



THE GREBE

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ **January 17 & 18 - NON PROFIT MEETING & NEWS CONFERENCE -**
Contact Noreen Tripp at 468-0402 to attend the news conference on the 18th.
- ◆ **February 6 - MONTHLY MEETING** at 7 p.m. at Deer Flat Visitor Center
- ◆ **February 17 - GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**
- ◆ **February 17 - FRIENDS LITTER LIFT** from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- ◆ **February 20 - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**
- ◆ **March 2 - 5 - Beyond the Boundaries** conference in Washington D.C.
- ◆ **March 6 - MONTHLY MEETING** at 7 p.m. at Deer Flat Visitor Center

If you have a story that you would like to have published in "The Grebe", please contact Denise Hughes, 850-5885 or den_hug@hotmail.com

Water Dancers

Some of you have probably wondered about the bird image on the Friends of Deer Flat Refuge logo. It is the Western Grebe, a water bird and member of the family of birds referred to as Podiceps. It is not a duck, although from a distance it may look like one; it is more closely related to the loon.

Of the six species of grebes in the western U.S., the Western Grebe and the similar Clark's Grebe are the largest, at 25 inches long.

The Western Grebe is a good wildlife representative for the Friends organization because it is found on Lake Lowell during all but the coldest months of the year. The refuge's grebes migrate to the south and west, usually departing in November and wintering on the coast. The first grebes to return in the spring arrive in late March,



when their presence is again signaled when their presence is again signaled by their "creek creek" calls carrying over the lake. They mostly eat fish, diving for their catch, and are well equipped for this task with long slim bills and long necks.

Western Grebes nest in colonies, building floating nests of reeds and other plant materials and anchoring them to emergent vegetation. In the unusual courtship ritual of the grebe, sometimes called the "water dance," the male and female grebe rise up out of the water with their bodies almost vertical, coil their long necks, extend their wings back, and quickstep across the top of the water together. Though most frequent in the spring, you may also see this courtship ritual later in June or July. The best place to observe it is in the eastern section of the lake east of Gott's Point, especially near the mouth of the New York Canal. It is this 'water dance' image of the grebe that the Friends have adopted.

The Western Grebe nests late in our area, and its eggs don't hatch until most young ducks have long left the nest. It is not unusual to see many very young grebes in August. Another interesting behavior of the grebe is the care of the young. Usually two to four eggs are laid and the chicks are precocial, meaning that they leave the nest and take to the water soon after hatching. During the first couple weeks, the young spend most of their time riding in the back feathers of mom or dad, even when the adults are diving to find food or to escape danger. The parents bring food to the young for much of the summer; watch them near the upper embankment. There are still many Western Grebes on Lake Lowell during November, but the numbers steadily diminish with the approach of winter, and by early December just a few birds remain.

Now that you have been introduced to the Western Grebe, find time to search it out and observe its activities. You just might chance upon the 'water dance' display or the little grebes getting a ride in their parents' feathers.

Friends Litter Lift

In 2006, the Friends group adopted a section of road that winds around the outer boundary of the refuge. We are responsible for the area known as the 'Iowa curve'. Please meet at the Visitor Center at

12:00 p.m. Plan on spending two hours picking up trash along the roadway.

Bring gloves, trash bags will be provided.



President's Corner

2006 was a wonderful year for our Friends group; we worked hard, learned a lot and accomplished a great deal. With hard work, determination, and a little luck, 2007 will turn out to be another successful year.

First I would like to say thank-you for the privilege of being the president of our Friends group in 2007. I feel it is a great honor and responsibility. I look forward to working with our group and for the refuge. Each of us has our own reason for joining the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge. Your reason for joining may be to protect wildlife habitat so hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing will always be available or you might just enjoy having a wild area to retreat to

when city life becomes too much. Whatever your reason, our main concern is to preserve and protect the refuge.

Our mission statement will be our guide in this coming year. I look forward to working with each of you. I hope you will let me know what you need and how I can help. I also encourage each of you to bring your ideas and suggestions to our round table discussions at the end of our monthly general meetings.

Noreen Tripp, President

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

2006 Idaho Non-profit Conference

Lyndell Jackson and Cathy Eells attended the 2006 Idaho Nonprofit Conference at BSU on October 6. Lyndell and Cathy brought back many important ideas to help us make our fledgling nonprofit organization viable.

The conference emphasized the importance of developing a strategic plan for reaching short term, medium range, and long range goals in the following areas:

- Vision and goals for the group
- Membership
- Budget, fund raising, and donor management
- Board member/committee chair training and job descriptions
- An annual organizational plan
- Development of program/organization activities
- Communication with members, community, media, and other organizations

-Marketing: identifying our unique niche and value to the community

Bill Sedivy, Executive Director of Idaho Rivers United, made this thought-provoking remark: "Never pass up the opportunity to educate people about your cause." We, as individual Friends members, can be effective advocates for our organization daily by sharing our mission with family, friends, and acquaintances.

Never pass up the opportunity to educate...

Friends Bookstore, coming soon!

