



# FRIENDS OF **MALHEUR** NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

## Malheur Musings - April 2018

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Sandhill cranes "dancing" in the Harney Basin  
Photo by Dan Streiffert

### Director's Message

Dear Friends,

Amid the bustle of last weekend's Harney County Migratory Bird Festival, those of you that visited our website probably noticed some substantial changes. That's right- the new FOMR website is finished! Late last year we hired a web designer to overhaul our site and it's finally gone "live". Please give it a visit, and be sure to let us know what you think! The address is the same: [malheurfriends.org](http://malheurfriends.org).

Almost all of the photography featured on the new site comes courtesy of longtime supporters such as Dan Streiffert, Barbara Wheeler and several others. Yours truly also contributed many images of wildlife and wild places in and around the Refuge.

As the days gradually grow warmer and the Harney Basin starts greening up, we're

setting our sights on breaking ground for the Pollinator Garden at Refuge Headquarters. Do you have a green thumb? How about experience with constructing raised garden beds? We'll need some help later this month to start the planting process. Gardening in the Northern Great Basin is highly weather-dependent, so we'll keep an eye on the forecast and try to give volunteers as much lead-time as possible. If you'd like to assist, please send us an email at [friends@malheurfriends.org](mailto:friends@malheurfriends.org) with "Pollinator Garden volunteer" in the subject line.

Remember that FOMR is hosting its Annual Meeting May 18-19. This weekend-long event is our way of saying thank you to our members, without whose support we would not exist. More details on this event below.

We also recently applied to and were selected for the Friends Partnership Mentoring Program. This nation-wide program offers peer-to-peer coaching for Refuge Friends organizations and their Service partners to help the partnerships flourish and sustain success.

The program is geared towards well-established partnerships seeking guidance on things such as capacity building, taking on a significant new project, or Board development.

The Mentoring Program at Malheur Refuge will take place July 20-22. The tentative agenda includes workshops, a Refuge tour and a social event to which partners, members and friends are invited. FOMR encourages any and all interested members to attend the social event Friday evening, July 20. We'll keep you updated with details about the Mentoring Program in the months ahead.

It's a heady time to be at the Refuge. We hope to see you soon!

Peter Pearsall  
Executive Director, Friends of Malheur Refuge



### **Spring Hours at Malheur HQ**

Visitor Center/Nature Store hours:

Open 7 days a week, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

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### **Aerial Surveys of Malheur Lake**

**By Alexa Martinez, MNWR Biologist**

Malheur Refuge provides crucial staging and breeding habitat for waterfowl migrating along the Pacific Flyway. The Refuge supports up to 66% of the Pacific Flyway total waterfowl population during migration.

To monitor this incredible abundance of ducks, geese and swans as efficiently as possible, biologists rely on aerial surveys to get a bird's eye view of the Refuge...[Read more here](#).



The Silvies River flowing into Malheur Lake  
Photo by Alexa Martinez

## **Benson Pond Work Party with Portland Audubon**

From May 4-6, join volunteers with the Audubon Society of Portland at their first work party of 2018 at Malheur's Benson Pond. The Refuge conducted a prescribed burn on at Benson Pond this winter to renew the marsh and wet meadow habitat conditions at the site, and new plantings need to be installed along the berms and walking paths.

Controlled burns are a management tool to allow healthy growth and increased plant diversity that provides food, shelter and nesting material vital for birds to thrive. The fire has also provided an opportunity to refresh the shrub layer surrounding Benson Pond. For more details and how to sign to sign up, [go here](#).



Historic pump house at Benson Pond  
Photo by Portland Audubon

## **Join Us for the Bobolink Survey!**

On Saturday, June 9, in cooperation with Malheur National Wildlife Refuge staff, FOMR volunteers and field biologists from Portland Audubon survey for bobolinks on the Refuge. This survey, which dates back several decades at Malheur Refuge, involves walking established transect routes through wet meadow habitat, counting birds both seen and heard.

We could use around 10 people to help with this survey, which can involve wading through knee-high water. To sign up and get more details, please contact [friends@malheurfriends.org](mailto:friends@malheurfriends.org) with "Bobolink Survey" in the subject line.



Male bobolink  
Photo by Dan Streiffert

## **The Ingenious Rust Fungus**

**by Peter Pearsall**

A walk through the sage-steppe this time of year usually turns up some of the first high-

desert wildflowers blooming between the dormant shrubs and still-brown grasses. Sagebrush buttercup, Beckwith's violet, yellow bells and several biscuitroot species are among the earlier species to flower. But there is another springtime plant, superficially flower-like in appearance, that bears a closer look...[Read more here](#).



"Pseudoflower" of rust fungus  
Photo by Peter Pearsall

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## Save the Date: FOMR Annual Meeting



FOMR members on a birding tour at Malheur Refuge  
Photo by Louisa Evers

Hello Friends, Spring is here and that means our Annual Meeting is just around the corner! This year's meeting will be held May 18-19 at Refuge Headquarters.

The Annual Meeting is a great opportunity for FOMR members to receive updates on what this Friends Group has been up to, as well as what we've got planned for the future. Malheur Refuge staff will also be on hand to give presentations about their work.

As with past Annual Meetings, FOMR provides guided tours of Refuge locales for attendees. These caravan-style, carpooling adventures often cover areas closed to the general public, so it's potentially a chance for members to see new parts of this wonderful Refuge.

The meeting and staff presentations will take place Friday, May 18, followed by a social event in Burns that evening. Saturday will be reserved for Refuge tours. All active FOMR members are encouraged to join us!

To RSVP, please contact us at [friends@malheurfriends.org](mailto:friends@malheurfriends.org) with "Annual Meeting" in

the subject line. We'll send out a reminder email with further details in the weeks leading up to the meeting.

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

[\*\*Become a Member!\*\*](#)

[\*\*Renew Membership\*\*](#)

[\*\*Donate\*\*](#)

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