



# The Grebe

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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Volume 9, Issue 11

Summer 2013

## A note from the president...

Welcome back to any and all of you who have been away for the summer. I hope that you found a cooler place to be during the hot spells.

As you may have read, the lake level was rapidly declining this season so the docks have become boardwalks in most places. If you haven't visited the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge facebook® page yet, I encourage you to do so. Hit "Like" and you will get daily updates from Susan and news of the science going on at the Refuge such as bird and nesting counts and water access as well.

## Volunteers needed—one hour on one day or as long as you would like.

Looking to the fall, we are going to need volunteers for the **National Wildlife Refuge Week celebration on October 12<sup>th</sup>**, and to serve hot chocolate to a multitude of costumed children as part of the **Creepy Critters Encounter on October 26<sup>th</sup>**. Both are afternoon events and Noreen is the contact for the N W Refuge Week ([tonotripp@cablone.net](mailto:tonotripp@cablone.net)). The third annual **BIG SIT** will be going on that day as well, so bring your binoculars or your scope and see what you can see for as long or as short a time as you wish.

Since its inception, **Cathy Eells** has managed our nature-themed bookstore, **The Grebe Nest**. When she is not volunteering at the Refuge she is a busy grandmother and a member of SIBA and the Caldwell Centennial Band. She has decided it is time for her to focus her attention on family and has stepped down as the manager of the bookstore. We cannot **thank her** enough for all of the time and talent she has given us and we look forward to seeing her at our meetings and events. If your paths cross, you may want to thank her personally, as well.

Since it is one of our only ongoing revenue sources, we'd like to have the bookstore open during special events to encourage people to browse and become familiar with The Grebe Nest as a potential gift source. We are looking at bringing in some seasonal merchandise, so if you have specific outdoor and nature-related items in mind that you would rather buy from "us" instead of from "them", drop me an email and let me know about it so I can find out the details of ordering.

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( continued from page 1: Message from the president )

All items must be approved by the Refuge staff liaison, so the sooner the better the chance. We hope to work with Weiser Classic Candy to provide chocolate “suckers” and box candy with an information card about Deer Flat Refuge as part of the packaging. We like the idea of supporting an Idaho company and a great product. Watch for more information soon.

If I don't see you sooner I hope to see each of you at the December Potluck on Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy your autumn!

*Louise Johnson*

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## HELP FEED THE BIRDS!

This will be the fourth year of feeding the birds during the winter at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. From November through March, bird feeders are placed near the Refuge Viewing Blind and at the Refuge Visitor Center. We feed a variety of winter bird species including: juncos, sparrows, finches, towhees, and chickadees.

Volunteers are wanted to help fill and clean the bird feeders several times each week. There is also a need for donated bird seed and funds to purchase seed. This year we are looking for four new bird feeders to place in the Pollinator Garden behind the Refuge Visitor Center. We would like the new feeders to be easy to clean, fun, and attractive for visitors to see and enjoy.

An orientation for volunteers interested in the bird-feeding program will take place on September 28 at 1:00 p.m. at the Refuge Visitor Center. Those wishing to volunteer, but are unable to attend the orientation, should contact Noreen Tripp at 208-249-8162 or [tonotripp@cablone.net](mailto:tonotripp@cablone.net).

Isabella Carson and  
Rachel Staats help  
feed the birds.

Picture by Noreen  
Tripp



Mark your calendar...

## Upcoming Events

### Scout Day

**October 5 and November 2 from 1:00 -3:00 p.m. Registration is required.**

Take a hike! Make a nature craft. Scout Day gives you the chance to meet other scouts, have fun, and earn wildlife badges for Girl Scouts or Cub Scouts.

### Reading at the Refuge

For preschoolers (and their parents). Hear a wild-life-related story and take part in related activities that will help the children learn about animals and the environment. **Held on the first and third Mondays of each month at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.**

### Wild About Life Lecture

**October 8 - TBA**

### Mark Twain Visits the Boise River

**November 12 at 7:00 p.m. Refuge Visitor Center** "Mark Twain Visits the Boise River" - Join Heimer, retired fisheries biologist, comes to the Refuge as Mark Twain to talk about his early life and the history of the Boise River during Twain's lifetime.