In early March 2007, the Friends group will be opening a bookstore that will help us to provide financial support for refuge programs for children and adults. All proceeds from sales go directly back to the refuge. Once open, the store will be an opportunity to purchase items as a memento of your visit to the refuge or for a gift for a loved one. In the future, we hope to also provide materials to educators and

students who will utilize the refuge as an outdoor classroom. The Friends need volunteers to help staff the new store and to keep it functioning as a business. Your time and talents are needed to help make it a success for the refuge. If you are interested in contributing your time, either to staff the sales counter, help maintaining inventory, or to provide accounting support, please give Cathy Eells a call at 939-4830.

New Members

Please welcome our newest members:

Hugh Fulton, Nampa, ID
 Wendy McGlinsky, Trumbull, CT
 Julie McGlinsky, Eugene, OR
 Fred and Leona Roberts, Boise, ID



2007 Projects

With the start of 2007, the Projects committee is gearing up to work on a few refuge enhancements. Our first project will be a photo blind. The blind will be a permanent structure that will be placed along one of the nature trails where wildlife can be viewed and photographed. All members with woodworking skills and non-experienced woodworkers are invited to help with this project.

Help is needed to find a suitable design for the blind and to secure donations of building materials and/or cash donations. Please contact Jim Iverson, Projects Chairman at 459-6501 to lend your support.

Other projects that may be completed in the upcoming year include expanding the butterfly and hummingbird garden that is

adjacent the visitor center and restoring native vegetation to the Lower Dam area.

Photo Blind At Black Bayou NWR, built by Friends group in 2005



Great Backyard Bird Count

Part of our mission is to educate the public about the wildlife at the refuge. Join us as we participate in this annual count.

Who - Kids of all ages
 What - Bird Identification
 Bird Count
 Bird Walk
 Games
 Making homemade feeders
 Hot Chocolate, Cider, Cookies
 Where - Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center

Lake Lowell Upper Dam - West End
 When - Saturday, February 17, 2007

We need volunteers to help build feeders, make cookies for snacks, id birds, etc.

For more information or to volunteer, call - Lyndell Jackson - 459-4740 or Cathy Eells - 459-4435



Wild About Life...

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge is adding another opportunity for learning and community involvement to its list of educational events. Beginning in January DFNWR, in cooperation with the Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge Friends group, presents the *Wild About Life Lecture Series*. This monthly lecture series focuses on topics such as the natural history of local wildlife, native plants and desert gardening, and other Treasure Valley resources such as water and its use. Expert and dynamic speakers from many different agencies are excited to share their knowledge with the community.

Lectures will be held alternately on the first or second Tuesday of each month from 7:00 to 8:00 pm at the Visitor Center. The first presentation will be on Tuesday, Jan 9th by Barbara

Forderhase, an Education Specialist from Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. She will be talking about raptors that spend winters in Idaho and how to identify them. Plus, she will be bringing a few of these *LIVE* majestic birds with her! This presentation will captivate adults and children alike.

The second lecture is the first Tuesday in February and is before the general meeting of the Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge Friends general meeting. Michael Lucid, a regional Wildlife Biologist from Idaho Fish and Game will describe the dynamics of a wolf pack



throughout the seasons and discuss key management concerns including livestock depredation, hunting issues, dogs, and human safety. After the presentation participants are invited to attend the Friends group general meeting.

Finally, as spring is approaching on March 13th Susan Belle, a Horticulture professor from University of Idaho Ada County Extension, will discuss native plants and Xeri-scaping, a water conserving gardening strategy. All community members are invited to attend and bring friends, neighbors or family. Be sure to look for more presentations in the upcoming newsletter.



Photos – Swainson's Hawk, Idaho wolf, Big Mountain Sagebrush



FRIENDS OF DEER FLAT WILDLIFE REFUGE

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Executive Board:

President - Noreen Tripp (468-0402)

Vice President - John Augsburg (362-2769)

Treasurer/Secretary - Kris Horton (461-9717)

Membership - Lyndell Jackson (459-4740)

Projects - Jim Iverson (459-6051)

Newsletter - Denise Hughes (850-5885)

Upcoming Programs

January 2 - Time for Election!

It's the start of a new year and time to elect new board and committee members. We want to also use this time to develop a strategic plan of action for 2007. Please join us and give us your input.

January 9 -

Title: Raptors Wintering in SW Idaho
Synopsis: Learn to identify the raptors who call SW Idaho home during the winter months.

By: Barb Forderhase,
Education Specialist,
BLM Snake River
Birds of Prey National
Conservation Area



February 6 — Wolf Biology

Michael Lucid, a biologist with Idaho Department of Fish and Game will give us



the real scoop on the wolf packs that are in the southwestern part of the state. If you have concerns about the wolf reintroduction or just love wolves join us as we discover the difference the truth

and put the myth to rest.

The Friend's group general meeting will be held right after the program.

March 6 - General Meeting

Join us for a round table discussion with other local groups who are concerned about the development around the refuge perimeter. We are looking for ideas to protect and improve the outer boundaries from some of the current development.

March 13 -

Susan Belle, a Horticulture professor from University of Idaho Ada County Extension, will discuss native plants and Xeri-scaping, a water conserving gardening strategy

