

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner a Big Success!



The Annual Volunteer Awards Banquet was held on November 19, 2012 at Pamlico Jack's Restaurant in Nags Head to recognize volunteers for their dedicated service to Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges. During the ceremony, volunteers who had reached milestones in cumulative service were recognized.

George and Peggy Harrison, resident volunteers who recently completed their second season here, were recognized as "Superior Refuge Volunteers" and joined past recipients on the Volunteers of the Year plaque.

George assisted the staff with maintenance activities and was instrumental in adapting the interior of the new Visitor Center and maintaining the landscaping.

Peggy staffed the visitor centers at Pea Island and on Roanoke Island and helped set up the retail operation in the *Wild Things* Gift Shop and Book Store.

For cumulative hours contributed, the following pins/awards were received:

George Harrison — 1,500
 Peggy Harrison — 1,000
 Laura and John Gilson—1,000 each
 Peggy Eubank — 2,000
 Ken Wynne — 3,000
 Ron Marchand — 3,500
 Pat Moore — 4,000

Interns Cody Stone, Heather Brickiron, Kyla Brick and Jonathan Cooley received 500-hours pins, and Interns Cari Cook, Sarah Gutman, Sanders Overman, Ashlyn Knight and Alden Early received 250-hour pins.

Refuge Manager Mike Bryant presented the awards and reminded participants of the importance of volunteers to the success of these refuges. Each volunteer received an heirloom-quality, numbered, limited-edition stained glass bird (sun-catcher).



Volunteers of the Year Peggy and George Harrison with Refuge Manager Mike Bryant

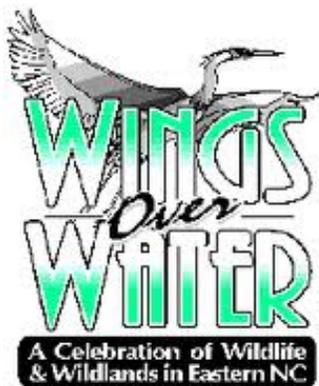
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Wings Over Water

A few days before the 2012 Wings Over Water Festival was to begin, Hurricane Sandy brought unique travel and logistical problems to Festival organizers and participants and to Outer Banks residents. Due to flooding, over-wash, rain and wind damage, the Bonner Bridge at Oregon Inlet was closed. Access for Hatteras Island residents was limited to sporadic and emergency ferry service from Stumpy Point. Access for visitors was slim or non-existent. While the North Carolina Department of Transportation worked to repair the Bonner Bridge and NC Highway 12, Wings Over Water staff and the volunteer trip leaders coordinated changing the venues of trips scheduled for inaccessible locations.

Wings Over Water 2012 transportation and location challenges were not limited to the after-effects of Hurricane Sandy. There was also a two-day nor'easter that blew through, causing further road flooding and cold, damp, unpleasant conditions.



Birding in particular was affected by the hurricane and nor'easter. Birds that might normally have been found in abundance were not as prevalent. A few unexpected birds were spotted due to being 'blown in' by the storms.

Nevertheless, trips needing relocation were changed, participants and leaders were mostly satisfied that there was a variety of nature to observe, photograph and enjoy in spite of the difficulties. In fact, the responses to our after-Festival survey were overwhelmingly positive about

the resiliency of WOW trip leaders and the organization and Festival in general. That is good news considering the many obstacles faced.

In hope of having warmer weather, 2013 Wings Over Water is scheduled for Tuesday October 22 through Sunday the 27 — two weeks earlier than in 2012. The WOW steering committee is busily organizing the 2013 event with plans to have the new OBX Wild on the stands by March.

For information about Wings over Water:

www.wingsoverwater.org,
wow@coastalwildliferefuge.com
call Steve Brumfield at 252-216-9464.

Keynote Dinner

Our 2012 WOW keynote speaker was John Sill. Sill has worked as a freelance artist and illustrator since 1971. His art has been exhibited in many shows and has appeared in a number of books and magazines. He is the instructor in the Field Sketching and Bird Illustration Workshop for the Institute for Field Ornithology sponsored by the American Birding Association. The subject of most of John's work has been birds - both real and imagined. His illustrations for his wife Cathryn's 'About:' series of children's books have expanded his art to include other wildlife. Titles in the large series include, *About: Birds*, *About: Wetlands*, *About: Crustaceans* and *About: Reptiles*. John's keynote



Keynote Speaker John Sill

speech was humorous and probably most appreciated by birders. He utilized birds depicted in his two books, *A Field Guide* and *Another Field Guide to Little-Known and Seldom Seen Birds of North America*.

