



FRIENDS OF **MALHEUR** NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Malheur Musings - February 2019



Clouds reflected in the Blitzen River at sunset
Photo by Peter Pearsall

Director's Message

Friends,

Throughout the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service it is common for staff to refer to their coworkers within a Refuge, a Hatchery, or Regionally as family. It is not a passing, trite nicety--I have had the privilege of experiencing this and I can tell you, they mean it. This week, from sea to shining sea, families were reunited. Here, in our own conference room, a collective sigh of relief fell around us as our own Malheur National Wildlife Refuge family gathered for the first time in over a month. Returning to work after 35 days of furlough means coming together in shared enthusiasm for the work and the privilege to do it. These folks are public servants, fiercely committed to the National Wildlife Refuge System mission: "...[T]o administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the

fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans." (www.fws.gov). Not only are they coming back to their work; they are coming back to each other both here and across the landscape.

Meanwhile, though the last month had been quiet around here, I have kept myself quite busy preparing for the year ahead. My highlight of January was, believe it or not, attending our 1st Quarterly Board Meeting of 2019 in Bend, OR. A big thank you is owed to the staff of Worthy Brewing who allowed us to use their conference room! It is always invigorating to spend a few hours with like-minded folks who are passionate about doing good in the name of Malheur NWR and the Refuge System. Our Board Members are excited about all of the wonderful things we have on our plate for 2019, including the construction and planting of our long-awaited Worthy Pollinator Garden, the upcoming Harney County Migratory Bird Festival in April, our Annual Meeting (or Birthday Party) Weekend in May, and reopening our Nature Center with new Friends of Malheur LOGO merchandise--just to name a few things!

With merely one month before we reopen the Crane's Nest Nature Center and Store for the season, I can practically hear spring honking overhead! I am looking forward to all this year has in store, but also to meeting so many of you on your travels to Malheur NWR. Please don't be shy and make a point to stop in and say Hi!

Thank you for being a Friend,

Janelle
FOMR Executive 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

Membership Minute

This 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!

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 current Friends can get theirs one of 3 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.

Pins are now in production and a running list of all who are owed one is growing! Pins are expected to arrive in our Crane's Nest Nature Store and begin making their way to you by mid-March.

Register for the Harney County Bird Festival!

The Harney County Migratory Bird Festival, held every year in April, celebrates the annual migration of birds passing through Harney Basin on the Pacific Flyway. Harney Basin is one of the three most important areas left in the western United States for spring migratory birds stopping on their way north--more than 300 bird species are known to use the basin's varied habitats.

The festival began in 1981 and continues to celebrate the migratory birds' return each year with guided tours led by experts, workshops, and fun activities for both youth and adults.

Registration starts in February; [visit the website for more details](#). (Please note that early registration is open to Bird Festival members, not FOMR members.) Everyone, however, is welcome to attend the "Photos with Friends" program that weekend--learn more about that and other tours on the [Bird Festival website](#).



Black-necked stilt
Photo by Peter Pearsall

Malheur Symphony Concert in May

There has been a lot of buzz lately about the upcoming Malheur Symphony Concert to be held in Burns this coming May 2019. Details are forthcoming and tickets for this FREE event will be available soon. [In the meantime, enjoy this teaser from KTVZ News in Bend.](#)

Stay tuned to the Central Oregon Symphony and our own Malheur Musings Newsletter for updated information as it becomes available.



Sandhill cranes calling
Photo by Dan Streiffert

The "Marsh Hawks" of Malheur

Even in the depths of winter, the marshes, prairies, agricultural fields and other grassy clearings at Malheur Refuge are home to a low-flying raptor with eyes and ears to the ground, hugging the contours of the land, scanning for sight and sound of prey.

Northern harriers are common and widespread throughout North America and Eurasia; many arrive at Malheur Refuge to breed in spring, vying with resident pairs for prime nesting and feeding habitat...[Read more here.](#)



A juvenile Northern harrier lifts off
Photo by Peter Pearsall

Volunteers Wanted for Short-eared Owl Surveys near Malheur

Calling all short-eared owl enthusiasts! Are you interested in being a part of the world's largest short-eared owl study? Grab a friend and sign up to be a valuable citizen scientist in Oregon!

The Western Asio flammeus Landscape Study covers eight western states and is designed to provide crucial information to help management decisions for the short-eared owl. Spots are filling fast, so don't hesitate to be a part of this important study! To learn more about the project and how to participate, [go here.](#)



Short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*) in flight

Photo by Dan Streiffert

Conservation Corner

This section in 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 work being done at Malheur Refuge 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.*



Family of burrowing owls outside of their nest.
Photo by Loree Johnson

Volunteer Spotlight



FOMR Board members and volunteers pose along the Center Patrol Road in October 2017

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, it's possible to join the wait list in the event that someone's plans change mid-stream. Volunteers with an RV or similar set-up 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 & 14th - We will spend the weekend 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, 13th and 14th. This is a special treat, as lodging is a scarcity during the Annual Harney County Migratory Bird Festival! [Sign-Up NOW!](#)

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. [Sign-Up NOW!](#)

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:

