100435 Peoria (Peoria and Lincoln), by 1:30 pm for the staff/volunteer guided tour of this unique facility. Several of their exhibits include:

Wild Sights: Our National Wildlife Refuges

This exhibit highlights John and Karen Hollingsworth's photographic images from 34 National Wildlife Refuges. The color photographs represent the beauty and diversity of species and habitats throughout America's National Wildlife Refuge System.

America 's Wildest Places

America's Wildest Places chronicles the 100-year history of America 's National Wildlife Refuge System. Through historical and scenic photographs, video, artifacts and natural specimens, the exhibition tells the story of the development of federal lands dedicated to wildlife conservation. In 2003, *America's Wildest Places* appeared at the Smithsonian Institution to celebrate a "Century of Conservation" begun by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903.

National Volunteer Week is about thanking one of America's most valuable assets – our volunteers – and calling attention to all that they do to improve our communities. National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing the week as an annual celebration of volunteering. Since then, every U.S. President has signed a proclamation promoting National Volunteer Week.



Refuge Bald Eagles

The Refuge's resident pair of bald eagles began egg incubation at their nest on February 18 and one egg hatched March 27. The parents were seen bringing food to the nest and feeding a chick, if there is a second egg, it should have already hatched. At five weeks old, the eaglets will be banded. They will be removed from their nest so they can be weighed and measured. It will take ten to twelve weeks before the eaglets can fly.



Visit our website <http://rockymountainarsenal.fws.gov/>

Calendar of Events



Recreation Program Leader Training

Thursday, April 14, 2005

5:30 pm Visitor Center



Angler Meeting

Thursday, April 14, 2005

6:30 pm Visitor Center



Volunteer Appreciation Event

Thursday, April 21, 2005

6 pm ARF



Fishing Fever

Mandatory Volunteer briefing for this premier event will be May 5 at 2 pm or May 5 at 7pm at the Visitor Center. Please attend only one. See you there!



2005 Fishing Program

It's time to get out your fishing pole for the 2005 Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge fishing season! Fishing orientations are held every Saturday and Sunday at 9:00 am in the events area. The 2005 fishing season begins April 16 and ends October 9, 2005. As always, we could not execute the fishing program without your help!

Fishing Fever

Fishing Fever will be held on May 14 from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. This premier event will consist of various booths with interactive activities, with an emphasis on fishing and fisheries. We are anticipating that this event will bring 1500 – 2000 Refuge visitors, and as always, we could not host this event without your assistance! Volunteer positions include: shuttle escort, tour guide, trail rover, fishing monitor, parking, kids fishing area, trash patrol, and other positions may be available. Sign up sheets for positions will be available at the May 5 briefing. Hope to see you there!

Volunteer Meetings

The dedication of Refuge volunteers enables the Service to accomplish its mission. Volunteer meetings are the best way for Refuge volunteers to keep up-to-date on Refuge information. These meetings are **mandatory** for all Refuge volunteers. If you are unable to attend a volunteer meeting, please let Jeannine know ASAP.



Thank Tank



The Refuge staff would like to give a special "THANK YOU" to Cathy Rathbun, Dave Rhoades, Lynn Wilcockson, Tim Hogan, Irv Cohen, Dick Martley and Dennis Mead for their much appreciated assistance at the Colorado RV, Boat, and Travel Show March 2nd through March 6th. We were able to reach approximately 1,500 visitors. As always, we would not be able to accomplish all we do without our volunteers. Thanks for making a difference!



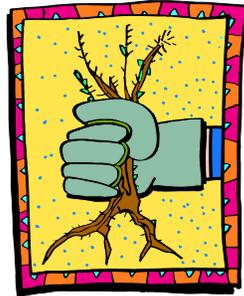
Weed Control

The 2005 Refuge weed control effort is underway! The Service has been performing prescribed burns, which are an important tool in habitat management.

Ash from fires returns vital nutrients to life-supporting soils which in turn, provides for healthy vegetation and habitat for wildlife. So far this year, .5 acres of debris piles in the Highline Canal, 3.8 acres along Uvalda Ditch and 146 acres along the Northwest portion of the Refuge are part of the effort. Plans are to burn approximately 3,000 acres this year, weather permitting.

Grant Awarded

RMANWR received funding through the Challenge Cost Share grant and partnering with Shell, Mile High Youth Corp and Denver Botanical Gardens to work on the removal of houndstongue and Canada thistle, along the Refuge’s southern waterways and tree groves.