### Friends National Wildlife Refuge Week Celebration - 2013

**October 12 from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m.** Celebration will include face painting, bird counting, crafts, donuts and cider, and much more . . .

### Creepy Critter Encounters

**October 26 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.** Spooky fun for kids of all ages. Create your own trick or treat bag and learn about creatures of the refuge on a spooky hike. Come in costume for a special treat!

Volunteers are needed to help set-up and clean-up, staff the craft room, and staff stations to teach kids about creepy critters and other Refuge wildlife.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO VOLUNTEER, CALL 467-9278**

For more information on all events, contact the refuge at 467-9278 or

Email: [deerflat@fws.gov](mailto:deerflat@fws.gov)

Website:

<http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/index.html>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/DeerFlatNWR>



**PREPARE NOW FOR BLACK FRIDAY AND SUPER SATURDAY  
2013 HOLIDAY PURCHASES  
BY PLANNING YOUR ORDER FOR  
SCRIP CARDS**

The beauty of scrip is that you put your regular household shopping dollars to work. You earn money for The Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge without spending a single additional penny. Just spend your regular shopping dollars with scrip at the stores that participate in the scrip program! And scrip can be used for just about any household purchase including food, clothing, entertainment, gasoline and even dining out.....NOT TO MENTION GREAT HOLIDAY PURCHASES.

We are anticipating sending in our SCRIP HOLIDAY Order about NOVEMBER 15th. Watch for the next newsletter and your email prior to that time. If you have questions about SCRIP, contact Bob Christensen at [rclloydchris@juno.com](mailto:rclloydchris@juno.com) or phone 208-454-2518. In the meantime check out what Scrip is all about and which stores participate by visiting: <http://www.glscrip.com/index.aspx>.

## Interview with Outgoing Former Friends Newsletter Editor Denise Hughes

Prior to myself assuming the duties of Newsletter Editor, (my first issue as editor was the Spring of 2013), Denise Hughes held the title for many years. I wanted to interview her to see if she could share with us any memories as editor and to inquire as to what her future plans are.

### ***How did you get involved with the Friends organization?***

I moved to Idaho in August 1996 and discovered Deer Flat NWR the following spring. I was elated to find a wild area so close to home and I spent many hours at the refuge. I don't remember how I heard about the first organizational meeting of the Friends group but I wanted to be involved with a group that was concerned with the future of the refuge.

### ***When did you start as the editor of the Friends newsletter?***

After the first couple of planning meetings for the Friends of Deer Flat, I wondered if information was getting out to everyone who expressed a concern for the refuge. I thought the best way to get information out to everyone was by newsletter. So I volunteered to edit a newsletter.

### ***How has the newsletter evolved over time (format, colors, photos etc...)?***

I had never edited a newsletter before taking on the Friends newsletter. I knew I had a newsletter/brochure publishing program on my computer but I had never opened the program. The grebe logo was designed and from that The Grebe became a reality. Early on there wasn't much color in the newsletter other than the photos. But after a couple of years I wanted to give the newsletter a more modern look. After several hours of playing around with my publishing program I designed the current newsletter. The publishing program has many color combinations so I was able to change the background colors of the newsletter on a monthly basis. I tried to keep the colors coordinated to the seasons of the year.

Several people, including Bob Christensen, have been wonderful about submitting photos for the newsletter. I also used some of the photos I took when I wandered around the refuge. I think the photos are one of the more important features of the newsletter and I was always happy to receive them.

### ***What has been your biggest challenge?***

In the early years of the newsletter, I tried to put it out on a monthly basis. But I soon discovered that I had problems finding articles, photos, etc. for a monthly newsletter. After a long discussion the Executive Board decided that a quarterly newsletter would be best for our Friends Group.

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***Any funny incidents, typos, blunders etc...?***

One of the Friends out-of-state subscribers lives in the town where I grew up. And her last name is the same as one of my classmates. It turns out that this subscriber is the mother of a former high school classmate.

***What are your future plans?***

Right now, my work has become all consuming. And I think it will be this way for the foreseeable future. I have managed to find a small amount of time to go bird watching but not as much as I would like to do. I hope to spend more time at Deer Flat and some of the other national wildlife refuges in the west. Spending time in nature keeps me balanced and eases the stress in my life.