These were birds ingeniously illustrated and described with mock-seriousness. So clever and plausible were John's descriptions and illustrations that it took some participants several minutes before they realized that John and his co-authors had invented these birds, such as the Grey-Green Lichen Mimic, the Mangrove Penguin and the patriotically-plumed red, white and blue American Bunting. For those who had spent many hours hiking and paddling around the various refuges in the cold and wind, a little warmth and good food at the keynote dinner, and then a little levity was relaxing and most appreciated.

Volunteers, Interns and Resident Volunteers in 2013...

“The most notable reason for the success of refuge programs is volunteer support. We have all kinds of volunteers. Some of them are local and work a day or half-day; others literally move to the refuges for their volunteer time. But all of them are dedicated and love these refuges and their wildlife,” said Tracey Rock, Refuge Volunteer Coordinator

The greatest number of refuge volunteers are local folks who contribute a half- or whole-day on some sort of regular schedule, some seasonally, some on a regular basis, and some on an “on-call” basis. These **local volunteers** live in the area and perform a variety of duties on the refuges and in the Visitor Centers.

During our busier times (spring, summer, fall), we generally have two types of volunteers who live on the refuge and commit to contribute 24-40 hours each week, in return for some sort of personal support.

Resident volunteers reside on the refuge for several months at a time in their own RVs (recreational vehicles). In exchange for use of a pad with electrical, water, and septic hook-ups, these volunteers contribute a minimum of 24 hours each per week (32 hours, if single).

Interns are usually college students or graduates in fields related to wildlife, biology or conservation, from

all over the country who commit to 3-6 months of refuge work and reside in one of our refuge bunkhouses. For more details visit the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/alligatorriver/intall.html>.

We are currently working to expand and re-organize tasks for some of our local volunteers. We have begun putting together teams to organize like-minded folks who can work together. For example, many volunteers prefer to work indoors, in a visitor center, providing information to the public on the refuges and local area while also staffing our retail gift shops/book stores. Others enjoy assisting with educational programs at the local elementary, middle and high schools, staffing outreach events, or even providing administrative support functions.

We have many volunteers who prefer to work outdoors clearing trails, assisting with canoe tours, shooting wildlife photography, or leading bird walks, just to name a few outdoor opportunities.

All volunteers are encouraged to work in any and all areas of interest to them. Committing to one type of volunteer work often leads to further refuge involvement.

During the winter months, there are fewer resident volunteers and interns. Currently we have one couple, Dale and Sue Vice, who are assisting in our Pea Island Visitor Center and refuge educational school programs.

Chelsea Vosburgh is currently the Refuge Red Wolf Caretaker Intern.



Intern Cari Cook at the OBX Seafood Festival

We always have a need for volunteers during any and all seasons. Some of the regular volunteers spend weeks or months during the winter further south. Some prefer not to work during the summer, since they have lots of company or a summer job. So, we always need trained people who can fill in, especially in the Visitor Centers. Offering yourself as a refuge volunteer does not commit you to a regular weekly schedule or to a specific time requirement. But, most volunteers find they want to volunteer more time, once they begin!

To volunteer or for further information please contact Tracey Rock 252-473-1131 X 227.



Volunteer Beryl Iven and Refuge Manager Mike Bryant. Beryl volunteers at the Visitor Center on Roanoke Island and distributes brochures regularly around the refuge.





"We want to start off the new year by saying thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers! We truly appreciate the many hours you generously donate. The Refuges and Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society are lucky to have each and every one of you," Susie Kowlok, Bookstore Manager.



Warren Davis & Ann Groves
at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center

Let's go shopping!

We are always on the lookout for new items to carry in both of our gift stores.

Many of our visitors (and staff) at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center on Roanoke Island have asked about the tiles in our restrooms. The tiles were created by local artist, Stephanie Kiker. Stephanie lives and works on Hatteras Island; she began her career there in 1996. We recently started carrying some of her items, including cutting boards, coasters, magnets and ceramic tiles.

The next time you are at the Visitor Center, check them out!

Do you have a favorite local artist? We're preparing a plan to exhibit local art in the auditorium of the new Visitor Center on a consignment basis. Help us pass the word or give us a call with their contact information!

Contact: Susie Kowlok at (252) 473-1132 X 226 or e-mail: Susan_Kowlok@fws.gov



"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless~"
Sherry Anderson



Environmental Education and Outreach Programs Update

“There has been a lot going on over the past four months! Manteo and First Flight Middle School sixth-grade Science Clubs have had monthly meetings to learn about wildlife on the refuges. In addition, the Kindergarten Clubs at Manteo, Kitty Hawk, and Nags Head Elementary Schools are in full swing,” reported Cindy Heffley, Visitor Services Specialist. These program are led by Cindy, interns, local volunteers and resident volunteers.

All fifth-grade students from Manteo Elementary School, as well as all eighth-grade Manteo Middle School students came to the new Visitor Center. The fifth-graders also enjoyed a scavenger hunt and tram tour at the Alligator River refuge.

Monthly Saturday tram tours continued through the fall and winter months although attendance was lower than during the summer months. We anticipate more interest than we can handle this summer!



Manteo Elementary School students enjoyed a field trip on the refuge tram and participated in scavenger hunts on the Creef Cut Trail and at the new Visitor Center. We received many positive comments about their visit.



Prescription for Nature

A new National Wildlife Refuge System initiative has reached our area. A colorful display was recently set up at the Manteo Post Office. Photos of local children enjoying the refuges were used to help promote the initiative. A brochure from all eleven refuges and the National Fish Hatchery and tear-off “prescriptions” were available at the display.

Did you know that nature is GOOD for your child’s health? Kids who play outside are less stressed and less likely to be overweight! The prescriptions list the many ways to enjoy a refuge and even include QR codes for use on smartphones!

Educators interested in planning a field trip are encouraged to contact Cindy Heffley at 252-475-4180 or Cindy_heffley@fws.gov.



Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society News

The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society is a non-profit organization established and incorporated in 1989 by a group of local citizens to provide support for Alligator River, Pea Island, and other national wildlife refuges in eastern North Carolina. The Society has three purposes: generate funds to support programs and activities, assist in the recruitment of volunteers, and provide a voice for the members of the Society at a local, state, and national level.

More information about the Society is on its web site at: <http://www.coastalwildliferefuge.com/>

Meet the 2013 Officers and Directors

PRESIDENT



Gail Dreis, newly elected President of the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society and resident of Roanoke Island, has served on the board for more than six years.

This recently-retired middle school teacher from the Dare County Schools has chaired the Transportation Grants Committee and has encouraged teachers from Dare and surrounding counties to apply for educational grants awarded by the Society. Leading by example, Dreis founded and hosted The Junior Friends of the Refuge at First Flight Middle School. The Club was expanded to include Manteo Middle and Cape Hatteras Secondary Schools in 2008. For more than seven years the club was dedicated to familiarizing students with Alligator River and Pea Island Refuges. The club hosted refuge staff who educated the youth about wildlife found at each refuge and their environments. When asked why she joined the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society, Dreis commented, "I have enjoyed paddling the waters of each refuge and walking the trails with my family. I want to make sure that children of Dare County have the opportunity to discover these unique resources for themselves and their families."

VICE PRESIDENT



Joyce Bornfriend is a retired educator and co-founder of the Frisco Native American Museum and Natural History Center. With experiences from kindergarten to post graduate level as a

teacher, counselor, principal, and superintendent, she has spent more than forty years working as an advocate for environmental education. She has served on a number of county and regional boards and is a recipient of the Governor's award for community service, the Order of the Long Leaf Pine. She worked on the original team to develop Wings Over Water and helped create the first Wildfest. She joined the CWRS board in 2007.

TREASURER

Warren Davis received a Bachelor of Science degree in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Tulsa in 1941. He worked for the Gulf Oil



Corporation from 1941 until his retirement as Chief Economist of Gulf Oil in 1982, except for three years in World War II as a Squadron Maintenance Officer in the Army Air Corps. He has done volunteer work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since 1985. His other volunteer work includes the Outer Banks Hotline, the Dare Literacy Society (tutoring), and church and town committees.

Did you know there is FUNDING available for field trips?

