



# Willapa Tidings

Vol. 13 No. 3 Spring 2013

Newsletter of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

*Efforts To Save An Endangered Deer ... page 2*



Endangered  
Columbia  
White-tailed  
Deer being  
released at  
Ridgefield  
National  
Wildlife  
Refuge

Photo by Natalie St. John, The Daily News

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# Efforts To Save An Endangered Deer

By Jackie Ferrier

An emergency translocation of endangered Columbian white-tailed deer from Julia Butler Hansen (JBH) Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is currently underway.

## Why move deer?

Steamboat Slough dike, a dike owned by Wahkiakum County Diking District #4 along the Columbia River boundary of the JBH Refuge, is eroding and could fail at any time. A dike breach would inundate the JBH Refuge mainland unit with 2-6 feet of water and place the approximately 100 Columbian white-tailed deer (CWTD) inhabiting the Refuge at extreme risk. The emergency translocation is an attempt to minimize loss of deer and maintain efforts toward recovery under the Endangered Species Act.

## Why not fix the dike?

See the article on page 3.

## What effect will flooding have on the deer?

When the dike breaches and subsequent flooding occurs, the majority of these deer will be displaced or die setting recovery efforts back significantly. Prior week-long flood events in February 1996, November 2007 and December 2009 in this unit reduced deer numbers by



up to 50% from existing levels. Failure of the dike could substantially reduce or eliminate habitat available to this subpopulation of CWTD, to a point where it could not recover.

## When are the deer being moved?

A breach in the dike is likely to occur before repair or stabilization can be designed and completed, therefore, we will translocate approximately half of the subpopulation (up to 50 deer) from JBH to Ridgefield NWR between January 29 and April 15, 2013.

## Why move the deer to Ridgefield NWR?

Ridgefield NWR is within the historical range for CWTD and contains good quality suitable habitat.

## Who is moving the deer?

Refuge staff from both JBH and Ridgefield NWRs are capturing and moving the deer in partnership with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Please contact the refuge if you would like to volunteer to help.

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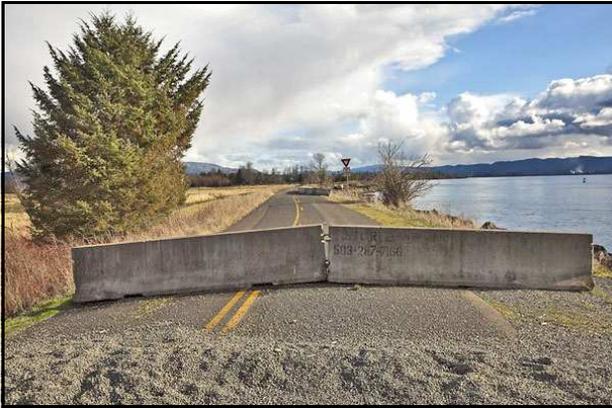
## How many deer have been moved so far?

As of March 6, a total of twenty-two deer including eight bucks and fourteen does (eleven adults, seven yearlings and four fawns) have been relocated to the Ridgefield NWR since capture efforts began the week of January 29. Two of the translocated deer with radio collars have been located outside the boundaries of the Ridgefield NWR. To learn more and get updates about the project please visit: <http://www.fws.gov/jbh/translocation.html>.

## *Failing Dike Requires Cooperation*

By Jackie Ferrier, Project Leader, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex

When the Steamboat Slough Dike fails, waters from the Columbia River will pour into the main unit of the Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge, home to Columbian white-tailed deer. This water would damage habitat and could kill the majority of the 90 to 100 federally protected deer on the refuge. The inundation of the refuge also would destroy more than \$28 million of taxpayer-supported assets and push water up against Highway 4.



Although we don't know when the dike will fail, we know it will fail. Structural engineers say there is an immense hole in the riverbed just offshore from the main erosion point that would swallow countless tons of rock and still not allow us to shore up the eroding dike without millions of dollars. The experts say that even if the dike is fixed, more erosion is likely to occur in the future because the dike has not been maintained to standards.

The existing dike belongs to the Wahkiakum County Diking District #4 and they don't have the money to fix the dike. The road on top of the failing dike, closed for safety reasons, belongs to Wahkiakum County and they don't have the funds. The land under the dike belongs to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and we don't have the funds either.

There is an agency that has the money – the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – and they are willing to help. The Corps has money to build the set-back dike and restore fish habitat using funds allocated to them by Congress to mitigate for the effects of Columbia River dams on salmon populations. But they can only do it as a salmon recovery project. That means the area between the failing dike and the set-back dike must be restored as salmon habitat. Otherwise, the project does not qualify under the terms Congress set when it appropriated the funds and the Corps cannot do the project.

*Continued...*

The Corps is interested in the project and could begin work as soon as late summer. Preliminary estimates place the cost of the set-back dike and related restoration work at \$8.5 million. Approximately 80 acres of deer habitat lost to the project would come from the refuge. But there's a catch: the Wahkiakum County commissioners and the Diking District #4 must approve any changes to the failing dike. To date, the commissioners have given their approval, but the Diking District has not.

The project would protect the refuge, save deer, add salmon habitat, provide jobs, enhance recreational fishing and help resolve a long-term problem. That's a lot of winners.

Without the project, when the existing dike fails, we all lose: the road goes; public access to the river is dramatically reduced; deer and other wildlife die; the chance to do something good for salmon is lost; taxpayers lose more than \$28 million in assets; the public loses a big piece of a beloved wildlife refuge; and the community loses the dollars the refuge and its visitors bring to the local economy. We don't have to lose any of this. If we work together we can all win, but we need to act quickly. If we don't, we all lose – especially the wildlife.

## *Willapa Refuge Complex Thanks its Many Volunteers*

By Nancy Holman

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex held a dinner event to honor its many volunteers Saturday, March 2 at The Cove in Long Beach, Washington. Volunteers gathered to challenge their knowledge with a game of refuge trivia, and received certificates and awards for their service to the Refuge Complex.

The Refuge Complex includes Willapa, Lewis & Clark, and Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuges. These refuges are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a nationwide network of lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service specifically for wildlife. Together the refuges of the Willapa Complex protect a living heritage, including a variety of migratory birds, diverse amphibians and aquatic species, and the endangered Columbian white-tailed deer.

**Refuge volunteers logged over 5,800 hours in the last two years.** Their service helped the Refuge Complex accomplish conservation goals that protect local wildlife and support recreation. Refuge volunteers participated in clean-up events, monitored wildlife, facilitated outreach activities, maintained trails and facilities, and contributed their talents of photography, videography, graphic design and writing. The efforts and talents of volunteers continue to be an important and invaluable contribution to the work of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex. You can be part of the Refuge team. Contact Nancy Holman at [nancy\\_holman@fws.gov](mailto:nancy_holman@fws.gov), or 360-484-3482 x23, for more information on how you can help wildlife.

The Refuge Complex extends a big thank you to the following volunteers for their contributions: **Over 10 hours:** Alice Slevoigh, Art Limbird, Carolyn Glenn, Curt Stephens, Dan Bierle, Don Parsons, Dorothy Antilla, Ed Darcher, Hannah Liles, Helen Hackett, Joanne Jambor, Karen Hoch, Karen Stephens, Laura Dessen, Margaret Parsons, Matt Tennis, Melanie Liles, Michael Hackett, Susan Bissel, Tim Wilson, and Margie Cochrane; **Over 50 hours:** Clay Nichols, Beverly Olson, John Epler, Mark Johnson, Nancy Beliveau, Patricia Wilson, Peter McGuire, and Wade Cogdill;

*Continued...*

**Over 100 hours:** Dave Hoch, Gretchen Goodson, Jim Ferrier, Floyd and Jan St. Claire; **Over 150 hours:** Julie Tennis, Michael Spencer, Rose Power, Sandy Neilson and Suzy Whittey; **Over 200 hours:** Marie Fernandez; **Over 250 hours:** Rollin Bannow, Ron Craig and Russ Lewis; **Over 1000 hours:** Dr. Madeline Kalbach.

Members of the Shoalwater Birders, Long Beach Rotary, Ocean Park 6th Grade Class (2012-13), Naselle 4th & 5th Grade Classes (2011-2012), Wahkiakum 5th & 6th grade classes (2011-2012), Bellevue Christian School, and the following people also contributed time and talent to the refuge: Brian Atwater, Chuck Bolden, Courtney Braswell, Duncan Wurm, Dylan Morrow, Elizabeth Mulligan, Jay Elder, Chris Brong, Heather Murphy, Laura Schonbrun, Lesley Ferguson, Marilyn Raymer, Mark Bolden, Michelle Havens, Nancy McGuire, Rachel Morrow, Regina Southworth, Shawn Schmelzer, and Stephanie Bolden.



Volunteers & staff test their refuge smarts with a game of trivia at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.



## *Refuge Reflections*

By Nancy Holman

National Wildlife Refuges are important sanctuaries for species in peril. Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex actively manages for plants and animals listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). A few of the threatened and endangered species found on our refuges are marbled murrelet, western snowy plover, and Columbian white-tailed deer.

The United States Congress passed the Endangered Species Preservation Act in 1966, and then a more comprehensive law, the Endangered Species Act (ESA), in 1973 to help animals and plants. This legislation allows for the identification, protection, and recovery of threatened and endangered birds, insects, fish, reptiles, mammals, crustaceans, flowers, grasses, and trees. Not only are plants and animals protected by this law, their habitat is, too!

Endangered Species Day is May 17th. It was created to encourage people to know more about wildlife in trouble. Mark your calendar as a reminder to learn more about local endangered wildlife. Celebrate what you know by sharing it with a friend. Find out more about refuge wildlife at: [www.fws.gov/willapa](http://www.fws.gov/willapa) and [www.fws.gov/jbh](http://www.fws.gov/jbh).



The streaked horned lark has been proposed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Leadbetter Point at Willapa NWR, and the islands of Lewis and Clark and Julia Butler Hansen NWRs, are some of the few places this bird is found. Photo Courtesy of Rollin Bannow.

# Volunteer Activities Coming Soon

By Dave Hoch

Spring is just around the corner and with the extra daylight hours volunteer activities become more frequent.

**April 20th** brings the **Grass Roots Garbage Gang's spring beach clean up**. The Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge have adopted a section of beach for each and every clean up date the GRGG organizes. The section of beach is approximately 1.5 miles north of the Cranberry beach approach and extends ½ mile from 148th to 158th. Friends volunteers meet at the beach approach between 9:00 am. and 9:30 a.m. with available rides onto the beach for those not comfortable driving their vehicles out onto the sand. The GRGG offers a clam chowder feed after the clean up. Many of our members are already involved with the beach cleanup and are servicing other sections of beach, and we as a group are proud to be an involved effort to keep our beach tidy.



Grass Roots Garbage Gang's Logo

**May 5th** brings the annual **Loyalty Day Parade** and the past two years the Friends group has been involved with the loan of an air boat from the refuge to decorate and pull through the parade. More members are welcomed and encouraged to participate in our show of support and pride in the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. Again an e-mail reminder will be sent to the membership to fill in the details of meeting area and time to decorate the "air boat float" just prior to the start of the parade. In the past years it has proven to be a fun event, and hey, who doesn't like a parade!

Additional opportunities include the **Garlic Festival booth in June**, the **4th of July Parade** in Ocean Park and the **beach clean up the next day on July 5th**.

The Refuge will also have **Volunteer Opportunities** such as the 4th grade education program, more violet planting, camp ground clean up on Long Island, trail maintenance, the annual barbeque in August to name a few.



The Friends have also just adopted the section of highway along the Refuge headquarters for litter patrol and a date for the initial clean up is yet to be determined.

Contact Dave Hoch at: 360-642-4094 email: [dhoch@centurytel.net](mailto:dhoch@centurytel.net) for more information. Email reminders will be sent to member with more information as events approach. **We encourage your involvement!**

Please visit the WNWR FaceBook page also for information and news about the refuge and activities and don't forget to "friend" our FaceBook page when you visit it.

.....  
Nature holds all the answers - go outside  
and ask some questions - open your heart  
and listen to the response! ~Amethyst Wyldfyre



## Back To Fourth Grade

By Sandy Nielson

It's that time of year again! Fourth graders in six schools (Ocean Park, Long Beach, Raymond, South Bend, Naselle and Willapa Valley) are beginning a new year of environmental studies keyed to our Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

As in earlier years, the curriculum is presented in four classroom sessions with an exciting all-day field trip to Refuge Headquarters and Long Island as the culminating event. The program underwent a major revision last year by Nancy Holman, Visitor Services Manager at the refuge. The new emphasis on small groups with hands on materials from the refuge was enthusiastically received by students and teachers. Nancy also created four colorful magazine-workbooks to extend the learning goals of each lesson. This year, the teachers agreed to give 30 minutes more time from their already tight schedules for each session. That represents a real testimonial to the worth of the program!

Another popular feature, volunteer training, is returning from last year. Ms. Holman hosts training sessions before each new round of classroom visits. Everyone leaves the afternoon well-schooled in materials and ideas needed for the group he or she will be leading. Even people with no previous classroom experience find that working with small groups becomes a doable pleasure. Although an important goal for the program is to make the refuge relevant to students, participating adults find their training brings such a wealth of information and insight they too look at their refuge through new eyes.



Students use structural and behavioral adaptations to identify a Pacific loon, a bird that winters in and near Willapa Bay, as part of Lesson 2, Adaptations.



Volunteers are key to the program's success. The small group format requires 5-6 adults for each classroom. The students are rotated through each group so by the time the visit ends; each volunteer has had the chance to interact with every student in the class. *Continued...*

Gretchen Goodson and students making connections between plants and animals in the forest habitat as part of Lesson 3, Web of Life.

That's part of the fun for the helpers.....feeling the interest and excitement of fourth graders multiplied times 25 kids!

Many of last year's volunteers are on tab for 2013 but new faces are always welcome. If you are thinking of participating email Nancy: [nancy\\_holman@fws.gov](mailto:nancy_holman@fws.gov). Her telephone: 1/360/484/3482.

More information about the education program is available at [www.fws.gov/willapa](http://www.fws.gov/willapa)

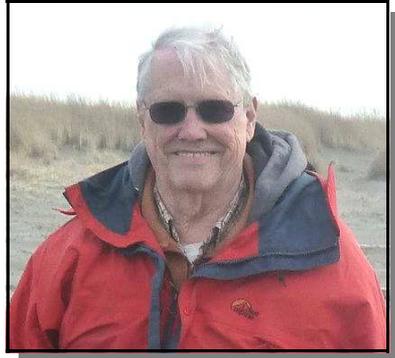
I remember last year looking forward to the training sessions and the classroom visits with pleasure. Each was truly enjoyable and represented a rewarding time in a community of learners. If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity that will give to you as you give to others, this is it!



Beverly Olson helps South Bend students, aka "Refuge Explorers in Training", to use a field guide to identify forest birds during Lesson 2, Adaptations.

## *Meet New Board Member Clayton Nichols*

Clayton Nichols is retired from the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho Operations Office which managed the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory. At the time of his retirement he served as Chief Scientist and Assistant Manager for Research and Development at the Idaho office. He has served as a team leader for United Nations-sponsored studies of the geothermal potential of Mexico, a National Park Service Naturalist at Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park, and as the Program Manager for Reservoir Engineering in DOE's National Geothermal Program. He has been responsible for major national initiatives in environmental science and technology planning, biotechnology, and global climate science baseline research. He presently serves on the Board on Earth Sciences and Resources, National Academy of Science, and chairs The Committee on Earth Resources for that Board. His teaching appointments have included serving as an Instructor for various Yellowstone geology courses at the Yellowstone Institute. His areas of technical expertise include volcanology, clay mineralogy, environmental restoration, fossil energy, renewable energy, and the history of science.



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## President's Letter

By Acting President Michael Spencer

As the Friend's vice-president, I took over leadership duties following the departure last December of Julie Tennis, our former president. While honored by being entrusted with the responsibilities and rewards of this prestigious position, I made clear from the start that this was only a temporary solution due to my many other county-wide commitments to similar activities, along with my home being at the far end of the county (Raymond). I would rather be remembered as a good VP, rather than a mediocre Friend's president.

That said, the emphasis of this communication is directed at the recruitment of a new Friend's president, especially one located at the south end of the county with the accompanying benefits of local knowledge/personal contacts/more immediate availability. Besides that position, the Friends are always seeking potential new board members, as well as volunteers for a large number of refuge-related activities. Many of these have been extensively detailed in previous issues of this newsletter and will not be repeated at this time here; however, I would like to recount some of the actual (excerpted) comments made by current, and past, board members about their personal enjoyment from being involved with the Friends:

"I found myself learning interesting facts about the refuge and this area of SW WA and I definitely enjoyed that. As a board member, I find that knowledge has increased exponentially through (all the various associated activities). I have not become a scientific "expert" on these beautiful surroundings of ours but my appreciation of what I see around me has been heightened by what I have learned and experienced since I became a board member". – Board member, Sandy Nielson

"Our local wildlife refuges are an important part of our national treasure. I think we should do all we can to preserve them for the enjoyment of our children and grandchildren, our fellow citizens from all over our country, and for visitors from all over the world. Preserving wildlife is in all our interests". – Board member, Peter McGuire

"After a storm, volunteers have quickly responded by making repairs to the Salmon Trail and Cutthroat Climb, from pitching in at the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade field trip or the annual BBQ; members and volunteers have stepped in whenever needed, often refuge staff are contributing their free time to help the Friends group...it's a great joy to be a part of such an awesome group of people!". – Former board president, Amy Cook.

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In the words of past president Julie Tennis, "Serving on the Board of Directors in one of the many ways you can contribute your expertise and passion to the success of the Friends of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge". To submit a nomination, for yourself or someone you believe fills the bill, for being either on the board, or for president, or to simply volunteer for a committee, please send me an email at: [president@friendsofwillaparefuge.org](mailto:president@friendsofwillaparefuge.org).

# Refuge Update

By Nancy Holman

'Tis the season for emergence. Visit the refuge at any location and you'll discover the signs of spring. Skunk cabbages are unfurling their yellow capes throughout refuge wetlands, the bright green leaves and magenta flowers of the salmon berry are bursting out along stream edges, ponds are filling with amphibian eggs, the salt marsh is gaining green daily as plants sprout from winter slumber, and the air is filled with bird and frog song.

Refuge dunes are a hive of activity, too. Staff completed this year's coastal dune restoration efforts in February. Through this effort an additional 6 acres of non-native beach grasses were removed and an additional 150 acres were maintained to enhance nesting habitat for threatened western snowy plovers and streaked horned larks (a candidate species). Native dune plants, like pink sand verbena, also benefit from and thrive in restored areas.

This is a grand time to visit the refuge. As the days get longer, warmer and dryer enjoy a walk on the Art Trail and the Cutthroat Climb at Refuge headquarters. Be sure to spend some time searching the pond for rough-skinned newts and the occasional water scorpion. Listen for the bubbling song of the Pacific wren. Look for elk tracks, bear scat and playful rivers otters. Or take a stroll on the Bay Loop Trail at Leadbetter Point (don't forget your Discover Pass). Scan the skies and tidelands for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl as they head north to nest. Spring brings new arrivals daily. Keep an eye and ear out for the sights and sounds of osprey, Caspian terns, brown pelicans, and western tanager.

Does spring fever have you itching to get active and involved? The refuge has a myriad of volunteer opportunities. Contact Nancy Holman at 360-484-3482 or [nancy\\_holman@fws.gov](mailto:nancy_holman@fws.gov) to get more information.

Dozers are used to remove non-native beach grass and re-contour dunes as part of the Refuge's efforts to



## *Willapa Tidings*

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Suzy Whittey, Editor

To request an address change, to contribute items of interest (including photos), or to submit articles for publication, please contact Friends of Willapa NWR

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### **Web Site**

[www.friendsofwillaparefuge.org](http://www.friendsofwillaparefuge.org)

### **Facebook Site**

[www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=123317069999](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=123317069999)

### **Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge**

A nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge was established in July 2000 to provide support and assistance to Refuge programs and to enhance awareness and appreciation of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

### **Board of Directors**

Acting President - Michael Spencer  
Secretary - Pete McGuire  
Treasurer - David Hoch  
Director - Sandy Nielson  
Director - Clayton Nichols  
Director - Ron Craig

# Membership Form

- New Member  
 Renewal

*Invite a friend to Become a Member !*

Make Checks Payable To:  
Friends of Willapa NWR

Mail to: Friends of Willapa NWR  
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Office Use Only

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- Yes! I want to receive Friends e-mail announcements.

My e-mail address is \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions to the Friends of Willapa NWR are tax deductible.

## Memberships

Individual     \$ 20.00  
Family         \$ 30.00  
Patron         \$ 50.00  
Benefactor    \$100.00  
Business      \$ 90.00

## Donations

Scholarship Program     \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Education Program        \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_         \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

For more information about the different levels of memberships contact:  
[membership@friendsofwillaparefuge.org](mailto:membership@friendsofwillaparefuge.org)

*Thank You for Your Membership and Support!*

## Volunteer Interests

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach          | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Education     | <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat Restoration                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Recruitment      | <input type="checkbox"/> Trail and campground maintenance   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Projects and Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Shorebird and waterfowl monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising                | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and amphibian monitoring      |