Thank you Denise for your time on this. It sounds like you have a busy future ahead of you. Good luck with your future endeavors!

Interview questions by Robert Allen



Denise releases a Coopers Hawk at the Idaho Bird Observatory

Photo provided by Denise Hughes

## *Raptors of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge*

By Bob Christensen

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge provides excellent habitat for a variety of raptors (predatory birds) as listed below (information taken from *refuge bird list*). Those which regularly nest on the refuge are shown with an asterisk. An obvious omission is the list of owls which inhabit the refuge; however, these will be covered in a subsequent newsletter.



Two of the more abundant hawk-like raptor species on the refuge are the red-tailed hawk (web image at right) and American kestrel, both which not only nest, but also are readily observed spending the winter months foraging in habitats around the perimeter of Lake Lowell and among the Snake River islands. Other common but less plentiful year-round residents include the bald eagle and northern harrier. The osprey and Swainson's hawk are common to the area in low numbers during their annual breeding and nesting season, but both migrate from the area for the winter period.

<b>Osprey, Kites, Hawks and Eagles</b>					
*Osprey	W,D	c	c	c	
*Bald Eagle	W,D	c	c	c	c
*Northern Harrier	W,G,A	c	c	c	c
Sharp-shinned Hawk	G,D	u	c	c	u
*Cooper's Hawk	G,D	o	o	o	u
Northern Goshawk	D	o	r	o	o
*Swainson's Hawk	G,A	c	c	o	
*Red-tailed Hawk	G,D,A	c	c	c	c
Ferruginous Hawk	G,A	r	r	r	
Rough-legged Hawk	G,A	o		u	u
Golden Eagle	S,G	o	o	u	u
<b>Falcons</b>					
*American Kestrel	G,D,A	c	c	c	c
Merlin	G,D	o	r	o	u
Gyr Falcon	G, A				v
Peregrine Falcon	W,G,A	r	o	o	r
Prairie Falcon	S,G,A	o	u	u	o

*Habitats*

- W - On or near water
- G - Grassland and dry uplands
- D - Deciduous woodlands and riparian areas
- A - Agriculture
- S - Species more likely to be seen on the Snake River Islands Unit

*Seasons*

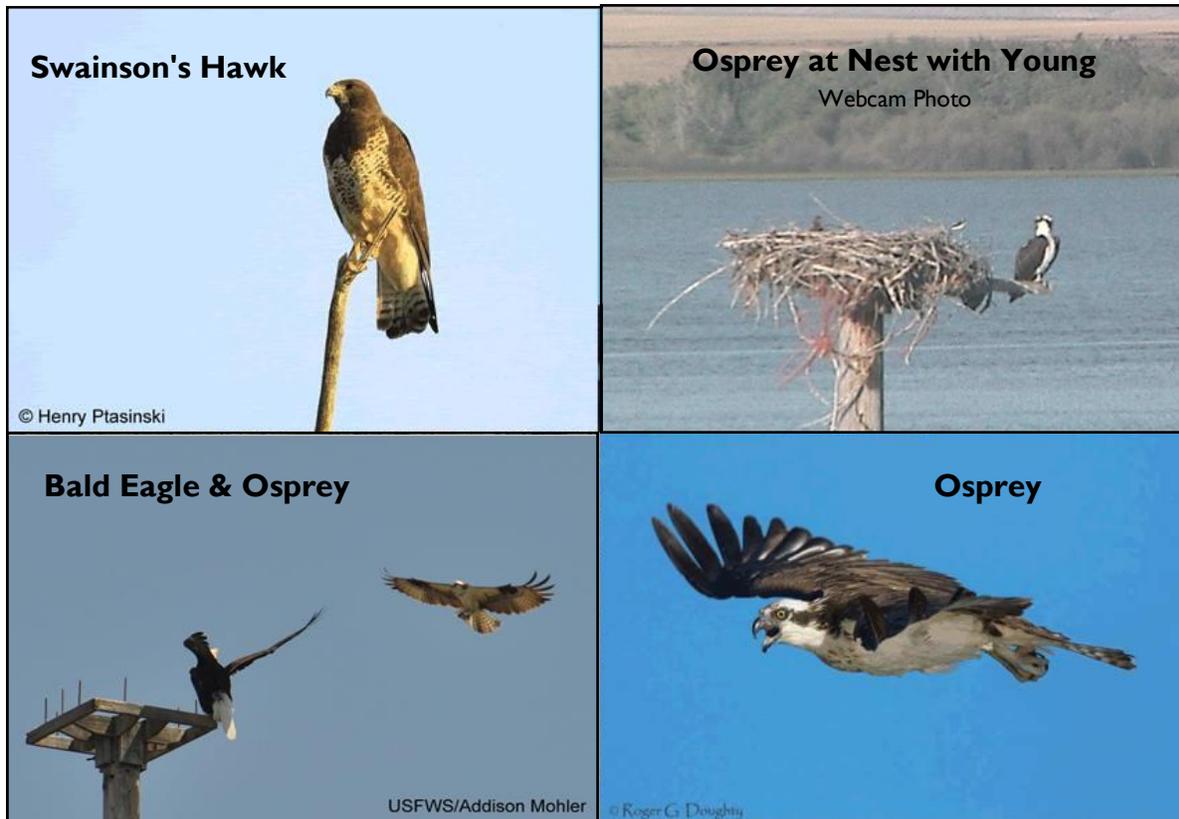
- Sp - Spring = March-May
- S - Summer = June-August
- F - Fall = September-November
- W - Winter = December-February