In an effort to assist area students in learning about wildlife and experiencing national wildlife refuges, the Society funds a grants program to pay for transportation and other costs associated with class field trips to Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges, as well as the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center. The main objective of the program is to encourage students to learn about and appreciate wildlife, habitats, and other natural resources. The application is available online:

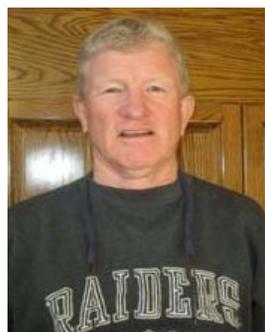
Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society-Board Members for 2013 (cont.)

Returning Board member Bob Glennon is a retired federal employee who worked for the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service for 24 years – mostly as a conservation plant specialist. He worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the refuges in northeastern North Carolina for 6 years and developed the refuges’ comprehensive conservation plans. A native of Pennsylvania, Bob holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Management from Rutgers University and a Master of Forest Resources degree from Penn State. He has volunteered on the refuges for 13 years and joined the CWRS board in 2011.



Marlene Schumm and Bob Glennon at the OBX Seafood Festival

New Board member Marlene Schumm is an avid birder who conducts bird walks at Pea Island, assists with school programs, and staffs exhibits at special events such as Wildfest and the Outer Banks Seafood Festival. Her uncle, Paul Sturm, was the manager of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge from 1947 through 1949. She visited Pea Island while he was manager and has returned every year since then. Marlene was an operating room pharmacist at Saint Mary’s Hospital in Richmond. She retired to Kill Devil Hills in 1999.



New Board member Chuck Scherck has been a resident of Elizabeth City since 2008. Chuck and his wife, Kathy, have volunteered as a part of Pea Island Turtle Watch for three seasons. Chuck holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the US Naval Academy, graduating in 1967. Following Naval service, Chuck joined State Farm Insurance in 1972 and retired after 36 years having served in a number of positions most notably as a manager for 21 years in corporate properties. He currently works part-time inspecting homes for many insurance companies in northeastern North Carolina and Virginia’s Hampton Roads.



Former Society President Stanley Oliver is a native of Creswell, North Carolina and is the “most recent” past president of CWRS. He graduated from North Carolina State University with a degree in agronomy.

Stanley worked for an agricultural chemical distributor selling to dealers and farmers, then worked for a basic manufacturer of agricultural chemical through many consolidations. He has lived all over the East Coast and in Indiana. Stanley retired here in 2005. He likes to fish, garden, and grow hybrid tea roses and is active in his church.

New board member Kenneth Wynne has been volunteering at Pea Island since 1998. He earned a Master of Education degree from the College of William and Mary, taught school in the Tidewater area of Virginia for 7 years and was a school principal in Chesterfield County, Virginia for 29 years. He retired to Kill Devil Hills in 1993.



New board member Katie Neller teaches advanced placement environmental science and advanced placement biology at First Flight High School. She also sponsors a research team in collaboration with NOAA and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

She and her students are currently monitoring 30 miles of local coastline to collect and identify toxic phytoplankton species in order to predict potential blooms. They presented papers at the IEEE International Oceans Conference in October. The group was recognized as the North Carolina Governor’s Youth Environmentalists of the Year in 2007. Katie is the elective teacher of AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) at First Flight. AVID is part of the refuge’s Climate Stewards program. AVID students volunteer at Wildfest as group leaders and staff activity stations. Katie also worked in the book store at Bodie Island Lighthouse for 2 summers.



Sea Turtle Nesting Program Report

During 2012, there were 30 sea turtle nests laid on Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge— the second highest total number of nests ever recorded. All were loggerhead sea turtles. Three of the thirty nests were lost: one to poaching and two to Hurricane Sandy. Twenty-three of the thirty nests were relocated to avoid inundation with ocean water.

There were 3,119 eggs laid, and 2,463 eggs hatched – a 79.4% hatch rate. One nest had a hatch rate of 100%, which is a rare occurrence. The average number of eggs per nest was 110.

Routinely, locations of turtle nests are reported by volunteers on “Turtle Patrol” who survey the beach for turtle ‘crawls’ throughout the nesting season. Nests are monitored by

volunteers on “Turtle Watch” during the hatching season to ensure that the hatchlings successfully make it to the ocean and are not killed or eaten by land predators.

In 2012, Turtle Patrol functioned with two separate operations because of the new inlet created by Hurricane Irene in 2011. The original shed that housed the four-wheelers was destroyed by the storm. Two sheds were built to replace it, one north of Irene Inlet and one south.

The need for volunteers increased dramatically because of the divided beach, which made it difficult/impossible for one

volunteer to patrol both the north and south sections.

If you are interested in volunteering for Turtle Patrol or Turtle Watch for the 2013 season, contact Tracey Rock (tracey_rock@fws.gov).



The Nature Conservancy’s Climate Change Adaptation Project on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge continues along the eastern shoreline of the refuge between Manns Harbor and Stumpy Point.

Efforts to restore the hydrology of drained wetlands impacted by salt water intrusion are continuing to

Climate Change Project

protect wetlands along 11 miles of shoreline. In addition, constructed oyster reefs are reducing shoreline erosion at the project demonstration site.

In November, TNC hired Christine Pickens as a Coastal Restoration and Adaptation Specialist. She will serve as the new Climate Adaptation project director. Christine completed her PhD dissertation research at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 2012 where she investigated the influence of climate change on a salt marsh-mangrove plant community. In practice, Christine uses plant ecology to improve restoration practices for barrier islands and wetlands. Currently, Christine is assessing

restoration strategy effectiveness and preparing to expand the project and strategies used.

The results of the project will guide efforts in other areas of the coast to mitigate the effects of climate change. Information on the project can be found by going to The Nature Conservancy’s web site at www.nature.org and following the links to the North Carolina Chapter home page.

Volunteers for all aspects of these projects are always needed. Interested parties should contact Kate Murray at kmurray@tnc.org.

News and Notes

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Reopens



The north end of the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge was reopened on December 2 after the North Carolina Department of Transportation cleared the sand from the right-of-way and repaired the pavement on North Carolina Highway 12 that was damaged by Hurricane Sandy. The Visitor Center is now open every day, and bird walks are being conducted on Friday mornings through the winter.

Do You Have A Cell Phone?



Coming soon, there will be added interpretation to both the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center and walking trails and Wildlife Drive on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Using technology by On-Cell, visitors with smart phones may scan a QR code for a short audio-visual presentation at each stop. For the less “technologically advanced” (those of us who still use simple flip phones), there will be a toll free number to call for an audio message. Try out On-Cell by scanning the QR code above. Or call (252) 564-3105 (Stop 2) to hear the message! The system should be up and running at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center by April 1 and on the refuge by May 1. Plan a spring or summer day to bring your family and take your own personalized tours!

Fire Manager Tom Crews Retires

Tom Crews, “the original” as he liked to joke, retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after 18 years as the District Fire Management Officer for District 1, Southeast Region. In total, Tom had 35 years of service with the federal government. His dedication and passion for fire management and his employees will be missed.

Tom graduated from NC State University in 1975 before going to work for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in Utah. After a brief stint with private industry from 1978 to 1980, Tom returned to the USFS as a forester on the Croatan National Forest. Tom moved around between national forests in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Mississippi before switching agencies and settling in Manteo in 1995. Tom spent the next several years growing the fire management program on eastern NC’s national wildlife refuges and learning to prescribe burn in pocosins. Good communications and cooperation with our local fire management cooperators is another legacy Tom leaves with the refuge program.

We hosted a retirement party for Tom on January 25 that was well attended despite the



Tom Crews (third from left in back) with many of the fire crew and local partners during his retirement celebration.

weather. We managed to find a few old photos and embarrassing stories to share to send him off in good fashion. Tom has retired in Manteo, so he remains a close, knowledgeable resource for the refuge fire program.

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Friends of Alligator River and Pea Island
National Wildlife Refuges



The Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Looking Ahead (January—March 2013 ... and beyond)

- Pea Island Refuge
Guided bird walks Fridays at 8AM
- Alligator River Refuge
Tram tours Feb. 9, March 9, April 13
9AM—Noon
- National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center
Pre-school Programs
Feb. 22 (other dates to be added)
Times to be determined.

Contact Cindy at 252-475-4180 for more information.

Your input is welcome! We have a wonderful new facility on Roanoke Island and hope to draw hundreds of thousands of visitors, as well as local residents. What would you like to see offered?

Help us out!

- **Bring your friends and families to the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center**
- **Identify new items to sell the gift shops**
- **Join our volunteer work force**
- **Help us recruit more volunteers**
- **Tell us your ideas for programs we can offer at the new Visitor Center**
- **Think of workshops or camp-type events to consider, like “build a rain barrel”, plant a butterfly garden”, or “start a worm farm”.**