



FRIENDS OF MALHEUR

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Malheur Musings - December 2018



Mule deer with a snow-covered Steens Mountain as backdrop
Photo by Peter Pearsall

Director's Message

The Refuge lays quietly beneath a cool fog that will melt away under the bright morning sun for a short, quiet day before we watch the sun set a little quicker each evening over the ridges to the west. Winter in the sagebrush steppe is stunning and she is slowly showing herself through the morning's frosted fence lines and accumulating snow on Steens Mountain. I love this time of year and feel blessed to be learning this place, my new home, through the changing seasons.

Less than two months have passed since I took up my position as the Executive Director for the Friends of Malheur. It might seem that with autumn would come a state of torpor or rest. Closing the Crane's Nest Nature Store for the season and carrying on with all the normal minutia of our day-to-day operations. This would be a façade. Much

like in nature, winter brings unexpected opportunities. For me, I have been surprised by and immersed in the chance to have deep meaningful conversations with folks, like you, who know and care deeply about Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. In an effort to gain an understanding of the heart and soul of the Friends I have been speaking with our Board members, community members, Refuge staff, and partners, but most importantly with our members.

Behind every Membership and donation there is a memory, a feeling, a connection to this landscape, its inhabitants and its rich history. Your memories. Your feelings. Your connections. These are simultaneously deeply personal and universally understood by those who share in them. Through #GivingTuesday and the time that has followed I have been touched by your stories of childhood time spent in Harney County or the deep sorrow you experienced personally during and after the 2016 Occupation. These feelings that drive you to be a Friend, similarly drive the work the Friends have done and will accomplish going forward in support of the Refuge.

Your support and engagement through financial contribution, volunteering and spreading our message are invaluable. It is my hope that we meet your expectations through our service to the Refuge. In 2019, the Friends of MNWR will turn 20 years old. This birthday is cause for reflection, celebration and continued action.

Thank you for being a Friend.

Janelle L. Wicks, FOMR Director



Winter Hours at Malheur HQ

The Visitor Center is open weekdays, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

The Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store is closed for the season
and will reopen March 1, 2019

**Looking for Gifts from Malheur?
Get in Touch!**

This holiday season, FOMR is excited to announce that we will be shipping small gift orders from the Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store! We are currently able to ship long-sleeve shirts, ball caps, and mugs. If you're interested in purchasing any of these items for a friend or family member in the coming weeks, please contact us at friends@malheurfriends.org to inquire about styles, availability and price.



Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store
Photo by FOMR volunteer Kay Steele

Winter Wildlife at Malheur Refuge

Essay by Noah Strycker

In the high desert, winter draws back the curtain, unmasking the actors, and simplifies the plot lines. Nests from previous seasons reveal themselves after the leaves drop, reminders of birds that have since flown thousands of miles to warmer climes.

But minimalism is itself a virtue, and the cold months at Malheur present a chance to set aside the usual distractions. When a landscape is laid bare, so, too, is the life within it. [Read more here.](#)



Winter at Malheur Refuge
Photo by USFWS

Short-eared Owls

The low-flying short-eared owl frequents open areas such as the marshes and agricultural fields of Harney County, preying on rodents and other small animals. While most active at dawn and dusk, short-eared owls occasionally hunt during the day, particularly in winter and under cloudy skies. [Learn more about these distinctive owls here.](#)



Short-eared owl
Photo by Peter Pearsall

The Kinglet's Golden Rule

Kinglets in winter are a marvelous sight, their movements frenetic, flighty, and all too fleeting. They are industrious while others lie torpid, fluttering about in their desperate search for calories and warmth.

Tiny golden-crowned kinglets, common autumn migrants and occasional winter residents at Malheur Refuge, are thermodynamic wonders...[Read more here.](#)



Golden-crowned kinglet
Photo by Peter Pearsall

Volunteers in Action!



FOMR members and volunteers lead a birding tour at Refuge HQ
Photo by FOMR volunteer Kay Steele

As a member-supported non-profit organization, Friends of Malheur Refuge depends on donations of both time and money to fulfill our mission. Volunteers are an integral component of this Friends group, providing Malheur Refuge with much-needed support at Headquarters and beyond.

Do you enjoy spending time in the high-desert expanses of Malheur Refuge? Are you interested in improving Refuge habitat, monitoring wildlife populations, or providing interpretive services to visitors? Volunteers with FOMR do all that and much more.

Residential volunteers with Friends of Malheur Refuge are able to park their camper at the newly renovated RV hook-ups with access to a volunteer lounge, kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities. We require a month-long commitment of 24 hours per week. Our volunteers come away from their service with indelible memories, a renewed passion for Malheur Refuge and public lands in general, and (more often than not) some incredible photographs. Starting in 2019, FOMR will provide its volunteers with a special gift in appreciation for their service...stay tuned for details!

If you're interested in this amazing volunteer opportunity, please [contact us here!](#)

As always, stay tuned to our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for updates!



[Become a Member!](#)

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STAY CONNECTED:

