



FRIENDS OF **MALHEUR** NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Malheur Musings - January 2018



The January 1 full moon rises above a partially frozen Malheur Lake
Photo by Peter Pearsall

President's Message

Fellow Friends,

Refuges urgently need your support in our current political climate. It has now been two years since the shocking takeover of Malheur Refuge. It took over a year for the refuge to reopen and we still have a lot of work ahead of us to help get Malheur back in business. We appreciate your support of this Friends group!

It's long been in our interest to work toward improving relations between Malheur Refuge and the community. Our goal is to build a strong support group in the local community to help protect Malheur Refuge from future threats.

We plan to assist the community where we have common interests and to identify opportunities for partnering with local groups and engaging the community in refuge activities. For example, we are working as a partner in support of the local Harney

Basin Wetland Initiative, which is part of the refuge's Aquatic Health Program, focused on reducing impacts of Common Carp on wetlands, which is broadly supported by Harney County citizens (see: [HBWI](#)); we help with the Harney County Migratory Bird Festival (coming up April 5-8; see: [Bird Festival](#)); we are working with a local committee to help improve the Burns-Hines Nature trail along the old railroad bed; and we are reaching out to the Burns Paiute Tribe as a local partner to involve them more in refuge activities. Also, in December, our Board voted to approve our funding of an annual scholarship of \$1,000 to a deserving Harney County high school graduate.

This winter, we are moving our store into our new Nature Center and we have a lot of work to do. Last summer we were awarded a \$13,625 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to help with the costs of setting up our new Nature Center, which required that we match with \$14,777 of our funds. About half of our match will be covered by our staff and volunteer time in working on the new facility; the remaining half will be cash. We are particularly excited about using this funding to purchase two eBird Kiosks which will allow Malheur and Harney County bird sightings to post live on our web page. We plan to install one of the kiosks at the Harney County Chamber of Commerce office so birders can report their sightings and get refuge information in town. We hope you might consider supporting this project by donating or contacting us to see if you can fit our volunteer needs (construction and garden skills).

I hope you might consider supporting our work by providing a donation towards our special projects such as our Scholarship Fund, the Aquatic Health Program, or our Nature Store Project. To do so, [please click here to donate](#) and be sure to add in the "Instructions to seller" which project your donation is for. Thank you for considering this!

If you have a chance to visit Malheur soon, be aware that in early February, Tundra and Trumpeter Swans move through the basin and can be readily found in the Refuge's Blitzen Valley ponds for some wonderful photo opportunities.

Happy 2018!

Gary Ivey, President
Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge



Trumpeter Swan by
Gary Ivey



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)

Saving Trumpeter Swans

by Gary Ivey

Trumpeter swans, largest extant waterfowl in the world, were nearly exterminated in the 1930s. To save the species, swans were relocated from Montana's Red Rock Lakes NWR to other refuges in the West, including Malheur NWR. The Refuge has supported a small flock of Trumpeter Swans for over 50 years...[Read more in this press release from The Trumpeter Swan Society.](#)



Trumpeter swan and cygnets at Malheur Refuge
Photo by Peter Pearsall

Meet Malheur's "Marsh Hawks"

By Peter Pearsall

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...[Read more here.](#)



Northern harrier
Photo by Peter Pears

Harney County Christmas Bird Counts

By Peter Pearsall and Rick Vetter

On December 15 and 18, Christmas Bird Counts were conducted in Burns, Oregon and at P Ranch in Malheur Refuge, respectively. Rick Vetter, FOMR Secretary, has organized and participated in the counts for several decades now, and Peter Pearsall, FOMR Executive Director, was one of eight participants during this year's counts...[Read more here.](#)



Ferruginous hawk seen during the P Ranch CBC
Photo by Rick Vetter

River Otters Seize the Carp!

by Peter Pearsall

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 here: <http://bit.ly/2CXEftR>

Learn more about how common carp affect aquatic health in the Harney Basin: <http://bit.ly/2CZ4uzZ>



River otter near Malheur HQ
Photo by Peter Pearsall

Volunteers Needed in our Nature Center!



Hello Friends, we need your help! If you're available during the months of March or April 2018 and have an RV or similar set-up to stay in, we are looking for volunteers to help staff our new Nature Store/Nature Center at Refuge Headquarters.

This volunteer position involves operating the Friends of Malheur Refuge Nature Center/Nature Store at Refuge Headquarters and providing general interpretation of the Refuge to visitors. Volunteers will have some proficiency with cash registers, point-of-sale devices, etc., as well as a basic understanding of how to maintain an inventory of Nature Store items. Good communication skills are desirable, as is a willingness to interpret Great Basin natural and cultural history. We ask that our volunteers commit to at least a month-long stint, working 3 days (~24 hours) a week, but the duration of the stint may be negotiable.

Refuge Headquarters provides RV pads with hook-ups and a nearby building with communal kitchen, bathrooms and laundry. There are two RV spaces available for volunteers in March and April. There is also the potential for volunteers to stay in a FOMR travel trailer at Headquarters.

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!

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STAY CONNECTED:

