

Friends Forward



Special Issue – Fall 2009
Arts on Refuges

National Wildlife Refuge System

In This Issue

Art can be a powerful educational tool, many refuges and Friends groups are learning. At refuges around the country, innovative programs joining the arts and nature are drawing new audiences and calling attention to the Refuge System’s environmental mission. We highlight some programs here.



ALEXIS RYKKEN

Young artists in Bosque del Apache’s Mapping the Rio project show off their paper model of the Rio Grande watershed.

You’ve Gotta Have Art

By Ren Lohofener

Refuges need artists. The well-being of national wildlife refuges depends on public support, and artists are experts in visceral communication to which the public can powerfully respond.

Leonard Bernstein, renowned composer and conductor, said, “Music can name the unnamable and communicate the unknowable.” Prominent realist painter Edward Hopper reflected that, “If I could say it in words there would be no reason to paint.”

What better champions of refuges than artists who trumpet the value of conservation and the necessity of

keeping places natural. The arts reach people in a multitude of ways. Fifty years ago, before the Mississippi Barrier Islands became part of the National Park System, Walter Anderson, an illustrator and water colorist, rowed a small boat out to Horn Island. There, he recorded his thoughts and impressions. Today, his writings and paintings vividly portray the importance of these islands.

Ana Flores, artist-in-residence at Kettle Pond Visitor Center on Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge in Rhode Island (*see story, page 10*), uses natural sculpture to interpret the intertwining of natural and cultural history and to

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USFWS/FRIENDS OF THE BOSQUE DEL APACHE NWR

Native wildlife is the focus of the Wild Things Art Contest, an annual children’s competition sponsored by the Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex.

Picture This

Visual Arts Heighten Refuge Appeal

Salmon Art Trail, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, Washington

Cost: More than \$100,000 over seven years and three stages of adding public artwork

Funding: Federal monies, local and foundation grants and donations of materials and services

Challenges: Securing private grant funding, fundraising.

Rewards: Higher refuge profile, increased visitation, innovative environmental education for local school groups

Six years ago, the staff at **Willapa National Wildlife Refuge** decided to try something new.

“Originally, the idea was just to give visitors something to do at our headquarters site,” separated by water – or a 45-minute drive – from refuge hiking trails, says Angie Chapman, refuge administrative officer. “We decided we needed a trail here” – to spotlight a newly restored salmon stream. But not just any trail.

The refuge invited University of Washington public art students to enter a design competition for the outdoor space. Entries, judged by professors and refuge staff, had to depict native wildlife, be biologically accurate and withstand weather. The panel chose seven favorites and the refuge installed them, with funding from federal and local agencies and private foundations. The **Friends of Willapa Refuge** helped with fundraising.

The concept was such a hit that in 2007 the refuge asked students to compete

again. This time five artists were chosen to build their designs. In 2009 the refuge commissioned two more works, including a major piece depicting local birds.

Friends president Amy Cook calls the results “amazing.” In one area, she says, “there’s a little amphitheater [known as the ‘Amphibitheater’] in the hillside, with bronze amphibians nestled in. You have to look for them... In the trees along the creek, there are metal salmon. As you progress, the salmon change form just as they do when they’re going upstream and getting ready to spawn.”

The Willapa Friends, who continue to fundraise and conduct grant searches for the ever-growing project, commend the Art Trail as an educational tool: “This has opened up a new opportunity to reach kids who maybe weren’t so interested before in science and nature,” says Cook. Curiosity draws new adult visitors, too.

The Art Trail “shows up in magazine articles,” says Chapman. “Visitors tell us, ‘I read about this trail and wanted to come see it.’ We get folks from as far away as Portland and Seattle, and we get many photographers. Every year the trail seems to attract more people.” 🦋



Pacific Giant Salamanders, hiding along the Salmon Art Trail, are among 25 bronze amphibians sculpted by Ida Brown that represent all 13 species of amphibians found on Willapa Refuge.



Along the Salmon Art Trail, a sculpted metal piece called “Spiral Flock” by artist Kristen Boraca symbolizes the flight and migration of western sandpipers, shorebirds native to Willapa Bay.



“Upbringing,” a Salmon Art Trail piece by Jacquye Jones, upends a simulated streambed to reveal two often-overlooked species found on Willapa Refuge: the tailed frog and the western pearl shell mussel.

Drawing Kids Into Nature

Wild Things Art Contest, Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Cost: About \$1,200

Funding: Funded entirely by Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges through small grants, donations

Challenges: Staff time, display means, space

Rewards: Increased visitation, greater community awareness of refuges, increased school involvement in refuge programs, more interest in local wildlife


“Every kid and their parents want to come see their art. We display every piece.”

—Byron Fortier, supervisory park ranger,
Southeast Louisiana Refuges

Center (a local artists’ group), Lacombe Car Care and the St. Tammany Arts Commission (a parish organization). It also prints contest brochures and helps pick judges.

Byron Fortier, supervisory park ranger for Southeast Louisiana Refuges, calls the project “a window” for many kids

who ordinarily are not exposed to wildlife experiences. The event also draws new visitors to the Refuge System. “Every kid and their parents want to come see their art. We display every piece.”

For more information: <http://www.fws.gov/southeastlouisiana/> 

In southeast Louisiana, word is also spreading about the Wild Things Art Contest – an annual children’s event sponsored by the **Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex** – a group of eight refuges in the region. Entries topped 400 in 2007; 350 in 2008. Held each October during Refuge Week, the drawing and painting competition is open to budding artists ages 5 through 18. Entries must depict native plants, animals or landscapes. The first-place winner in each of eight categories wins a \$50 prize.

Event organizers remind local schools, libraries and arts groups early about the contest, hoping they’ll nudge kids to enter. Sometimes, teachers make the contest a class project, and every student submits a drawing or painting.

“Some of the drawings are just incredible,” says Jim Schmidt, president of **Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges**. The group finds sponsors, including the Bayou Lacombe Arts



An entry in the annual Wild Things Art Contest sponsored by the Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex depicts common egrets native to the region.

Set Your Message to Music If Nature Doesn't Move Them, Banjos Will

Birdfest and Bluegrass Festival, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Washington

Cost: \$20,000 - \$25,000 per year

Funding: In-kind donations of goods/services, Challenge Cost Share grant, local business sponsorships

Challenges: Finding sponsors in economic downturn, coordination, planning, marketing

Rewards: Friends/refuge collaboration, community appreciation of the refuge, more family/youth interest, fostering community advocacy

If you think bluegrass flourishes only in Kentucky, you don't know Washington state. Every fall when the waterfowl arrive, the two-day "Birdfest and Bluegrass" festival draws crowds to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and the town of Ridgefield. If love of nature doesn't pull folks in, the fiddles and banjos often do. Music has been an intrinsic part of the weekend event for six of the past 10 years.

"Birdfest draws in nontraditional crowds because of the music interest," says Eric Anderson, instructional system specialist for the Ridgefield refuge complex. "To some degree we use music as a hook to give people a first-time refuge experience. They'll come for the bluegrass and perhaps go on a hike or see raptors in flight. We try to pull in new people and broaden our base." Last year

"To some degree we use music as a hook to give people a first-time refuge experience."

– Eric Anderson, instructional system specialist, Ridgefield Refuge Complex

Birdfest drew about 4,000 visitors, up from 3,000 or more the year before.

Many have a hand in the mostly free event. City officials close several blocks to traffic and turn over the local school, a downtown park and the Ridgefield Community Center for use, in turn, as a raptor showplace, a children's venue and the Birdfest marketplace hub. The refuge waives its usual \$3 car entrance fee. The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge rent a bus that makes a continuous loop Saturday of all Birdfest sites – including the downtown music stages (a \$10 ticket admits you to all) and the refuge. Festival-goers ride free. (The costliest event, available by reservation, is a \$25 per person three-hour tour of closed areas of the refuge, where sandhill cranes fly in for the night.)

The Friends also do much more: They book the acts, find support, organize volunteers, write press releases and staff event booths. Says Anderson, "They put this on their back and they carry it."

