



## Spring 2021 Newsletter

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### **President's Corner**

It is almost the spring of a new year and while we still struggle with the pandemic's impacts, we hope that 2021 will bring a return of things that brighten our days. For me, it is the return of the spring migrant birds with their brilliantly colored breeding plumage, wildflowers in bloom, and the emerging bright green buds of our trees and shrubs in the forests surrounding Willapa Bay. While we don't yet know what the lingering impacts of the pandemic will bring to our activities this year, we can count on the solace of our natural world to help us through.

The changing of seasons has also brought changes to the Friends organization. Two of our dedicated volunteer board members, Kathy Freitas and Diane Fuller have stepped down from the board. While they will still be involved with Friends activities, they are taking time to enjoy family, friends, and time outdoors. Their help in supporting the efforts of our Refuge has been invaluable. Their vacancies also provide us with opportunities to continue their legacy. Currently at only five members, there is much work to be done and we certainly could benefit from a greater diversity of individual perspectives and experiences.

Another change is the newsletter's format. Information is organized into several topics, calling attention to things that will interest you. The President's Corner remains as the go-to place for highlighting what's new in the Friend's world. The Refuge Update will highlight the activities and issues that are of importance to the management of the refuge resources. We will also be presenting a Feature Article this month authored by board member David

presenting a Feature Article, this month authored by board member David Campiche. This section will highlight the new season, and the wildlife-oriented opportunities it offers. There is no better place than Leadbetter Point to highlight in our spring issue where you can enjoy the waterfowl and shorebirds passing our shores.

In our Pics and Poets section, you are invited to share with us some of your wildlife, wildlands, and refuge-centric inspirations. We will select a few to share with our newsletter readers, while other submissions might be posted to our website or other social media platforms. So send in your creative thoughts and images and join us in celebrating our natural world.

EcoSense is a new feature of the newsletter and will highlight ecologically important activities and ideas that help us all to maintain a sustainable world. You might see topics on recycling or invasive species control. Or maybe even just some inspired thoughts from motivational speakers or environmental leaders about our natural world.

There are two topics, Volunteer Opportunities and Donation Opportunities, which are the life blood of our organization. Without volunteers, both the Friends and the Refuge could not carry out our important work. In years past we have organized and you have participated in trash cleanups, trail maintenance, native plant plantings, and events such as Wings Over Willapa and Willapa On Tap. While pandemic restrictions remain in place and limit our ability to gather for public events, there are still opportunities for you to be involved.



Donation Opportunities will highlight our basic needs as an organization and also our special projects. We will most likely be limited again this year in our activities and abilities to gather socially and host fundraising and educational programs, but we still need to maintain the needs of the organization.

Board members are volunteers and are by definition, unpaid staff. But there is still the fiscal need for ongoing organization needs, such as tax and accountant expertise, insurance postage and printing supplies, and website hosting and membership software [which by the way, has switched over to a new and improved system. We like it and hope you do too! So please keep your memberships current and donations coming. We appreciate all that you can do!

So there you have it: Our spring edition of the newsletter. Hope you enjoy it and hope to see you all out on the trails and waters soon!

*By Charles Pelizza*

Submissions for Pics and Poets

## Refuge Update

### New Park Ranger

Lauren Harre is the Refuge's new Visitor Services Manager and Park Ranger. She has worked at several Refuges and Parks, including Kodiak and National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuges and the Blue Ridge Parkway and Kings Canyon National Parks. Hired in November, Lauren is excited to start a new career in Washington. She has many roles, including managing volunteers and refuge visitor publications, and hopefully talking to and educating the many visitors to the refuge! She is looking forward to the summer season with more visitors and the beautiful weather she has heard so much about, and looks forward to working with the Friends to promote visitor access and enjoyment of the Refuge.

### New Refuge Headquarters

The new Refuge Headquarters at 7112 67<sup>th</sup> Place in Long Beach is currently only open for staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Visitors are invited to walk around the building and admire the architecture, the native plant landscaping, and views of the Bay. The Headquarters may be open to visitors later this year depending on the guidance from the Fish & Wildlife and Service.

Hikers can access a new trailhead that sits next to the Headquarters' lower parking area. The trailhead leads to the South Bay Trail and offers a diversity of landscapes. Refuge staff are working on opening some brand new trails in this area in the coming year.

## Trail News

As of this writing, the Cutthroat Trail, accessed at the old Refuge Headquarters on Highway 101, is closed due to falling trees. For trail updates, visit the Refuge website <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Willapa/about.html>. All other trails are open for use.

According to federal rules, facemasks are required in all federal buildings. If you cannot maintain a safe distance between yourself and other groups, please use a mask on Refuge trails.

You will see bright new signs on many Refuge trails. These signs emphasize the many uses of the trails and remind visitors of prohibited uses.

*By Karen Strege*



## A Passport to Happiness:

### Leadbetter Point State Park and the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

The vastness of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge and Leadbetter Point State Park—this expanse of big sky set against the smallness of three wee figures, friends, rambling through short winter grasses, sedges, and marooned eel grass—offers hikers a rare opportunity. The hike along the bay at Leadbetter Point is my favorite in Pacific County.

We amble up a stretch of sandy shore, heading north along Willapa Bay, a bay once called the Shoalwater, or before that, by the Tsinuk (Chinook): the Wilapah.

We spot a photographer, Ken, with a telescopic camera photographing sandpipers. I certainly cannot identify all of them, even up close. The photographer has an advantage called the camera's eye. But then, *his* human eye is mighty good, too.

"Peeps," one of my friends pronounces.

"Peeps," I say?

"Yes, sandpipers, probably Western Sandpipers. Maybe Greater or Lesser Yellow Legs."

"Yes," agrees, Ken, and then points to another species.

"Dunlin."

Heck! Growing up we called all of them, "snipes." So much for my contribution!

As Ken zeroes in his lenses, I offer an apology.

"Sorry, to interrupt. I probably scared your birds away."

"No problem," he says, "This is my joy. Just being out here."

And that said, says it all.

*By David Campiche*

## Pics and Poets

### Moon Creek

Traipsing through rich evergreen boughs  
Kwa Gulth moon scrambles between quick-silver rain  
Each drop prancing  
Like horse hooves on cobblestones

Leaves bend down  
And winter breezes linger on our fingertips  
You touch them to my lips

I hear the soft-speak of river song  
Or is it  
That little brown bird  
With a black crest  
On its tiny feathered breast

Entertaining me, this troubadour  
Playing a wind sonnet like a liberated harpsicord  
As moonglow dapples the sweet  
Flowing waters of Moon Creek

Dances through watercress and wild celery  
Late, late

Moonglow will soon kiss your eyelids  
Sleeping Beauty

*By David Campiche*

## Willapa Nature Notes

Our weekly radio program, [Willapa Nature Notes](#), is entering its fourth year of bringing our wildlife refuge to the world. Listen to it every Tuesday morning at 8:42 AM and Saturdays at 1:00 PM on the radio at 91.9 FM, on your smartphone using the Tune-in app, and online at <https://coastradio.org/>. Our catalog of previous broadcasts can be [found here](#). Is there anything special you would like to hear on the program? Interested in writing a two-minute show? Contact the producer, Bob Duke, at [beachduke@gmail.com](mailto:beachduke@gmail.com).

*By Bob Duke*



## Volunteer Opportunities

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex is looking for volunteers for 2021! Volunteers can work as individuals or in groups if they are from the same household or "bubble" and willing and able to participate in safety mitigation efforts for the COVID-19 virus, such as the wearing of face coverings on public lands and proper social distancing from unrelated volunteers, visitors, and staff. Each volunteer opportunity is different and may require varying skill and fitness levels. Some volunteer opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Photography of refuge lands and wildlife
- Writing (monthly "Nature Notes" series for local radio)
- Trash and litter cleanups
- Trail maintenance/ "Adopt a Trail" program
- Plantings
- Invasive Species Removal Work Parties
- Biological monitoring (waterbird surveys, etc.)
- Visitor Education and Trail Roving (COVID-dependent)

Contact the Visitor Services Manager at [lauren\\_harre@fws.gov](mailto:lauren_harre@fws.gov) if you are interested in these volunteer opportunities or would like to learn more.

*By Lauren Harre*

Volunteer!

## Donation Opportunities

There are many opportunities for you to help the Friends organization and the Refuge. Here is a list of the most pressing needs. And don't forget, your memberships help us make it through. If you are a member, great! If you are not, please hit the link below and join us!

### Scholarship Fund

Each year we offer a scholarship to a local graduating high school student who is interested in continuing a natural resource education. While we have an endowment that covers some of the scholarship, additional funds are always needed and welcome. This year's scholarship amount is set at \$1,500.

## Refuge Headquarters Rendezvous Trailhead Site Development

We are currently soliciting donations to develop a public interpretative, picnic area, and trailhead site at the new headquarters. Currently, the site is undeveloped and overlooks Willapa Bay. Funds will be used for interpretative signs, picnic tables, landscaping, and improving the site for ADA access. We anticipate a need of \$5,000 in donations. We will seek to match this amount with various grants as well as in-kind support from the Refuge.

*By Karen Strege*

[Donate/Join today!](#)

*Trailhead project at Refuge Headquarters*



## EcoSense

One of the big bugaboos in conservation is the problem of invasive species. The US is plagued by hundreds of non-native animals and plants that aggressively out-compete native species. Because each ecosystem evolved over thousands of years, native species developed complex interrelationships. Adding non-native species upends this balance and causes serious problems throughout the entire system.

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge has been proactively removing invasive species for years. The Refuge combatted spartina grasses in Willapa Bay, Scotch broom on Leadbetter Point, and English ivy and holly at the South Bay Unit. Staff and volunteers worked numerous hours to remove these species and replant native ones to initiate balance.

While restoration cannot reverse every effect of human activity, the efforts of the Refuge, the Friends, and other volunteers give Willapa native species a chance to thrive.

*By Rebecca Lexa*

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