



The Pileated Post

Quarterly Newsletter Friends of the Little Pend Oreille NWR

Winter 2010

[http:// www.refugefriends.com](http://www.refugefriends.com)

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Refuge Manager's Notes

Winter has wasted no time supplying us with snow this week. Bitter cold temperatures, now 9 inches of snow according to the snow gauge outside my office window, tells us in no uncertain terms that winter is upon us!

Fall is my favorite time of the year. Maybe it's just my increasingly selective memory at work, but I thought last fall was glorious! I recall golden-leaved aspen and autumn-blond larch trees, with sunny days that had me pining away for the outdoors while sitting chained to my desk. And what about those fungi! I don't know what caused it, but I can't recall ever seeing so many varieties or such a palette of subtle hues. I credit Jim Groth with raising my awareness of the varieties of fungi we live amongst, but it was in my memory an outstanding display.

Our fire crew worked hard on rehabilitation after the Slide Creek fire. They spent many days rehabilitating the dozer line that necessary while the fire was being controlled. The bare, disturbed soil was raked over with forest floor debris and native grass seed dispersed. We were also funded to reclaim the more severely burned portions of the refuge. Native grass seed was spread over some of that area until wet conditions made it impractical to continue. We'll resume seeding in early spring, hopefully in time for that newly applied seed to germinate as the soil warms. There are also survey markers and boundary fencing to construct as we replace the infrastructure lost to the fire.

The fence removal contractors worked through much of October and succeeded in eradicating almost all the old fence on the refuge west of headquarters. About fourteen miles of the almost twenty

-two miles on the contract has been eliminated. They'll be returning in April to finish the job.

Hunting seasons are winding down on the refuge with only the die-hard archery deer hunters left in the deepening snow. The grouse harvest seemed to be down again this year, as was the deer harvest. In spite of the extremely mild winter last year, the deer population has yet to rebound from the two previously harsh winters. Hunters reported low numbers of deer seen and fewer bucks harvested. However, there are always a few skilled and or lucky hunters who bag some truly outstanding deer, and this year was no exception.

Thanks to the Friends for building the magnificent wildlife observation blind on McDowell Marsh. That's how a project needs to happen! Many hands working several days had that project done in less than a week. A few finishing touches will wait until the spring thaw, but it's essentially open for business.

Our annual refuge winter bird count is scheduled for Wednesday, January 5th. As always, members of the refuge Friends group are encouraged to join us for our annual foray into the lives of our wintering birds. We plan to congregate at refuge headquarters at 8:45 for trip planning, then venture into refuge winter for a few hours. Soup's ready by about noon as birders return to compare sightings and tell tales of adventure. This is shaping up to be a snowy count, so there should be opportunity for cross-country skiers and snowshoers to ply their hobby. Birding skills are not necessary, just a desire to tramp through the snow and enjoy the refuge with dressed in its winter garb.

Jerry Cline, Refuge Manager

Fall Wildlife 2010

The staff must be really busy because I have not received many wildlife reports. I injured my knee the beginning of August and have not been taking my daily lunch break walks or seeing much from my office window. I never did see the sow black bear that always came in to eat the apples from the trees by the Headquarters pond. She had 3 cubs with her every year. We suppose a hunter got her.

Since my last report, there were a few moose sightings on Blacktail Mountain Road and off Rookery Road. Visitors from Switzerland were biking past the McDowell Overlook and were able to take some great photos of a bobcat up a tree. They were thrilled since they had never seen a bobcat before. Two cougars were seen together on Bear Creek Road and a yearling black bear was on Blacktail Mountain Road.

A fly fishing club from Spokane came up to work on the spawning stream that runs from Potter's Pond to Bayley Lake. They were unsuccessful due to 3 beaver dams and a beaver lodge on that stream. It was decided not to disturb the beavers and let them overwinter in the lodge.

Interesting bird sightings were a Barred Owl on Webking Road late October and 40-50 Clark's Nutcrackers feeding on pine nuts around the Fire Cache in early November. There have been many reports of Clark's Nutcrackers in the area.

If you enjoy looking at birds, you are invited to join us for the annual Colville Christmas Bird Count. It will be held on December 18. We will meet at Del Sol restaurant (formerly Park Place) at 6:45 am for breakfast or 7:15 am to get organized for the count. For more information you can call me at the Refuge at 509-684-8384. Hope you can come!

I got a phone call from a woman in Rice who was concerned since she did not have any birds at her feeders. My feeders at home have been neglected since our dog had 10 puppies, so the lack of birds has not surprised me. Has anyone else noticed fewer birds at their feeders? If so, have you heard any reasons for it? *[Editor's note: My feeders have the usual nuthatches and chickadees in good numbers, as well as goldfinches, juncos and a few song spar-*

rows. In some falls, the birds will ignore feeders before snow cover as they apparently have enough to eat elsewhere.

This short report shows me how much I have been missing since I am not walking every day. I need to rehab my knee and get back out there. The most popular modern firearm seasons are over and all hunting on the Refuge will end December 31. Starting January 1 the Refuge gates will be closed; then it is walk in only access (as well as skis or snow shoes). I can't wait for the snow to cover the ground so I can go out tracking and see what mammals have been where. Winter is a great season to visit the Refuge.

Barbara Harding, Refuge Staff



Steve Rumsey, 1953-2010

The Friends, and our community, lost a valued colleague in late October. Steve Rumsey died of complications from cancer. Not only was he an active member of the Friends, he was also a force in educating all of us, whether it be students in his English classes or readers of the publications he edited, especially the North Columbia Monthly. Steve and his wife, Karla, edited this periodical for many years, and it reflects their values and style. This publication is unusual in that it is one of the only local magazines that contains articles and opinions grounded in science and objective history. I always look forward to the interesting and informative articles in the NCM and it has been the best source for finding out about upcoming events in the area, es-

pecially those relating to non-exploitative outdoor activities. The periodical is also unusual in that it welcomes Canadian content—information about history, geography and our friends in adjacent BC would be nearly nonexistent without the NCM..

Steve's involvement with the Friends was raised a notch when, in 2005, he was elected to the Board of Directors. Among his many activities, he took part in trail and boardwalk building on the McMeet Trail (see photo), was a lead organizer for our first family birdhouse-building event, and he contributed an opinion article to the Pileated Post (if you knew Steve you would not be surprised that he had opinions.) During his three years on the Board he also served as our public relations director, where he was able to put many of his talents to good use. He handled the PR for my first Friends spring mushroom foray on the Refuge (which he also attended) and his effectiveness was incredible—we had twice as many people requesting participation as we could handle!

To honor and remember Steve, we will be installing an engraved, memorial bench along one of the trails on the Refuge. Details are yet to be worked out.

Jim Groth, Editor

Introducing Two New Board Members

Two individuals have been elected and have agreed to serve on the Board of Directors, replacing members who stepped down this fall.

Daniel Price

For a little background on myself: I was born in Pullman Washington and have spent the majority for my life in Eastern Washington. I have a Political Science degree from WWU along with some studies in Environmental Science. I am an avid backpacker and camper and spend a lot of time exploring the wilderness of Washington and Idaho. Also in the cooler months I enjoy exploring the scablands of eastern and central Washington.

Over the past few years I have spent a great deal of time at the LPO and in the last year have become more involved in volunteering at the refuge, in such

activities as work on the McMEET trail (Basalt columns were so much fun!) and the winter bird count, and I would like to become even more involved..

Rick Moore has helped me to get to know the staff at the refuge and has been a big help in letting me know what future work needs to be done. With myself, Rick, Joel, and other members I would like to get more people interested in volunteering.

As a Friends board member my goals are to help in organizing more volunteer work groups and to further the public knowledge and interest in the LPO. I would like to help find ways to get the public even more interested in the refuge and to get more people out to the LPO. I am glad to see that in my time at the refuge this year there seems to be more people visiting and would like to help continue this trend.

Janice Berube

My residences have been on the West Coast: California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Our current home is outside of Kettle Falls overlooking Lake Roosevelt.

I recently retired from the Colville NF after a 25 yr. career as a forestry technician and cartographer. I graduated from North Idaho College in 1979.

Jay, my husband, and I were fortunate to both be employed by the FS over the years. Jay retired in 2003 as a Forest Ecologist for the CNF.

We have 2 children: Paul 28 yrs. old and Tara 26 yrs. old. They both live and work in Bellingham, WA.

Outdoor activities I enjoy are sailing, kayaking, biking, hiking, skiing, bird watching, gardening, and supporting the farmers market. Fiber arts are also a favorite pastime including spinning, weaving, knitting and basketry.

Two Winter Events to Note

If you need to get out of the house this winter, we have two excuses.

1. Refuge Bird Count. January 5, 8:45 at Refuge Headquarters. See parts of the refuge you have not seen, and at a most unusual time of year. Birding experience not necessary—we will pair you with experienced people, and with staff who drive big trucks and can open locked gates. A Half-day event culminating in a nice hot soup lunch.
2. January Board Meeting and planning session. All members are invited to this Saturday meeting to contribute ideas about the upcoming year and beyond. Meet at Jim and Jo Ann Groth's home on January 29, about 9:30 AM, 858 Lindsay Road (in the North Basin up Orin Rice Road). Pot Luck lunch followed by optional local x/c skiing/snowshoeing.

2010 Friends of the LPO Photo Contest Winners

The Friends of the Little Pend Oreille Wildlife Refuge are excited to announce the winners of their annual photo contest. This year there were 65 photos entered in four categories by 15 photographers. Each year the overall quality of the photographs has improved, making judging more difficult.

The four winners (in order below) are as follows:

People: "No Moose Today!" by John Mathot of Los Angeles.

Animals: "Butterfly on Purple" by Christine Tidwell of Colville.

Plants: "Beauty Unexpected" by Jody Johnson of Colville.

Scenic: "Black Locust" by Jim Peterson of Colville.

We wish to thank our judge, Scott Price, and the local merchants who contributed prizes this year: Clarks All-Sports, Dodson's Paint and Glass, Picture Perfect Custom Framing, and Stephani's Oak Street Grill.

Interested photographers are encouraged to enter next year's contest which began on August 16th and will run until August 15, 2011. For information contact Joel Anderson at janderson@ultraplix.com.



