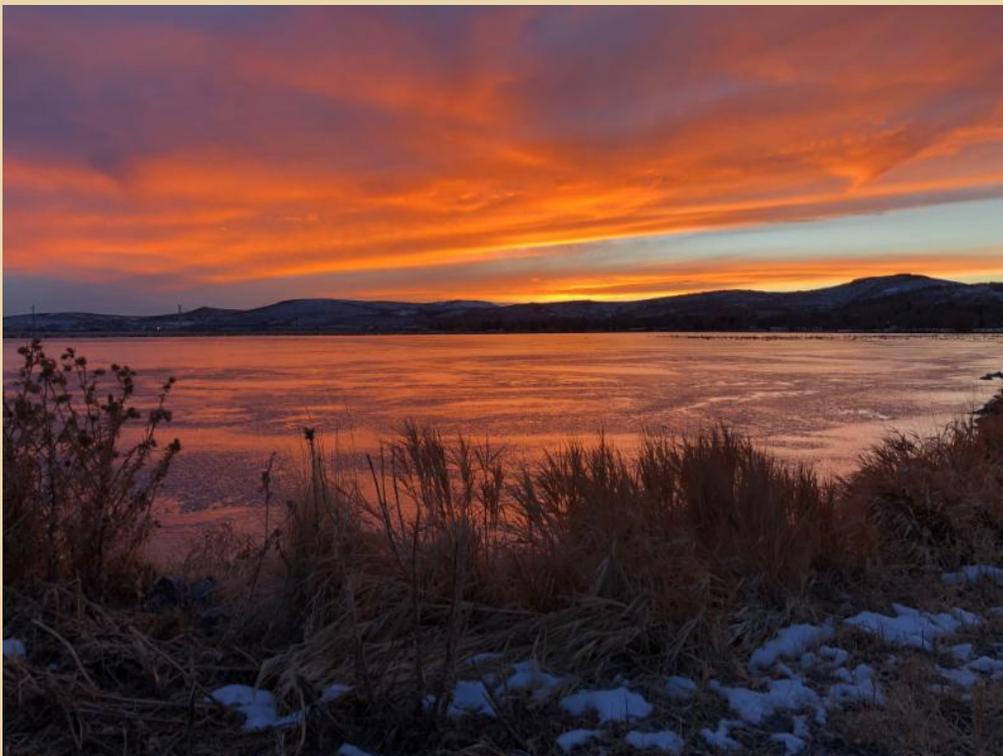




FRIENDS OF **MALHEUR** NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Malheur Musings - January 2019



Sunset over the Burns Sewage Ponds during the Christmas Bird Count
Photo by Rick Vetter

Director's Message

Friends,

Twenty years ago, a small group of passionate people were brought together by their love of Malheur. They shared a commitment to conservation, an understanding of the landscape and needs of the wildlife that depend on these spaces. They also came to know how a Wildlife Refuge might benefit from a Non-profit partner that could share the beautiful burden of caring for it all. Malheur Wildlife Associates was born out of that passion. Today, 20 years later, two of those founding members (Gary Ivey, President and Alice Elshoff, Vice President) are still on the Board of Directors for what is now the Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. A birthday such as this is occasion for reflection and celebration.

For much of FOMR's history it was a modest organization that, among other things,

secured small grants and leveraged partnerships to accomplish great things. Some highlights from the past include:

- The signage and accompanying audio CD for the 42 mile auto tour route which would not have been possible without the manual labor of our wonderful volunteers.
- The conception and construction of an interpretive wayside and parking lot on Hwy 205 at the Narrows.
- Securing interns and funds for the aquatic health program.
- The creation of the Crane Pond Overlook trail and maintenance of the Marshall Pond trail.

With every passing year the Friends' impact on the Refuge is only surpassed by its impact on us as not only an organization, but a now much larger group of people who share a love for Malheur.

As we move through 2019, it is my hope that you celebrate with us! Throughout the year this newsletter, our website and Facebook page will showcase opportunities to be a part of our 20th Birthday. Join a volunteer work party, submit a testimonial of your personal connection to Malheur, and learn about the work happening on the Refuge and throughout Harney County to support conservation of this captivating high desert ecosystem. Celebrating 20 years is truly a celebration of you, our Friends.

Happy New Year. Happy Birthday.

Thank You for being a Friend,
Janelle
FOMR Executive Director

President's Message

Greetings Malheur Friends!

In addition to welcoming a new year, this month also represents the 3rd anniversary of the occupation of our beloved refuge. Looking back, although the occupation produced a lot of negativity, it also backfired, as it put Malheur Refuge on the map. It brought many of you to us, and helped us grow as an organization. This growth increased the Friends' responsibilities and our commitment to Malheur. We are looking forward to celebrating this 20th anniversary during our annual membership meeting over Memorial weekend and I hope you all can join us in celebrating our success. Thank you for your support!

Gary Ivey
FOMR Board President

The Refuge Visitor Center is currently closed and will remain so until a funding bill is signed and the Government Shutdown is lifted.

For more information about Department of Interior operations during a shutdown, please visit [DOI Contingency Plans for Operations](#)



Fall/Winter Hours at Malheur HQ

Visitor Center/Nature Store hours:

Open Monday - Thursday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Open most Fridays from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Closed Saturday - Sunday (brochures will be available at Headquarters)

Membership Minute

This new section will include special information for Friends of Malheur NWR Members. If you are not yet a FOMR Member, please consider 2019 the year to become a Friend as we celebrate our 20th Birthday all year!



