

Volunteer Newsletter

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

Photo Courtesy Robert Allen



November 2015

Story time at Creepy Critter Encounters

Don't Miss These Volunteer Opportunities Volunteers especially needed for: **Maintenance Crew** (remove invasive Russian olive trees so visiting school groups can access the Upper Dam marsh), **Sagebrush Restoration** (place mesh guards over sagebrush seedlings and plant milkweed seeds), and **Winter Day Camp** (be a helper, co-lead, or take photos). See next page for more info.

Cheers!

Congratulations and thank you to this year's Refuge Volunteer of the Year: Rachel Staats. Rachel has served over 400 hours since 2011. She is a monthly Saturday Visitor Center host and frequently serves in her secret identity, "Puddles" the blue goose, at Refuge events. After volunteering several years to fill bird feeders in the winter, Rachel is taking the lead in coordinating bird feeding volunteers this year.

Other nominees who went "above and beyond to deliver consistent, reliable, dedicated volunteer service" were Bob Christensen, Steve Crouse, Norm Mitts, and Bob Ruesink.

Thanks to the nearly 40 Creepy Critters volunteers for their enthusiasm about connecting people to nature. Over 450 people attended and all of them left with smiles! Thank you – this event would have been impossible without your efforts.

What's New?

Take appropriate safety precautions while hunting season continues at the Refuge. Also, keep your dogs and children away from the lake water while the toxic algal bloom warning remains in effect.

Around the water cooler...

Autumn brings with it a change in Americorps staff. Welcome to Mia Callahan, the new Environmental Educator, and Wendy Irwin, the new Volunteer

Coordinator. Both will be on board through August.

Meanwhile, Kacey Kai is preparing to leave Deer Flat after 2 years as the Environmental Educator (and sometimes Volunteer Coordinator). Kacey has been a great asset and she will be very much missed. Thank you and best of luck in your future adventures!



Rachel Staats receiving the 2015 Volunteer of the Year Award

Photo USFWS/Mia Callahan



Upcoming Events *Unless otherwise stated, events take place at the Visitor Center*

Reading at the Refuge

Monday Nov. 16, Dec. 7 & 21 at 10am and repeating at 2pm

Preschool children and their parents are invited to a free wildlife-focused story hour.



Previous winter day camp participants visiting the viewing blind along the Nature Trail.

Photo USFWS

Hibernate, Migrate, or Insulate: A Wildlife Winter Survival Guide—

Tues., Dec. 29 – Wed., Dec. 30 from 1-4 pm Do squirrels have sleeping bags? Do bears have space heaters? Do geese eat at restaurants? Then how do they survive the challenges of winter? Second to fourth graders must pre-register for this fun winter day camp.

Don't-Miss Volunteer Opportunities!

Maintenance Crew— Nov. 13, 18, 20, and 25, 7:45-12:00 Help the volunteer maintenance crew remove Russian olive plants from the marsh by the Visitor Center. Longer-term maintenance volunteers are also needed.

Winter Day Camp— Tues. Dec 29- Wed. Dec. 30, noon-4:30 PM Winter day camp is always fun, but we need help making it happen! We need volunteers to help 1) **co-lead** by teaching 2nd-4th graders about the challenges of survival in winter, 2) **chaperone students** throughout the day and help with activities, and 3) **take photographs**. No experience necessary; training is provided.

Restoration Work — ASAP Help monarch conservation and vegetation restoration efforts by planting milkweed seeds in the new restoration plots behind the Visitor Center. Place mesh guards over sagebrush seedlings to help protect them from the cold and from grazing animals.

Other Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Monthly Vehicle Check — Mid-November Help maintain Refuge vehicles by checking fluids, vacuuming, and dusting once per month. Training provided but basic understanding of car maintenance preferred.

Reading at the Refuge — 1st & 3rd Mondays (10 am and 2 pm) Help connect youngsters to nature. We are seeking volunteers to select and acquire story books, prepare wildlife-oriented crafts, and lead the event.

Visitor Center Host — Saturdays all year, 10-4 PM

Volunteers help keep the Visitor Center open on **Saturdays**. If you enjoy interacting with people and sharing wildlife stories with visitors, this might be the opportunity for you! Training is provided. **Deadline to Register: Sign up before December 10th to get on the January-March schedule.**

Volunteer Program Assistant — 4-16 hours/week

Help improve the Refuge Volunteer Program and make it more sustainable by doing some or all of the following: recruiting, orienting, and training new volunteers; coordinating ongoing opportunities; and leading projects. Contact us for more information.

Other Opportunities to Help

Bucket Donations Needed

The Refuge is in need of 5-gallon buckets for various projects. Do you have some to donate? Or know a person or business that might have extras? Please send them our way!

Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge



The Friends of Deer Flat is a non-profit organization that supports Refuge activities. Friends memberships start at \$10 and are tax deductible. Email friendsofdfr@gmail.com for more info.

To sign up or find out more, contact Wendy Irwin at deerflat@fws.gov (208)-467-9278