Coyote Population Study

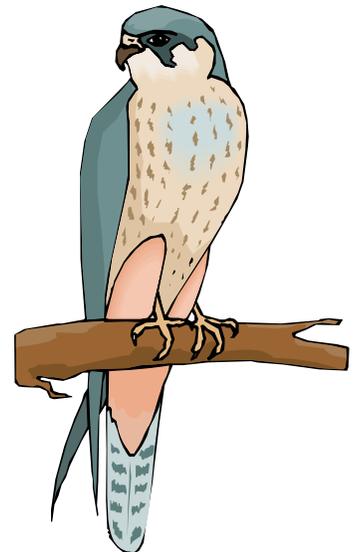


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Coyotes are the primary predator and scavenger on the Refuge, they have an important influence on other wildlife such as deer and small mammals. In February 2005, Refuge biologists initiated a study to estimate the abundance of coyotes on the Refuge. The goal of this study is to describe seasonal food habits, and estimate the number of coyote dens and litter sizes to provide an indication of reproductive success. To determine the relative abundance of coyotes, scat deposits will be tallied and to examine coyote seasonal food habits, scat content will be collected and its content will be analyzed, coyote reproductive information will be collected, and howling surveys will be conducted to locate den sites. Once dens are located, they will be observed to estimate litter sizes. This survey will allow the Service to estimate the primary predator population and food habits, ultimately providing a tool for better Refuge management.

American Kestrel and Burrowing Owl Nest Monitoring

On the Refuge, American kestrel and burrowing owl populations are monitored each year to evaluate reproductive success and to determine the occurrence and effects of West Nile Virus (WNV). This will be the final year of the 2 year study, which is in cooperation with U.S. Geological Survey. From March through September, kestrel nests will be monitored and from April through August, burrowing owl nests will be monitored. Adults and young of both species will be captured to collect blood and oral swab samples for WNV, to record body measurements and band. Blood and swab samples will be tested to determine WNV status (virus and antibody positive/negative). This survey will allow the Service to compare the survival and/or nest success of WNV-infected and antibody protected individuals against that of uninfected individuals.



HELP WANTED**We need YOU!****Puncture Vine Removal**

During the spring, summer, and early fall, many guided bicycle tours are scheduled on the Refuge. Historically, there has been a problem with flat tires on these tours, from puncture vine goat heads. Spraying these invasive species is adequate, however, the seeds remain on the ground. Puncture vines are best eliminated by root and seed removal. This project will require the assistance of at least 8 volunteers working 2 days for 4 hours. This work also will help the habitat crew in controlling this invasive species, which grows most in summer months and prefers spreading along trails and roads. Dates: May 28–29, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm; July 16–17, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. Contact Ivan Vicente at 303-289-0864 if you are interested in helping!

Anglers Needed

Anglers are needed to assist with fishing orientations, checking in anglers, and to monitor the fishing program. Contact Ivan 303-289-0864.

Visitor Center Assistants Needed

Volunteers are needed to staff the Visitor Center. Shifts are available 7 days a week. If interested contact Susan Echelberger at (303) 289-0366.

Get Outside and Enjoy YOUR Refuge

Trail Rovers are needed on the weekends. Beginning April 17, Refuge trails will be open in the evenings on the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month until October 15. We could use your help the following evenings: Sunday, April 17, Saturday, May 7, Sunday, May 15, Saturday, June 4, and Sunday, June 19. Please contact Jeannine at (303) 289-0471 to sign up.

Help the Habitat!

Volunteers needed for noxious weed control. Interested volunteers should contact Lorenz Sollmann at (303) 289-0927.

**Aquatic Monitoring**

The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service will conduct several aquatic surveys in the spring and summer of 2005, as part of the Refuge's aquatic management plan. The plan requires preliminary sampling for assessing habitat and biota needs. Beginning in May, the Service will implement water quality testing and invertebrate sampling and in July, vegetative transects, weed bed mapping and riparian habitat classifications will be conducted.

Welcome Aboard!

Some of you may have noticed a few new faces around!

I would like to welcome, Charles Wilkinson and Chadd Drott. Charles is a Visitor Center Assistant during the week and Chadd can be found on the trails or giving a tour. If you run into Charles or Chadd, please introduce yourself and give them a warm refuge welcome.

**Two Ponds
Building Bridges**

As some of you may already know, the bridge installation project at Two Ponds NWR has hit a snag. The cost of construction and installation escalated as a result of several factors, including steel prices, abutment installation costs, engineering fees, etc. As a result we have resorted to looking at other options.

A bridge source was identified that had not been looked at previously. This source uses railroad cars that have been taken out of service and uses them as bridges. The railroad car bridges are generally used for automotive traffic, but can also serve as a foot bridge.

If the rail car option for bridges does not work, we will likely table the project until sufficient funds can be obtained to proceed as originally planned.