*Abundance*

- a - abundant = a common species that is very numerous
- c - common = certain to be seen in suitable habitat
- u - uncommon = might be seen in suitable habitat
- o - occasional = seen only a few times during a season
- r - rare = seen at intervals of 2-5 years
- v - vagrant = highly unusual
- \* - species that nest on the refuge

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The following raptor photos are taken from the *Timeline Photos* album on the refuge's *Facebook* page:



Most of my experience with raptors at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge has been with the resident bald eagles and the migratory ospreys. The refuge hosts two breeding pairs of bald eagles and ospreys. Both of these species gain their subsistence by catching and eating fish from Lake Lowell during the breeding and nesting seasons. I have been monitoring the nesting activities of the bald eagles for ten years; and since we installed the osprey webcam in 2010, I have been actively watching the osprey nesting activities opposite the refuge visitor center. I also have the opportunity of operating the webcam via remote control and communicating with our sponsor, *Fiberpipe*, any operational or maintenance needs.

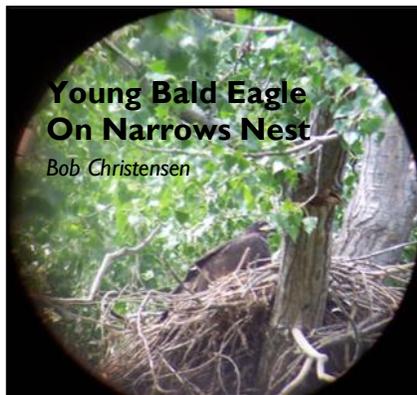
The two bald eagle nesting territories at the refuge are on opposite ends of Lake Lowell. One is in the East Side (no public access) area and the other is in the North Side area opposite the Narrows (about one mile west of the refuge visitor center). Over the years that I have monitored these nesting territories, the North Side pair of eagles has been successful (the last seven years) in raising one or two eaglets to fledging age. It has been more difficult to monitor the East Side nesting success because of its remoteness and inaccessibility during high water. But my observations conclude that this nest has been successful in raising one or two young eagles in at least four of those years, with a possibility of success during another two years. During 2013 both eagle pairs successfully fledged at least one young.

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Another interesting fact is that up to 30 bald eagles spend the winter on the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. Both adult and immature birds can be seen perched in the leafless trees around the refuge and/or sitting on the ice waiting for a chance to take a duck or goose for dinner.

The two osprey nests on the refuge are on poles constructed for that purpose by refuge personnel some years ago. They are a little over one mile apart--one being just south of the visitor center within the high-water area of Lake Lowell, and the other being on the shoreline near the refuge maintenance yard SE of the Upper Dam. While I do not have exact records, I can state that over the last decade the visitor center nest has been used longer than the other. In recent years both nests have been active each year, with the ospreys raising from one to four chicks. Last year, the visitor center nest had only one young which we named *Solo*. This year there were two chicks and the winning names were *Fishin' & Wishin'* as submitted by Bob and Sheryl Faller. The maintenance yard pair also fledged two young in 2013. The young ospreys are currently improving their flight skills and learning how to fish. They will leave the area for points south (as far away as Central America) in mid to late September.

More *Timeline* photos from Facebook:



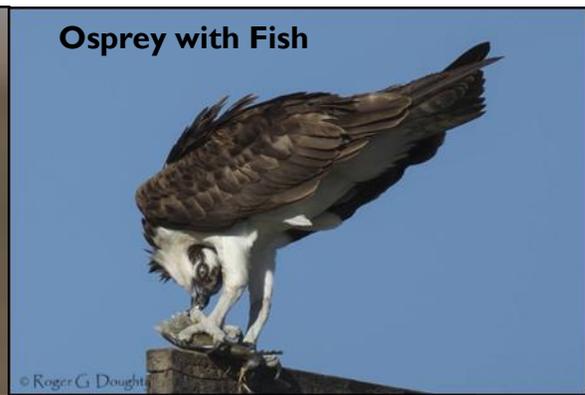
**Young Bald Eagle  
On Narrows Nest**

Bob Christensen



© Dick McKee

**American Kestrel**  
NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
REFUGE



**Osprey with Fish**

© Roger G. Doughty



**Young Bald Eagles**

USFWS/Addison Mohler



**Adult Bald Eagle**

USFWS/Randy Aulbach

## Acting Refuge Manager Stan Culling

by Stan Culling

This past June, Deer Flat Refuge Manager Jennifer Brown Scott accepted the Project Leader position at Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex near Sequim, WA. In the interim, Deputy Refuge Manager Stan Culling will be acting Refuge Manager. With government sequestration in effect, it is not known when the Refuge Manager position will be filled.

Many thanks to the Friends of Deer Flat as they continue to build a supportive unit to assist the Refuge as annual budgets continue to show signs of decline.



### Supporting our Supporters

We have been very fortunate to have wonderful community support from area businesses throughout the year. Flying M hosted the anniversary event and provided wonderful coffee and desserts at no expense to the Friends organization. Domino's Pizza has donated pizza to feed the volunteers who help with Creepy Critter Encounters in October for several years, and Wissel Farms donated pumpkins to decorate for the fall events last year and the previous year.

These donations are much appreciated and help us stretch our dollars to a greater extent, so I encourage all of you to think about meeting there or ordering from them or supporting them in some way. It would also be great if you would thank them for their support in person.

## Are You Sporting Your Membership Pin?



Last fall we worked with a very experienced company and created a Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge lapel pin. We were able to give them to members who attended the anniversary event and I was able to pass a few more out to members who attended the ice cream social in July. I know I haven't gotten them to each of you, so please e-mail me at [friendsofdf@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsofdf@yahoo.com) and use the subject membership pin request to let me know you still need one.

If you are local I will put your name on the pin/s and leave them at the front desk for you to pick up. If you are out-of-state I will mail one to you. This initial order provided us with enough for each adult member to receive a pin.

Genevieve

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## Teachers' Night Out

September 26<sup>th</sup> at Zoo Boise

Everyone likes a "captive" audience and the annual *Teachers' Night Out* is a great way for the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge to reach out to over 350 teachers of grades K through 12 from public, private and charter schools. The evening is a wonderful way for teachers to connect to classroom resources and other learning opportunities for their students while enjoying a box dinner and entertainment.

The Refuge has participated for many years and the Friends joined in last year as a way of getting the word out about our *Discover Wildlife Journeys* field trip. Through this effort we added six teachers to our mailing list and spoke to many more. We also gained a volunteer from Idaho Power. We hope that this second opportunity will turn teachers into Friends and additional field trip participants.

If you would like to join us between 4:00 and 7:00 at the zoo, send us an email to [friendsofdf@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsofdf@yahoo.com) with the subject Teachers' Night Out volunteer and tell us when to expect you.

## It's Not Too Early to Think About Christmas Gifts!

If you haven't stopped by the Grebe's Nest Bookstore lately, I encourage you to. We have a variety of nature-focused items including books, plush birds, earrings, and honey from the Refuge.

We would like you to pre-order some limited edition items and items customized with our logo (Weiser Classic Candy with a nature theme and information card and Nalgene© bottles, are on our wish list). We will also be selling the Scrip gift cards again in November so that they will get to you before Black Friday.

Help us plan for a successful holiday season by letting us provide you with unique and helpful gifts!

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## July Ice Cream Social

July 27 was a beautiful, sunny, very warm Saturday - perfect for ice cream treats and getting to know old and new volunteers. It was also a great time for the approximately 30 folks who attended, to hear about the many projects the Refuge and Friends are involved in.

Refuge staff explained their various tasks in keeping things running smoothly at the Refuge and Friends board members introduced and discussed several committees that were specifically looking for volunteer assistance. The audience responded; volunteers signed up to help with the osprey web-cam, bird feeding program, Discover Wildlife Journeys field trips, and the newsletter.

We want to thank all who came out to share ice cream with us. A very special thanks to you who agreed to also share your time, interests, and talents with the Friends of Deer Flat programs and projects that ultimately benefit the Refuge and the community in big ways.

## VOLUNTEERS!!!

Each October, the Friends of Deer Flat designate a day to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week; this year that day will be Saturday, October 12. We invite you to become part of an organizing group that will begin discussing and planning fun things for this special day. Things the group will work on include types of activities, food raffle, the possibility of a photography workshop for kids and families, and publicity. The group will meet in the Refuge Visitor Center at 1:00 on September 21.

We want to get to know you better and we can really use your help! If you are interested, please contact Noreen Tripp at 208-249-8162 or email [tonotripp@cableone.net](mailto:tonotripp@cableone.net).

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## Vote to Stay Vital!

A huge "Thank-you!" to the four members who graciously agreed to serve on the **nominating committee: Doug Cleveland, Heidi Fencik, Fred Christensen, and Bob Reusink**. In accordance with our bylaws, they will be talking with members to find candidates for November's slate of officers, to be voted on at the November general membership meeting or via email.

Not only do we need you to vote in November, we need you to consider sharing your time and talents with the organization to keep it vital. Job descriptions are available through the nominating committee and we would be happy to answer or research any questions that you have. When they call, please consider your talents and skills and the positive impact you can make through your leadership. We can't reach our full potential without you!

Next year's officer's will be installed at the December pot-luck dinner on Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>.

# 2013 Membership Application

\* \* \* \*

Please fill out this page and return with a check payable to:

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



\_\_\_\_\_  
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)



Goose Eggs & Golf Ball

### Annual Membership Categories:

- Owl (Senior & Student) \$ 10
- Deer (Individual) \$ 15
- Fox (Family) \$ 25
- Osprey \$ 50
- Eagle \$100
- Goldeneye \$500

### TOTAL

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**All contributions are tax deductible.**

### Friends Activities

Please Mark the Activities that Interest you:

- |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Habitat enhancement       | Public relations               |
| Staffing the bookstore    | Grant writing                  |
| Greeting Refuge visitors  | Lobby on behalf of the Refuge  |
| Helping organize an event | Be an officer in Friends group |
| Litter pickup             | Other _____                    |
| Weed eradication          |                                |
| Education events          |                                |
| Photography               |                                |
| Publicity                 |                                |

## WALKING ON THE LAKE BED - LAKE LOWELL

Today I walked on the lake bed.  
The water has receded, leaving beaches.  
Beaches drawing visitors, large and small.

Birds of many colors, sizes, and shapes  
come to the lake shallows -

Dainty, fast walking shore birds  
on spindly legs.

Sea gulls and terns,  
white, circling,  
calling to each other.

Elegant egrets standing  
still like statues.

Footprints in the sand

Deer, slight of foot,  
coming to drink.

Raccoon, looking for frogs?

Coyote, stealthy and cunning

Man, in shoes or barefoot

Shades of green vegetation surround  
the calm, quiet of the lake  
encircled by expanding beach.

Home to many and respite for travelers  
of long distances.

Lyndell Jackson  
August 2013

Poem photography by Jon Minkoff

