

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Newsletter • September 2013

What's New?

Water levels are quite low right now, but it's just right for the shorebirds that treat the exposed mud flats on the lake as a breakfast, lunch, and dinner buffet. Although summer's heat is still with us, it won't last too much longer; soon it will be time to start filling the bird feeders around the Visitor Center. Hunting season opened on September 1st for mourning doves and subsequent seasons will begin opening as we go through the month and into October.

Cheers!

Thanks to everyone who sent in their hours for Fiscal Year 2013. Over 525 volunteers served over 9,900 hours since October 2012! Your service has helped improve wildlife habitat, educate visitors and students, document visitor numbers, and many other great things. Congratulations, great work, and many thanks to all of you!



Heidi Zschach/USFWS

Addison and volunteers conducting a recent deer spotlight survey. They saw 50 deer—more than usually seen in summer.

Around the water cooler... In August we said good-bye and thank you for your service to Kim Portwood, Environmental Educator, and Heidi Fencik, Volunteer Coordinator, whose AmeriCorps terms ended in August. Kim will be teaching 7th grade science at Fruitland Middle School this year—what lucky students she will have! Heidi will continue to volunteer a few days a week at the Refuge to coordinate various projects. Thanks for your continued service! Heidi has recently changed her name from Fencik to Zschach. You can now contact her at Heidi_Zschach@fws.gov.

We are also pleased to welcome Kacey Kai, the new Environmental Educator/Volunteer Coordinator AmeriCorps member. Next time you're near the Visitor Center, stop in to say "hi" and introduce yourself!

Friends of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

The Friends of Deer Flat is a non-profit organization that supports the Refuge in many ways. A nominating committee is currently working to develop a slate of candidates for board and executive board membership. If you aren't ready to get that involved, then consider becoming a Friends' member. Memberships start at \$10 and are tax deductible. **For more information about Friends volunteering or membership, contact friendsofdf@yahoo.com.**

Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise stated, all activities take place at the Refuge Visitor Center

Birding Basics Roving Ranger— Saturday, September 7th from 2-6 PM, at the Lower Dam Recreation Area

Drop in to learn about local birds and get pointers on bird watching. Binoculars and other supplies will be available.

National Wildlife Refuge Week Celebration—Saturday Oct 12th from 1-3:30 PM, Sponsored by the Friends of Deer Flat

Celebrate the nation's over 550 National Wildlife Refuges at this event to include kids' activities and food.

Bring binoculars to join in the Big Sit birding activity, or a camera to join on a photo walk.

Volunteer Recognition Potluck—Saturday Nov 16th, noon-2 PM

If you volunteered between October 2012 and September 2013, then you are invited to our end-of-year volunteer recognition luncheon. *Save the date* to grab some grub and be appreciated for your volunteer service.



Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

National Wildlife Refuge Week Celebration Organizing Committee

Each October, the Friends of Deer Flat celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week with a family-friendly event. This year's event will be Saturday, October 12th from 1-3:30 PM. The Friends are seeking volunteers to help organize the event by planning activities, publicity, food, a raffle, the possibility of photography or craft workshops for kids and families, and more. The Friends want to get to know you better and can really use your help! Please contact Noreen Tripp (249-8162 or tonotripp@cableone.net).

Scout Day (2-3 volunteers per month)

Date and Time: 1st Saturday of every month from 1-3 PM.

This free educational opportunity for Scouts to earn various wildlife related badges will be re-starting on October 5th. We will need volunteers to lead programs that include nature crafts and a short hike. No experience necessary—only a love of kids, enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn!

Deadline to register: Friday, September 27th

Weed Warriors (as many volunteers as possible!)

Date and Time: Whenever it's convenient for you!

2013 has been one of the worst years in memory for goathead (puncturevine), and it's still popping up all across the Refuge. Think of what a dent in the goathead population we could make if each Refuge volunteer spent just an hour or two battling them with a shovel (or backpack of pesticides, if you prefer). **Deadline to register: When the last goatheads germinate!**

Discover Wildlife Journeys Field Trips (1-4 volunteers per field trip)

Dates and Times: Field trips will be offered Tuesdays-Thursdays in September & October (as well as in spring).

Volunteer to guide 4th-6th grade students through one of the field trip stations, teaching them about either birds, aquatic invertebrates (including sampling from the lake!), terrestrial invertebrates, or scat & track identification. No experience necessary—only a love of kids, enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn! **Deadline to register: Ongoing.** Training to be held early to mid-September if we have sufficient fall field trips scheduled.

Bird Feeding (3-5 Volunteers)

Dates and Times: Training September 28th @ 1 PM. Feeding times to be scheduled in October-March

Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge have been feeding our local birds in winter for a couple years now and they would like some help. September 28th they are holding a training and orientation for filling and proper cleaning of the bird feeders. From November through March they will need volunteers to help them fill and clean the bird feeders 3 times a week. If you are interested, please contact Noreen Tripp at tonotripp@cableone.net.

Creepy Critter Encounters (30+ volunteers for event)

Date and Time: Saturday, October 26th from 3-6 PM. Many volunteers needed for this Halloween event for kids (and kids at heart!). Kids come in costume to learn about creepy critters on a spooky hike, make crafts, and listen to scary stories. Volunteers are needed to staff the welcome table, craft room, and wildlife-related stations along the nature trail. **Deadline to register: Monday, October 14th**



Birders recently spotted a Whimbrel on the east end of Lake Lowell, a bird that has never before been documented at Deer Flat NWR!

To find out more about or sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities, contact Susan Kain at deerflat@fws.gov
Or (208)-467-9278.

Thank you, and see you at the Refuge!