



The Grebe

Volume 8, Issue 2

Spring 2012

Mission of The Friends of Deer Flat:

The purpose of this group is to promote, protect, and provide resources to preserve and enhance Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge for the enjoyment of present and future generations

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DEER FLAT'S 103TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

By Ruben Alers

It was a cool Saturday afternoon and Mr. Johannsen came by with his big red pick-up truck to take me to the anniversary celebration at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. When we arrived at the refuge we found the speaker, fisheries biologist David Cannamela, had already started his lecture.

I took my seat in the back by the door and listened. Of the fifty-plus people in attendance I noticed that about half of them were families with children of differing ages.

Mr. Cannamela spoke passionately about the importance of maintaining a healthy ecosystem for the fish. He also specifically defended the importance of sturgeon and lampreys in the ecosystem. Sturgeons have a slow birth rate and lampreys are facing major difficulties because of man-made dams hindering them from traveling back up the rivers where they choose to spawn. Mr. Cannamela's talk also transitioned to other topics such as the journeys of sand rollers through Idaho's rivers and his own Sicilian family's cravings for eels.

Mr. Cannamela incorporated props (fish mounts) and creative questions just for the children in the audience. It was apparent to me that there are many avid nature fans among Nampa's youth. Even the fresh pie served at the event was neglected in favor of listening to his message..

I enjoyed his lecture on Idaho's fish fauna. I'm sure that everyone else enjoyed learning more about the diversity of fish in Idaho's lakes and rivers as I did. With good memories and a good turnout I wonder what the folks at Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge have in store for next year's anniversary.



Photo credit: Genevieve Johannsen

A Note from the President:

Welcome back to another year as a Friend of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge! Thank you for being the concerned and involved citizens that help us preserve and enhance our local refuge. Your support is vital to the mission of the refuge and those who come to enjoy the refuge.

I hope that many of you were able to attend the 103rd anniversary celebration on February 25th. Fisheries biologist, Dave Cannamela, was our guest speaker and he captures the attention of those attending with his beautiful fish models, and his extensive knowledge base related to the “fish fauna” of Idaho. We were fortunate enough to have several Girl Scouts in attendance and other children and grandchildren and I hope his lively, interactive presentation inspired them to be the next generation of stewards of Idaho waters. Fresh pies were the refreshments for the day and barely a crumb was left by the end of the event. A special “Thank you!” is owed to Dixie Blome and Lee McGlinsky for coordinating the event.

As we move into warmer weather and the return of our migratory birds there are volunteer opportunities to be involved with bird counts, and nest counts and the annual Bio Blitz hands-on science event. We are also welcoming volunteers who want to help with the elementary field trip *Discover Wildlife Journeys*. For more information about any of the events and others still in the planning process you can call the refuge or e-mail Kash_Anderson@fws/gov or Kyle_Luthman@fws/gov.

As you will read in another article, we will be placing a third Scrip order in the next couple of weeks. You receive full value for your purchase, and the Friends group earns a portion of the sales, so I encourage you to pre-plan and pre-pay at least one purchase for the summer.

Intern update: we are still fundraising to fund an internship position that would promote the many wonderful assets and contributions of Deer Flat to groups and individuals. We have raised approximately three thousand dollars in dedicated funds, and we need much more to bring someone on board. If you have contributed, thank you, and if you wish to contribute please contact Bob Christiansen through the Friends’ e-mail account: friend-sofdf@yahoo.com.



Mule Deer seen at Deer Flat NWR, photos by Addison Mohler

Mark your calendar...

Upcoming Events

*Lecture Series - Gardening with Nature -
Creating a refuge at home*

Tuesday, April 10, 7 p.m.

See page 15 for additional information

Earth Day

Saturday, April 21st

Time: 9 a.m. to Noon

Help improve wildlife habitat at the refuge! Bring gloves and water and wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty. Meet at the Visitor Center

Scout Day

Saturday, May 5th

*Lecture Series - Preparing for the Upcoming
Eclipse*

Tuesday, May 8, 7 p.m.

See page 15 for additional information

2012 BioBlitz & Kids Fishing Day

Friday and Saturday, June 8 and 9

Time: Saturday, June 9, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Surveys start on Friday and Saturday is the day for the public to join in on the fun. Or participate in fishing-related activities and crafts, and then practice your new fishing skills! Fishing poles will be available to borrow, or bring your own. See page 4 for additional information.

Biodiversity Basics Day Camp

Wade through a wetland, dig in the desert, and scan the sky for birds to discover the diversity of the world around you. This week-long day camp is for kids going into 4th and 5th grade. The camp will be held **June 18th-22nd from 9-12:30pm.**

Please contact Kyle Luthman at 467-9278 or kyle_luthman@fws.gov to register.

(continued in next column)

Desert Detectives Day Camp

Explore how plants and animals survive life in the desert through activities, nature walks, crafts & games. This is a camp for kids going into 2nd and 3rd grade. The camp will be held **July 9th-13th from 9-12:30pm.** Registration is required and space is limited. Please contact Kyle Luthman at 467-9278 or kyle_luthman@fws.gov to register.

Reading at the Refuge

Preschoolers (and their parents!) are invited to Reading at the Refuge. Children listen to a wildlife-related story and participate in related activities that will help them learn about the environment. Reading at the Refuge is held on the **first and third Mondays of each month at 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Programs are held at the refuge Visitor Center.

Scout Day Information. Sign up your wolf, bear, and webelo Cub Scouts or Brownie and Junior Girl Scouts to earn wildlife-related badges. Pre-registration is required. Call 467-9278 or e-mail deerflat@fws.gov to pre-register.

Upcoming Refuge Events:

For more information on all events, contact the refuge at 467-9278 or deerflat@fws.gov

The **Grebe** newsletter is published quarterly. If you have an article or photo that you would like to be included in a future newsletter, please contact Denise Hughes at den.hug100@gmail.com

BIOBLITZ & Kid's Fishing Day

This year Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge is combining two great events in one: BioBlitz and Kid's Fishing Day!

The public is invited to participate in the refuge's 7th annual **BioBlitz on Friday and Saturday June 8th and 9th**. A BioBlitz is a 24-hour rapid survey of biological diversity, and to celebrate this biodiversity we host a public festival. On June 8th and 9th, local scientists, naturalists, and volunteers will comb Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge to find and identify as many different species of plants and animals as possible. Amateur naturalists and volunteers are invited to help with surveys. The **BioBlitz Festival will be held from 10-3 on Saturday at the Refuge Visitor Center**. Everyone is welcome to attend and lend a helping hand as we all celebrate the biodiversity at the Refuge and beyond.

BioBlitz is being held on Kid's Fishing Day again this year, so after visiting the BioBlitz head to Gotts Point for some fishing!

From 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, kids can learn about fish biology, fishing ethics, and water safety. Visitors will have a chance to practice casting and rigging and then test their newly-learned skills by fishing in Lake Lowell! Fishing poles will be available to borrow if needed.

Want to help?

Last year over 500 people came to the festival and volunteers like you helped the event run smoothly.

For this year we need volunteers to help prepare in advance of the events, set up, clean up, staff the Bug Tent, craft room and other booths, take photographs, teach kids how to fish, and help biologists in the field. You may even have a chance to wear the Blue Goose costume! Volunteers will spend the day outside and have the chance to make a difference by connecting people with nature.

For more information, call the Refuge Visitor Center at (208) 467-9278 or email deerflat@fws.gov



Photo credit: Steve Hillebrand from USFWS National Digital Library

Fishing Gear Needed!!

Do you have fishing equipment that is gathering dust in your garage or closet?
Gear that is in good condition and usable?

If so, please consider donating the equipment to the Friends of Deer Flat. Contact Genevieve Johannsen at 467-7515. Help make Kids Fishing Day a success!!

Recent Snapshots from the Osprey Cam



Osprey Cam Update

The osprey pair is back building their nest near the refuge visitor center. Once again we will have the opportunity to view their nesting activities. The webcam has been a success last two years and we hope it to be an even greater success this year. The ospreys continue to carry sticks and to arrange them on the nest platform in preparation for eggs soon to be laid and incubated.

So, tune in to the Fiberpipe link and watch the ospreys as they raise another family at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge: <http://www2.fiberpipe.net/deerflat/ospreycam.asp>

Donations are also solicited to help us maintain and keep the webcam and equipment updated. You can donate online from the website or send donations to:

Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge
13751 Upper Embankment Road
Nampa, ID 83686

The Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge was one of three friends groups which were selected to testify on the Interior Department's proposed 2013 budget. Below is Bob Christensen's Oral Testimony presented in Washington D.C. on March 21, 2012. Written testimonies from Deer Flat and the other refuges can be viewed at: <http://refugeassociation.org/advocacy/funding/refuge-system/testimony/>

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**ORAL TESTIMONY
FOR THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT & RELATED AGENCIES - FISCAL YEAR 2013
APPROPRIATIONS**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Bob Christensen. I am a *Certified Wildlife Biologist*. I worked for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for over 30 years, but am currently retired.

I am here today on behalf of the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge and its 80 members.

My first experience with a National Wildlife Refuge was in the summer of 1968 when I had the opportunity to work as a Biological Aid on one of the most remote refuges in the lower 48 states—Fish Springs NWR, located on the south end of the Great Salt Lake desert in west central Utah. That summer I gained an appreciation for the planning, work, and sweat that goes into creating, maintaining and enhancing these icons of wild America

Trapper Jim

While at Fish Springs I met a man we called, Trapper Jim, he had lived at Fish Springs for as long as anyone in the desert could remember. His abode was a ramshackle dugout built in the side of a desert mound on the edge of one of the refuge ponds. Most of the time during the winter months of the year, he spent trapping muskrats in the marshes. During the summer, Jim spent a lot of time keeping cool in his underground hut. He claimed that if one drank the alkaline water of the springs and took a good long walk through the marshes every day, he would stay healthy and clean, both inside and out.

My co-workers and I enjoyed listening to Trapper Jim spin his yarns of the desert and marshes. On one of our visits, we noticed that he had just skinned a muskrat and was preparing it for supper. He had removed the musk (or scent) glands from the carcass and had them sitting precariously on the edge of a dusty shelf. When he was looking the other way, the glands rolled off the slanting shelf and plopped into his coffee cup. We just looked at each other and snickered, waiting to see what would happen. Well, Jim picked up his cup, took a sip, looked a little puzzled, took another sip and sloshed the brown liquid around in his mouth, swallowed it down in a big gulp, licked his lips, and declared, "Now, that was a good cup of coffee!" .

I tell you this story to emphasize that each National Wildlife Refuge has its own history and heritage—it's on story to tell—its own intrinsic value on the American landscape.

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

And this is true for Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge in SW Idaho--which is one of the oldest refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Last month we celebrated its 103rd birthday.

Deer Flat NWR serves as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife--with emphasis on wintering waterfowl. The refuge received about 225,000 visitors last year. Interpretive and educational outreach programs provided by the refuge have, in recent years, reached about 6,000 people of varied ethnicities, while environmental education activities have influenced another 9,000 to 11,000 young people living in the greater Boise area.

These programs are lead by our enthusiastic interns. Also, many of these programs would not be possible without the efforts of the over 500 volunteers who have annually logged in 11,000 to 12,000 volunteered hours.

Funding Level Impacts

The Friends of Deer Flat realize the difficult economic times that we are experiencing and that funding increases are not feasible during this time of budgetary constraints. However, we respectfully ask that you seriously consider the adverse effects that budgetary shortfalls will have on the operational capacity of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and especially Deer Flat.

Even at current budget levels, increased costs of doing business at Deer Flat NWR, would most likely result in the loss of Challenge Cost Share Grants that in recent years have helped fund two intern positions. This would reduce volunteer, outreach, and/or environmental education programs by 20-30%, as well as hamper the collection of onsite scientific data from which to make local management decisions.

Budget reductions of 10% would further diminish these same programs by 40-60%. Fire suppression and invasive species control programs would be seriously diminished.

The refuge currently has no law enforcement officer—maintaining status quo or reducing the budget would not ameliorate this situation.

Request

We hope you will support the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge and all of the 556 refuges across the country by maintaining at least status quo funding for the National Wildlife Refuge System and funding the Challenge Cost Share program at the \$3.6 million level.

On behalf of the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge we thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today.

Sincerely,
Robert C. Christensen, Treasurer
Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge
13751 Upper Embankment Rd
Nampa, Idaho 83686

ON CAPITOL HILL: Bob Christensen (Deer Flat NWR), Joan Patterson (Potomac NWR), Todd Paddock (Headwaters – Mississippi River NWR)



Signs of Spring at Deer Flat



One gift or two...

The choice is up to you



On April 20th we will be placing our third Scrip gift-card order as a Friends fundraiser. If you have participated in the past you know that the value you pay is the face value of the card, and the Friends organization pays a reduced price and keeps the difference in our account. As a board, we feel that it is likely that many of you will be buying Mother's Day, Father's Day and summer birthday gifts at participating stores such as Cabela's. If you are willing to purchase a gift card in the amount you wish to spend you will be able to spend that full amount (or give the card as the gift) and the Friends group will be a bit richer because of your participation.

When I travel I like to have "airport food" cards with me. It limits the amount of cash I must carry and they come in handy wherever I am. Some of my favorites are Starbuck's and Einstein Bagels. I also like to purchase cards for restaurants not in our local market so that I can enjoy an evening out with friends who live in those market areas of Seattle and Portland. I enjoyed Landry's in St. Louis when I was at a conference one summer, so now I buy them to send to my niece as a birthday gift since she attends St. Louis University and lives on a college budget.

The percent we earn from sales varies from company to company (L.L. Bean being one of the most generous), but it all adds up in the long run. From our past two sales we were able to add \$280 to our general fund budget and that reflects 10 families participating overall. Imagine how much better it would be if we each pre-planned at least one purchase and bought a gift card to buy it with.

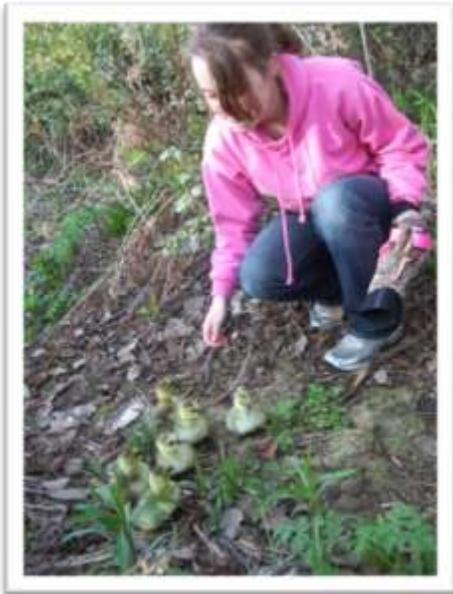
I thank you for your past participation and I encourage you to go to <http://www.glscrip.com> to explore the possibilities. Once you have decided write them down or build a document that Bob can use to create your order and we'll have it to you by the end of April if not sooner.

Send gift card orders and checks to Bob Christensen, 2408 Airport Ave, Caldwell, ID 83605. You can talk to Bob at 454-2518 or email at rcloydchris@juno.com.

Images of a Wild Easter Egg Hunt

I had the opportunity to take two of my granddaughters on separate Canada Goose nest surveys of the Snake River Islands during the Easter Season this spring. Below are some photos documenting our experiences.

by Bob Christensen



Anna with Goslings



Anna & Grandpa at Nests
on Silo Island





Hannah with Dead Heron



Leroy & Hannah
Inspecting Nest Box



Hannah & Grandpa



Hannah at First Goose Nest Found on Blind Island

Refuge Conducts Mule Deer Survey

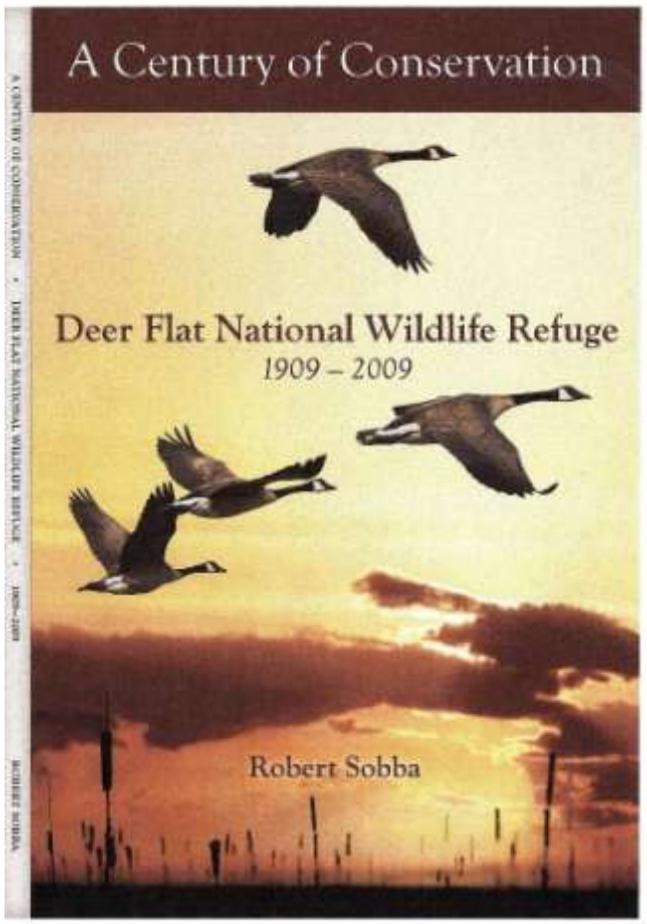
During January of 2012, Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge retained Vision Air Research of Boise, Idaho, to conduct a deer count on the Lake Lowell segment of the refuge. The survey area also included some adjacent agricultural lands and residential areas that include houses, barns, other buildings, forests/shrublands and agricultural areas.

The survey was conducted January 5, 2012 between 2:30pm and 6:30pm using a Cessna 206 "Stationair" with the sensor (PolyTech Kelvin 350 II - Sweden) mounted on the left wing. Transects were spaced 800 ft apart and flown at 1,200 ft above ground level. Results were recorded on a mini digital videotape. Deer were located by observing their level of emitted infrared energy versus background levels.

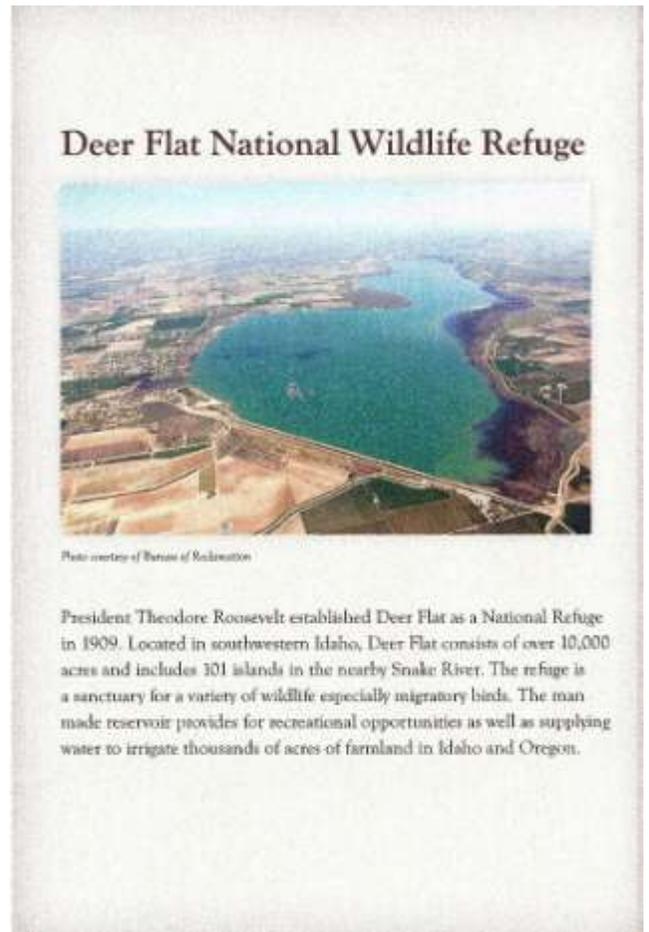
Weather conditions were good for flight safety and infrared surveys. Locations of deer groups were plotted and the total number of deer was recorded. A total of 164 deer within 52 groups were detected.



Figure A. Deer group locations found during the aerial IR survey conducted January 5, 2012 on Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge



JUST RELEASED



Now available at the
Grebe Bookstore,
\$10.00

Last Call to Renew Your Membership or become a Member For 2012

Dear Friends, Summer will be upon us before we are ready for it. If you have not renewed your membership or become a member of the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge (FDFWR), then now's the time to do it. Your tax exempt gift is critical to our ongoing work to preserve and enhance Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

In addition to providing financial support, our current members can do so much more for Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. FDFWR's credibility is greatly enhanced when we can count on YOU as a vital and growing membership from all walks of life.

For your convenience, there is a renewal form below. If you have any questions concerning your membership or about what Friends members do, please call Bob Christensen at 208-454-2518.

Be a Friend! Join Today!

Name

Address

City

State Zip Code

Telephone

Email address (please include email address if you have one – this is our primary means of communicating with Friends members)

Annual Membership Categories:

<input type="checkbox"/> Owl (Senior & Student)	\$10
<input type="checkbox"/> Deer (Individual)	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> Fox (Family)	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Osprey	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Eagle	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Goldeneye	\$500

All contributions are tax deductible

Please detach this portion and return with a check payable to:

Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge
13751 Upper Embankment Road
Nampa, Idaho 83686-8046



Canada Geese Roosting on Ice
Friends Webcam Photo



FRIENDS OF DEER
FLAT WILDLIFE
REFUGE

Nampa, Idaho 83686-8046

Executive Board:

*President - Genevieve
Johannsen (467-7515)
Vice President - Vacant
Secretary - Vacant
Treasurer - Bob
Christensen (454-2518)*

*Newsletter - Denise Hughes
(850-5885)*

We are on the web at:
[www.fws.gov/deerflat/
friends.htm](http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/friends.htm)

To preserves and enhance Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

The Grebe is published four times a year — look for the next issue in Summer 2012

Lecture Series

Gardening with Nature: Creating a Refuge at Home

Speaker: Ariel Agen-
broad



Learn to create a refuge
for healthy plants that is
beneficial to wildlife in
your landscape or
garden.

Prepare for the Upcoming Eclipse

Speaker: Amy Truska

Before the annular solar
eclipse on May 20th,
learn about the mechan-
ics of a solar eclipse as
well as how to safely
enjoy a solar eclipse