Friends of
Malheur NWR
logo pin

Our Birthday Gift to You

Throughout 2019, we will be giving away commemorative 20th Birthday enamel pins! All new Friends will receive a pin and our current Friends can get theirs one of three ways!

Birthday Bump

Renew your Membership in 2019 by bumping up to the next level. If you are currently an INDIVIDUAL Member, consider renewing with a FAMILY or DONOR Membership.

Forever Friends

Opt for renewing your Membership in 2019 through monthly recurring payments. For as little as \$5 or as much as comfortably fits your budget.

To do this, visit malheurfriends.org/support, click DONATE and choose to make this a monthly donation!

Volunteer

Join us for a work party, special project, staff the Crane's Nest Nature Store or lend us a hand by sharing your unique talents in any way you see fit! Keep an eye on this Newsletter and our Facebook page (@MalheurFriends) for upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Harney County Christmas Bird Counts

On December 21 and 22, Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were conducted at P Ranch in Malheur Refuge and in Burns, Oregon, respectively. Rick Vetter, FOMR Secretary, has organized and participated in CBCs for several decades now, alongside his wife Joan Suther. This year, there were 16 participants and 64 species were tallied, including 5,222 California quail... [Read more here.](#)



Male California quail
Photo by Dan Streiffert

River Otters Seize The Carp!

A festive Christmas dinner along the Blitzen River featured not turkey or ham as the pièce de résistance, but common carp, an invasive and destructive species at Malheur Refuge. Watch the video on the [FOMR Flickr Page.](#)

[Learn more about how common carp affect aquatic health in the Harney Basin.](#)



River otter in the Blitzen River
Photo by Peter Pearsall

In Crust We Trust

As most of Malheur Refuge's wildlife takes leave for the season, as many of the shrubs and grasses die back or slip into winter dormancy, the arid landscape is laid bare, somehow emptier and more desolate than before. But the grand architects of this high-desert ecosystem remain in place as they always have, humble and unassuming, right below your feet. They are known as cryptobiotic soils, or microbiotic soil crusts....[Read more here.](#)



Sunset over snow- and lichen-encrusted rocks at Malheur Refuge
Photo by Peter Pearsall

Conservation Corner

This new section to our newsletter will feature our much beloved Refuge Staff sharing with you their insights and interesting tidbits about their jobs. From Wildlife Biologist to Maintenance Supervisor there is much important and exciting working being done at Malheur and they want to share it with you!

*Considering the Government Shutdown we will start off slow, but expect more in the months to come.

Better Together

By Jeff Mackay, MNWR Deputy Project Lead

Early in December Malheur National Wildlife Refuge employees, along with local employees from High Desert Partnership, Portland Audubon, and Friends of Malheur Refuge, gathered one evening at a new restaurant in Hines. Not only was the season the reason to celebrate, but we also gathered to celebrate our collective accomplishments and achievements of the past year. "We are better together than we are apart" was a quote I shared that evening, which I felt captured our relationships and our shared dedication to conservation.

One of the primary benefits derived from the efforts of successful partnerships is a mutual respect for the process of collaboration and greater acceptance of the final results. Successful partnerships motivate, fuel, and perpetuate successes because achieving goals is, after all, the goal. I feel I could have also quoted "We are smarter together than we are apart". We each bring our cultural, social, and demographic diversity and experiences to partnerships creating an environment ripe for successes, no matter the scale. This diversity facilitates the formation of intellectual and productive relationships between and among partners, leading to a better articulation and truer understanding of the issues, and in the end, a greater acceptance of the final results.

We ended the celebration that fun evening with a white elephant gift exchange. There was the typical gift "stealing", as anticipated, capping an evening that motivated us to continue to find strength in our partnerships and to continue to face challenges and nurture successes, together.



2018 Holiday Gathering at Boomers Restaurant
Back row: Ed Sparks, Ed Moulton, Janelle Wicks, Chad Karges
Front row: Laurie Sparks, Savanna Cate, Suzanne McConnell, Alexa Martinez, Teresa Wicks, Carey Goss, Jeff Mackay

Volunteer Spotlight



Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store

We are pleasantly overwhelmed by the number of people who are interested in volunteering at the Crane's Nest Nature Center and Store in 2019! Thank you to everyone who has reached out and will be joining us. If you are interested and not yet on the list, is possible to join the wait list in the event that someone's plans change mid-stream. Volunteers with an RV or similar set-up to stay in, are able to take

advantage of the RV pads and amenities available at Refuge Headquarters.

Pollinator-palooza in 2019

We are in the final stages of our long awaited pollinator garden that will be going in the ground this spring! Volunteers can join us for one or both work party weekends:

April 13th - We will spend the day building and setting the raised garden beds for the Pollinator Garden. This will require light to medium physical ability and use of hand and power tools. Volunteers will have the opportunity to stay on site at the Refuge Fire Bunkhouse the nights of April 12th and 13th. This is a special treat, as lodging is a scarcity during the Annual Harney County Migratory Bird Festival!

May 4th & 5th - Finally, the plants will be planted! A weekend of gardening on behalf of the pollinators will include some light lifting, bending, squatting, etc. These plants will attract and support native pollinators and bring joy and exploration to Refuge visitors. Again, volunteers will have the chance to enjoy an overnight stay in the Fire Bunkhouse at Refuge HQ.

If you are interested in volunteering this spring, or have general questions about volunteering at Malheur Refuge, please contact us at friends@malheurfriends.org.

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

[Become a Member!](#)

[Renew Membership](#)

[Donate](#)

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STAY CONNECTED:

