

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

Volunteer Newsletter

March 2014

What's New?

NEW FACES! We have had several new volunteers sign on to work with us at the Refuge! They come from diverse backgrounds and bring some great skill sets. We are delighted to extend a warm welcome to **Janet Anderson**, Environmental Education (EE) volunteer from Vermont; **Amanda Taylor-Townsend**, EE volunteer and Master's program graduate from USU; **Justin Lofthouse**, EE volunteer and Bachelor's candidate in Natural Resources from USU; **Craig Stewart**, retired program director at the Utah Workforce Services; **Josh Leiter**, Utah Workforce Services; and **Monica Fuit**, also a Bachelor's candidate in Natural Resources from USU.

BIG REMINDER! All volunteers who interact with the public, whether it be at the Front Desk or assisting with events, are required to attend the safety training this month. Sign up for either Tuesday, the 18th or Saturday the 22nd is at the front desk or call Kathi. Details below.



From Left to Right: Janet Anderson, Craig Stewart, and Justin Lofthouse



Thumbs-Up!

THANKS TO YOU, our wonderful Volunteers, our Swan Day was hugely successful! We had a high number of visitors ever in attendance and you managed it beautifully. As the Refuge events become more popular, we heavily rely on our volunteers to warmly welcome and assist our visitors during these busy events. It simply would not be possible without you! A big kudos to SCA Charlotte who tirelessly pulled off the endless details to ensure we were ready to open our doors to Swan lovers. Thank you and hugs to all of the volunteers who assisted for both Bald Eagle Day and Swan Day. **WE APPRECIATE YOU!!**

Refuge Roundup

Spring is "springing" on the Refuge! Thanks to the warmer weather, all of the ice has melted away and we are wide open. There have been several sightings of "our" birds who are returning to the Refuge including Killdeer, American pelicans, Sandhill cranes, Double-crested cormorants, Yellow-headed blackbirds, and Greater yellow-legs. If you've been out on the Refuge, you no doubt have seen the very vocal Canada goose pairs getting ready to nest. Waterfowl and raptor species have been observed exhibiting courtship behavior. Red-winged blackbirds and Western meadowlarks are filling the air with beautiful music. And, what's more, BUGS are in the air and with that, swallows are buzzing outside the Wildlife Education Center looking for the perfect place to call home.

Invasive Phragmites management update: We have been using an integrated methods approach to fight the quickly spreading phragmites that has taken over many of our units. In the past we have grazed, mowed, and sprayed patches of it using backpack sprayers or amphibious tractors. This month we are planning to burn Unit 9 if conditions are optimal, and we are proposing to use aerial spray on it later this year. An Environmental Assessment for aerial spraying can be found on our website and is open to public comment until April 11.

To find out what else is going on at the Refuge, follow us on Twitter and Facebook!
(www.twitter.com/USFWSBearRiver and www.facebook.com/bear-river-migratory-bird-refuge)

YCC again coming to Bear River Refuge! Bear River will hire six youth this summer for an eight-week term, June 16th to August 8th. The YCC crew will work on a wide variety of outdoor projects including trail maintenance, wildlife surveys, pulling fence, and invasive plant control. The job is an excellent kick-start to any youth's resumé, and while the work can be demanding, it is extremely rewarding. Applications are due April 12th and are available at the front desk, by emailing Katie, YCC coordinator, at katie_mcvey@fws.gov, or Refuge website <http://www.fws.gov/nwrs/threecolumnn.aspx?id=2147508820>



Upcoming Events and Volunteer Opportunities

❖ **March 18 & March 22: Volunteer Safety Training**

Because we have had such great attendance at our event days this year, we will be hosting Volunteer Safety Training. Led by Greg Mullin, Law Enforcement Officer, the session will cover managing large crowds as well as CPR/AED/First Aid requirements. Volunteers are required to attend if working with the public. Please plan to attend either Tuesday, March 18th or Saturday, March 22nd. Bring your own lunches, snacks, and water bottles please.

8:30 – 10:30 General Preparedness Training

11:00 – 4:30 CPR, AED, First Aid

❖ **March 27 – May 19: Mountain Wilds to Wetland Wonders Field Trips**

Fourth grade students from Box Elder County School District and other districts will start coming to the refuge for their annual field trips on March 27. These field trips to the Refuge are part of the Utah fourth grade curriculum and everyone looks forward to them every year! We are excited to kick off field trip season, and are grateful for our EE volunteers helping out this year!



❖ **April 12: Sense of Wonder EARTH DAY Celebration!**

In celebration of Earth Day and Rachel Carson's enduring spirit and work, we will host "Sense of Wonder" Day, Saturday April 12! Building on our success from last year, plans for this event have begun and we hope to add many more amazing stations along the Wetland Walk – providing an educational and entertaining exploration for all ages! Filled with games, crafts and outdoor activities, "Sense of Wonder" Day will have many opportunities for volunteer help, so let Kathi or Charlotte know if you'd like to join in all the fun.

Mark Your Calendars and Save the Dates!

- **Mar. 15: Jr. Duck Stamp entry deadline**
- **Mar. 18 & 22: Annual Volunteer Safety Training**
- **Mar. 25: Jr. Duck Stamp Judging**
- **Mar. 27: Spring Wetland Wonders field trips begin!**
- **Apr. 12: Sense of Wonder / Earth Day!**
 - **YCC Applications DUE**
- **May 10: Jr. Duck Stamp Awards**
- **May 15 – 19: Great Salt Lake Bird Festival**



AVOCET CORNER BOOKSTORE

Exciting news! Junior Ranger backpacks are now for sale! Tracy has designed Junior Ranger backpacks that you can either pack with goodies yourself, or buy one that is pre-packed for you. Items include nets, identification guides, and a magnifying glass. Such a smart idea, Tracy!