Planning starts a year out, says Marguerite Hills, executive director of the Friends group. "During the festival itself we probably have over 150 volunteers." The Friends board raises funds for the \$20,000 event, seeking sponsors and in-kind donations. Local businesses are enthusiastic supporters. "Most of the business people in town say it's their best two days of the year, business-wise," says Hills. 

Friends of the Ridgefield NWR



Young visitors get a helping hand with arts projects at a children's activity tent at the annual Ridgefield Birdfest and Bluegrass Festival.

In Alaska, the Environment Rocks

Upper Tanana Migratory Bird Festival, Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska

Cost: Education specialist salary, volunteer time

Funding: Refuge budget, Challenge Cost Share grant

Challenges: Time, planning, funding

Rewards: Shared sense of fun, constituency building, community appreciation



Henk Timm, USFS

At Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, children lend their voices to a Birds of the Forest performance directed by education specialist Mary Timm.

Mary Timm, education specialist at Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge, knows how to get children to lap up an environmental lesson: Sing it. “Kids respond to language put to music,” says Timm, who won the Refuge System’s Sense of Wonder Award in 2003 for her creativity in children’s environmental education. “That’s how we learned our ABCs.” The music teacher and choir director is passionate about exposing youngsters to music and art, all the more so since “schools aren’t teaching art any more. For the last three years, students here haven’t had any music instruction either.”

So she brings music to grade K-6 classrooms in the Alaska Gateway School District, teaching students songs she’s composed about clouds and fire succession and even semi-serotinous cones – the ones that grow on black spruce and release their seeds when heated by fire. And one Saturday

“The way we’ve found to get more people from the community involved is to involve their kids.”

–Mary Timm, educational specialist, Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge

afternoon every spring, for the refuge’s Upper Tanana Migratory Bird Festival, she stages an original children’s musical at the Tok School or the Dot Lake School, 50 miles away, or the local Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center, rehearsing with students in class or after school.

“The way we’ve found to get more people from the community involved is to involve their kids.” Says Timm, “The response is amazing.”

The regional Friends group, based in Anchorage, is 320 miles distant – too far to pitch in easily. But an informal local group, made up of parents, neighbors and a liaison to the regional group, does what

it can to help. One volunteer leads a story circle, another helps with face painting; others pitch in on setup, cleanup, games and activities. Signs on a festival table invite new members.

Next year’s musical theme: activities you can do on the refuge. “My favorite line,” says Timm: “Come away with me Lucille/ On our merry snowmobile.” (Tetlin Refuge allows snow machining when snow is deep enough to prevent impact on habitat.) 

Capture Feeling in Words

Language Arts Spread a River's Story

"Mapping the Rio" Watershed Education Program, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico

Cost: \$45,000 per year

Funding: Friends general fund (including proceeds from the Friends-operated Nature Store); corporate and federal grants

Challenges: Funding

Rewards: Community building, refuge/school alliance, heightened environmental consciousness

For years the **Friends of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge** sought to help hard-pressed local schools in southwest New Mexico while teaching kids to value the environment. In 2005, they found a way. They contracted with writer/educator Alexis Rykken to develop a watershed education curriculum and won the support of school administrators, who adopted it, starting that fall, at no cost to the school system. The program's still going.

"Socorro County is the second poorest county in the state," says Leigh Ann Vradenburg, executive director of the Friends. "Our schools don't have these kinds of resources available to them otherwise."

Over nine weeks, students in grades K through 5 learn about the Rio Grande watershed, its geology and wildlife, traveling by bus with Rykken and selected teachers to the refuge and other public lands. The Friends pay for the buses. For many youngsters, the refuge trip is a first. "There are children who live 15 miles away, and they've never

been to the refuge," says Vradenburg. Then students write, paint or draw what they've learned.

"The students keep field journals," says Rykken. "A lot of what they write comes from the heart, and that turns out to be poetry in its own way. The writing also deepens the learning process."

"I see a wild river/ Flowing freely/
Meandering at its preference/

"A lot of what the students write comes from the heart, and that turns out to be poetry in its own way."

*—Alexis Rykken, education director,
Friends of Bosque del Apache National
Wildlife Refuge*

Undisturbed by man/ As wide as a house/
As deep as myself..." wrote one fourth-grader.

Rykken, Friends education director since 2007, has exhibited students' writing and her photos of the river at the refuge and in downtown Socorro. Viewers often come away impressed, she says. "People tell me, 'This really gives me hope.'"

The Friends feel encouraged, too. Says Vradenburg, "The schools and parents see that the Friends and the refuge are involved and providing resources to the community. They become more aware of what we're doing here...and see us as a partner, not just some entity out of town."

For more information: <http://www.friendsofthebosque.org/rio/> 



A participant in the Mapping the Rio project at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge finds a comfortable spot to make a journal entry.

Journaling Builds Awareness, Creativity

River of Words, Whittlesey National Wildlife Refuge, Wisconsin

Cost: \$2,000 per year plus staff time

Funding: Refuge budget; Challenge Cost Share grant (some years), volunteer hours

Challenges: Funding, coordination time, long-term commitment to students

Rewards: Seeing students build on what they learn and connect with caring adults, increased refuge visibility

At Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin, former park ranger Katie Goodwin rescued a floundering educational pilot in 2004-05 and made it the

“It’s so neat getting kids out on the refuge understanding what’s going on and tying it in with arts and language and poetry.”

—Tom Kerr, Whittlesey Creek Refuge manager

refuge’s own. She kept the name of the California-based model — River of Words (<http://www.riverofwords.org>) — and the program’s poetry and field trip components. To these, she added contact with professional artists and hands-on refuge activities such as collecting invertebrates, understanding a watershed model and identifying local birds and plants.

Like the Bosque del Apache project, River of Words is now part of a local elementary school’s curriculum, linking study of a watershed with language, arts and science skills. Fourth-graders have a one-week immersion that includes a day at the refuge. (The school

pays for busing; a scholarship from the Friends of the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center helps offset costs.) The refuge’s partnership with the school has grown to include kindergartners learning about animals, second graders about habitat, and sixth graders about stream assessments.

This past spring, after Goodwin assumed a new post at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge 250 miles away, Whittlesey Creek refuge manager Tom Kerr transferred her River of Words responsibilities to the new park ranger.

“It’s been a great project,” Kerr said. “Teachers have really bought into it. And it’s so neat getting kids out on the refuge understanding what’s going on and tying it in with arts and language and poetry.”

The refuge has no dedicated Friends group. But two teachers and other volunteers devote copious time to the project, setting up activities and helping children convey ideas in stories, poems and drawings. The River of Words team publishes a booklet of these creative works each spring and distributes it to students, teachers and area members of Congress. “It’s a good tool to show how the refuge is working with people,” says Kerr.

For more information: <http://www.fws.gov/arsnew/regmap.cfm?arskey=18638>



Students in the River of Words project at Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge inspect and document some local insects.

Honor Your Roots

Cultural Heritage Enriches Refuge Experience

Henshaw Creek Weir Science Camp, Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska

Cost: \$34,000 per year

Funding: In-kind donations of goods/services; Challenge Cost Share Grant shared by Tanana Chiefs Conference, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Allakaket Tribal Council and Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program; Friends of National Wildlife Refuges rural outreach grant

Challenges: Planning, marketing, serving enough kids, weather, remote setting and difficult logistics

Rewards: Increased community appreciation of the refuge, more family/youth interest, greater student exposure to science

Refuge. “They also teach traditional skills like setting a fish net or building a fish rack out of willows without nails.”

The program, a joint effort of the Tanana Chiefs Conference (a nonprofit Native Government organization), the **Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges** and the refuge, is in its third year.


This year, nine teens chosen on the basis of application essays camped out five nights in a remote area of the refuge. Brandy Berkbigler, Partners Fisheries biologist with the Tanana Chiefs Conference, described some of the lore elders shared. “Some of stories reflect cultural beliefs. Like if you’re out camping and you don’t have a tent, you can knock on a tree and ask if you can sleep under it. If the tree says yes, it will protect you overnight.” The story, she says, teaches “respect for all of your resources.”

In their stories, she says, elders referred to some revered creatures only indirectly.

For example, because of cultural beliefs, “women don’t eat bears and they don’t say the native word for bear,” she says. Instead, women, especially those of childbearing age, refer to the animals by a Koyukon Athabaskan or Inupiaq word that means only “black covering.” Most native Alaskan men also speak of bears indirectly and only hunt bears following prescribed native practices.

Other camp activities mix arts, science and culture.

For example, says Reakoff, after campers learn to fish with nets, “we’ll use some of the fish they catch for science activities, like dissection. Elders teach the kids traditional cutting and drying methods. Finally, one or two of the fish will be used to make fish-print t-shirts.”

Besides elders and volunteers, teachers include Reakoff, representatives of the Tanana Chiefs Conference and a representative of the regional Friends group. 

It’s called science camp, but it’s more. **Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge’s** five-day wilderness program for sixth through 12th graders, all Alaskan natives from the villages of Allakaket and Alatna, blends traditional teachings with Western science, sprinkled liberally with art and lessons about living lightly off the land.

“We have elders there the entire time and they share native stories every evening that teach the kids traditional cultural concepts,” says Kristin Reakoff, interpretive park ranger at Kanuti

Campers at the Henshaw Creek Weir Science Camp at Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska immerse themselves in a search for aquatic bugs.



USFWS

Native Arts Add a Spiritual Dimension

Nisqually Watershed Festival, Washington

Cost: About \$6,000

Funding: Contributions from state Department of Ecology, Tacoma Power, Nisqually Indian Tribe, Red Wind Casino (owned by tribe) and Friends of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. In-kind support from the University of Washington.

Challenges: Limited refuge capacity (can't accommodate more than 2,000); keeping focus on watershed issues, engaging local residents

Rewards: Family fun, positive energy, opportunity to showcase refuge, heightened public awareness of need to protect watershed



Traditional drummers from the Nisqually Tribe add solemnity and spirituality to the annual watershed festival at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.

Traditional drummers from the Nisqually Tribe take center stage at the annual Nisqually Watershed Festival, celebrating the history, economy and environment of the region that reaches from Mt. Ranier's Nisqually Glacier to Puget Sound. The free multicultural festival, now in its 20th year, takes place one Saturday each fall at **Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge**.

"They typically come in dancing," says Sheila McCartan, visitor services manager for the refuge. "The drumming is just an underlying, ongoing part of the whole performance.

Sometimes the whole group is dancing together. Sometimes an individual dances while the rest of the group watches. You can see it's extremely spiritual to them."

Native blessings, traditional foods (baked salmon, Indian fry bread) and an interpretive walk to the site of the 1854 Medicine Creek Treaty that ceded Indian

"[Visitors can see] the concern and even reverence the Nisqually Tribe has for the watershed... We want [people] to have an emotional connection to the watershed."

—John Keith, president, Friends of Nisqually Refuge

lands to the federal government combine with more generic family and festival fare such as a costumed "procession of the species" (a mini wildlife parade) and fish print-making.

Why is native culture featured so prominently? "It gives the public a chance to be exposed to the concern and even reverence the Nisqually Tribe has for the watershed," says John Keith, president of the **Friends of Nisqually Refuge**. "We're not just handing visitors a fact sheet on why they should support the watershed. A fact sheet doesn't have any vitality to it. We want them

to have an emotional connection to the watershed."

The festival couldn't take place without the support of 20 to 30 volunteers and Friends members. "We supply a lot of the person power that helps put the event on," says Keith.

"We staff information tables, do set up and help with kids' art projects and activities."

For more information: http://www.fws.gov/Nisqually/events/watershed_fest.html

An Artist's View

By Ana Flores

During the intermission of a Green Cafe arts event on **Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge** in Rhode Island, an elderly man approached me. He stared at my name tag, then asked in a booming voice, “Are you the artist who put up those sculptures along the trail?”

I braced myself.

“Yes,” I replied, feeling uncharacteristically timid.

“Well, Ana,” he said. “I wanted to tell you how thrilled I am to have them there. I’ve lived near the visitor center for the past 30 years and your work has made me really appreciate the history of this place. I’ve taken my children, grandchildren and friends to see the seven figures you sculpted. And I’m here tonight to listen to the Narragansett storyteller because of your sculpture of the Narragansett Indians.”

I smiled and counted one more victory for the Kettle Pond Visitor Center – and its art outreach program.

In 2006, when the center opened in my town of Charlestown, I contacted Ninigret Refuge manager Charlie Vandemoer to offer my services as artist in residence. As an ecological artist with more than a decade of experience, I knew art could help spread the word about the refuge’s environmental mission. I offered to find matching grants to help pay my way. Charlie liked the idea. With his encouragement and the support of the **Friends of the National Wildlife Refuges of Rhode Island**, we landed a \$17,000 grant from the Rhode Island Foundation. That was enough to cover my first year at the center, which serves the state’s five refuges. Several other grants followed, stretching my initial one-year contract to three years.

My supervisor, visitor services manager Janis Nepshinsky, supported my projects.

These included the trail sculptures, which I created using materials from the local landscape – sod, branches, stone, wood and metal. Interpretive boxes placed nearby offered journals for public comments. Hikers filled more than three of them.

In 2006, I also began the Green Cafe, a monthly art and environment lecture and film series. (Events are free; we charge for refreshments.) The series draws audiences of 60 to 100 people. Each event concludes with an open dialogue about the evening’s topic, ranging from the influence of John James Audubon on artists and ornithologists to China’s industrialization and its impact on climate change.

Last year, with support from a TogetherGreen fellowship (an alliance between Toyota and the Audubon Society), I started a project to bring teenagers – the missing species – into the center. On the recommendations of teachers and volunteers, I assembled a core group of 10 teens from four area high schools. We trained them for two months in environmental art and center operations, then encouraged them to create programs for their peers. The



Ana Flores, ending a three-year term this fall as artist-in-residence at Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge in Rhode Island, poses partway through construction with some of her woodland figures.

group calls itself “Greenhouse.” One Sunday a month, they help staff the center and run “the Granola Bar,” their teen version of the Green Cafe. This summer they made two films – one about biophilia, our inherent connection to nature, and one about waste – and hosted a festival to showcase them. They plan to continue after my refuge post ends this fall.

It has been a pleasure to mentor these young people and watch them develop a deep appreciation for their area resources. Their still-rural town of Charlestown is no longer “the middle of nowhere” in their eyes. Through their efforts and ours, they now see it and the refuge as special places that they want to celebrate and protect.

Ana Flores is a sculptor and professor of environmental art and sustainable design at Bryant University in Smithfield, R.I.

For more on Greenhouse: <http://greenhousefws.blogspot.com/>

For more on the work of Ana Flores: www.art-farm.net

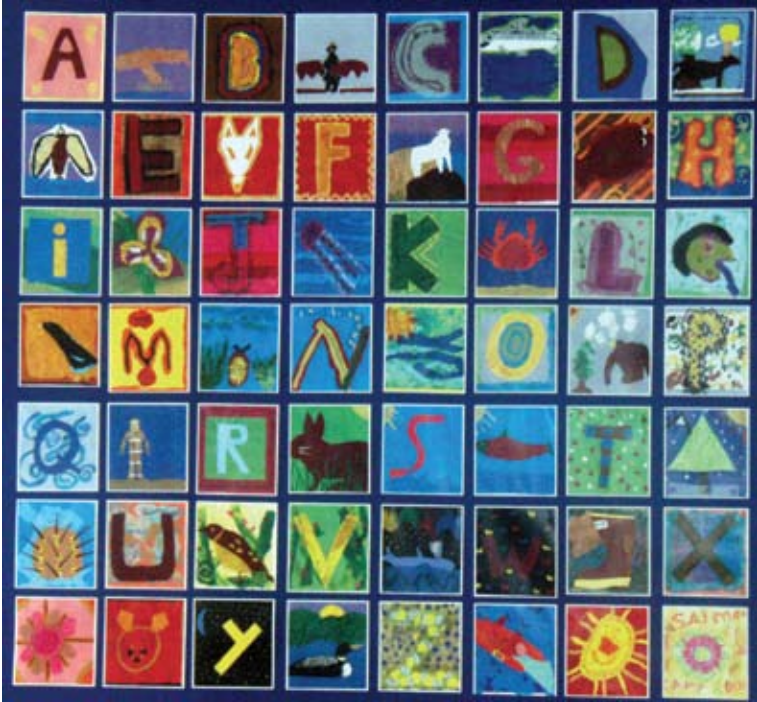
Tips from an Artist

What would it take to start an artist-in-residence program on your refuge? Where would you start?

Ana Flores offers some advice:

- ◆ Reach out to local artists with public organizing and political skills as well as artistic talent.
- ◆ Look for grants that support projects integrating the environment, arts and community.
- ◆ Consider where the artist will fit in your structure. Who will support him or her? Who will handle liability issues? How/where will the artist work?

Some Tips on Planning Arts Events



Launching an arts event can seem daunting. Here's some advice from Eric Anderson, instructional systems specialist at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex; Marguerite Hills, executive director of the Friends of Ridgefield Refuge; and Diane Barth, education/outreach specialist for the Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex:

- ◆ Start planning a year in advance.
- ◆ Give each volunteer a clearly defined role: logistics, marketing, etc.
- ◆ Communicate well and often with your team members.
- ◆ Keep meetings short.
- ◆ Use all media outlets available to get the word out.
- ◆ Create a flyer to publicize the event and distribute it to libraries and other local venues.
- ◆ Post contest rules clearly.
- ◆ Make provisions for bad weather.
- ◆ Show your volunteers you value their efforts.

Some Other Notable Refuge Arts Projects

- ◆ Wildlife and landscape drawing classes, Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge, New Jersey
- ◆ Artist-in residence program, Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Wisconsin
- ◆ Museum collection of fine art and 3,500 duck decoys, Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, New Jersey
- ◆ Wildlife photo workshops, Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, Montana
- ◆ Children's Street Banner Contest, Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Utah
- ◆ Wildlife photography workshop, Mississippi Sand Hill Crane National Wildlife Refuge
- ◆ Migratory Bird Calendar Contest, Alaska refuges
- ◆ Junior Duck Stamp contest
- ◆ Photo contest, Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, Delaware



You've Gotta Have Art—Continued from page 1



Members of “Greenhouse,” a teen group organized through the artist-in-residence program at Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge in Rhode Island, receive coaching on an environmental film project from a wildlife videographer.

National wildlife refuges are dedicated to conserving natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations. What better place for an artist to seek inspiration?

connect people with nature. Visitation at the center since she started her residency has increased by 30 percent!

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge on the coast of Washington empowered students from the University of Washington Public Arts Program to design and construct artwork for the “Salmon Art Trail” to commemorate the restoration of a small stream and interpret its importance to the conservation of salmon.

Seeking Inspiration

Artists also need refuges. “Art takes nature as its model,” said Aristotle. National wildlife refuges are dedicated to conserving natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations. What better place for an artist to seek inspiration? With its stunning horizons and skies, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, in Georgia

O’Keefe’s New Mexico, is certainly one of the refuges most frequented by photographers and painters. The value of Bosque del Apache Refuge to artists and to the general public will never be doubted, because the art captured today from nature has the power to communicate for generations to come.

Artists and refuges enjoy a perfect symbiotic relationship. The arts in all their forms touch almost everyone. Cezanne, often referred to as “the father of modern art,” wrote, “Painting from nature is not copying the object; it is realizing one’s sensations.” And poet Maya Angelou, observing the beauty of nature, reminds us, “Everything in the universe has rhythm. Everything dances.”

Ren Lohofener is the regional director for the California-Nevada Region. 🌿



Sculpted wooden posts that revolve above a railing at the Willapa Salmon Art Trail depict the life stages of chum salmon and other stream-dwellers that depend on them.

Spread the Word

Friends Forward is available online at www.fws.gov/refuges/friends. Send your Friends members and prospective members there to read or download the latest issue. 🌿

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