



Newsletter of the Malheur Wildlife Associates, Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge  
 . . . . . Keeping the Needs of Wildlife First . . . . .

Volume 2, Number 2

November 2005

**MALHEUR**  
**Wildlife Associates**  
 an affiliate of the  
 National Wildlife Refuge Association

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**A GENTLE REMINDER . . .**

This will be your last newsletter if you are not a paid member of the Malheur Wildlife Associates.



**WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING!**

*Patty Bowers, Newsletter Editor*

The weeks from early spring through early fall were busy times at Malheur. In March volunteers planted hundreds of willow, dogwood, and other cuttings to improve habitat for wildlife and to improve riparian condition along the Blitzen River. A low snow pack on the Steens hinted at early low water conditions in the basin, but record rainfall in May created a brief but impressive flow event. Water management efforts by Refuge staff corralled the Blitzen's second highest flows on record, resulting in a "lake" from Krumbo Lane south to Frenchglen to protect Refuge Headquarters and private ranchlands downstream. Refuge roads, especially the Center Patrol Road, sustained considerable damage.

Work continued on cooperative interpretative projects including completion of the auto tour route (see related story on page 6), panels destined for the new pullout near the Agriculture Research Station, the Narrows panels, and the new sign near the Grange Hall directing visitors to Malheur Refuge. We submitted a grant application to the American Hiking

Society's National Trails Fund for help in financing the Crane Pond Overlook Trail and committed to helping with an education program to benefit the Harney County Boys and Girls Club.

During National Wildlife Refuge Week in October, the third annual Ranching Heritage Day celebration at the historic Sod House Ranch was well attended, Young and old alike enjoyed the tours, activities, and the delicious barbeque provided by the local Boy Scout troop.

Please remember to send your 2005 dues soon. The membership form is on page 5. Only paid-up folks are counted as members when talking to granting institutions and public leaders. Your membership card (sent following renewal) entitles you to a 15% discount at the Visitor Center store at refuge headquarters. Thanks for remembering!

**WORKERS NEEDED**

If you want to receive word about work parties, check the appropriate box on your membership form and include your e-mail address. A handy list of interested folks improves our efficiency in notifying only those interested in participating.

BE AWARE that our work projects often rely on available refuge equipment or staff, or are dependent on road conditions or access to marshland. Although we will give you as much notice as possible, we often cannot plan far in advance.



## MEET THE STAFF - PAUL LARSON - Maintenance Supervisor

*Alice Elshoff, MWA Chair*

Paul began his career with four years in the U.S. Navy's 7th fleet, aboard ship off the coast of Vietnam. Back home, he worked for the Federal Highway Administration for three years before moving on to a 16-year career as a core drill operator in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Paul joined the Malheur Refuge staff in 1993, where he is in charge of all the working parts of this sprawling 187,000 acre refuge. As head of maintenance, he oversees and works with a staff of seven, (down from the needed 13) as they go about the daunting and important work that is largely unseen by most Refuge visitors.

Paul and his staff maintain 54 buildings, 37 vehicles and 25 pieces of heavy equipment. Paul keeps track of a real property inventory of 720 items, including everything from water control structures to signs to office furniture. He recently returned from an intense training session where he learned to use a



Paul Larson with one of the 25 pieces of heavy equipment he is responsible for maintaining. Photo by Carey Goss.

new national computer system for tracking all of these assets. It sounds like this project alone could keep him behind a desk more than he would prefer!

Paul's work keeps him involved in many different Refuge programs. For example, Paul and his staff plant grain crops to sustain fall migration of cranes which supports biological programs. Safeguarding cultural sites and providing educational programs such as safety classes for refuge staff and volunteers also fall under Paul's list of responsibilities. Working with outside contractors, and coordinating with other federal,

state and local government entities round out Paul's contributions to Refuge programs.

What Paul likes best is seeing the accomplishment of projects that benefit the long term goals of the Refuge. He enjoys working with volunteers and wants it known that volunteers are welcome in the maintenance

department for everything from maintaining grounds and buildings to farming.

As an example of the pride Paul takes in his work, his personal pick-up truck has already logged 439,000 miles. He's maintaining it to go for half a million!

Paul is looking forward to retirement within the next year, a return to his home in Battleground, Washington, and more time for hunting and fishing. When that happens, staff will definitely miss the delicious wild game dishes he brings to potluck celebrations.



## NEW SIGN GUIDES REFUGE VISITORS

*Patty Bowers, Newsletter Editor*

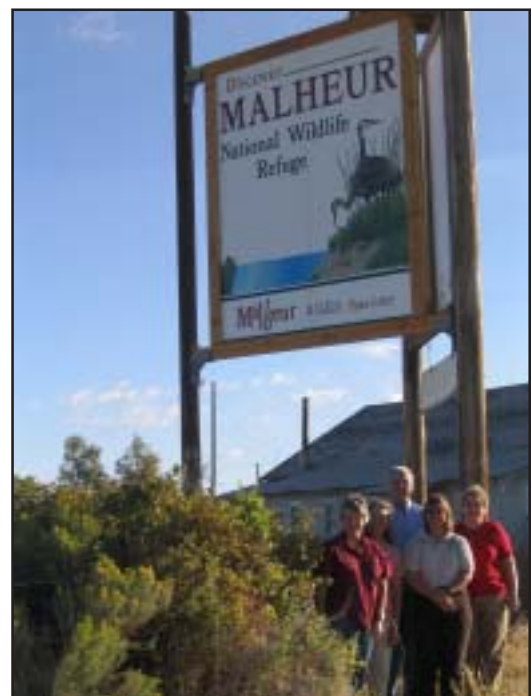
By summer's end a new sign was up along Hwy 78 directing visitors toward Malheur Refuge at the Hwy 205 junction near the Poison Creek Grange Hall.

Refuge Manager, Donna Stovall, was contacted early this spring by PRIDE, Positive Results from Innovation, Determination, and Energy, a local grass roots organization dedicated to improving the local community. PRIDE offered the Refuge the opportunity to use the back of their large sign which welcomes visitors to the communities of Burns and Hines. PRIDE is responsible for several landscaping, signage, and clean-up projects in the Burns and Hines communities.

Donna contacted MWA who agreed to help with this worthwhile project.

MWA Board members worked with Refuge staff and Cindy Jennings of Creative Signs to produce the 8' x 9' sign. Refuge staff assisted with installation. PRIDE also plans to landscape the area near the sign with typical "high desert" plantings.

The sign, with sandhill cranes pointing the way, encourages visitors to "discover Malheur National Wildlife Refuge." MWA is generously credited on the lower part of the sign.



PRIDE members, Bill Burstow and Ethel Bossuot join MWA members Alice Elshoff and Patty Bowers, and Refuge Manager Donna Stovall to commemorate completion of the project. Photo by Wayne Bowers.

# VOLUNTEERS WORK TO RESTORE BLITZEN RIVER RIPARIAN

*Jen Bock, STEP Biologist, ODFW*

In mid-March, hundreds of willow, dogwood and elderberry cuttings were planted along a two-mile stretch of the Donner und Blitzen River to restore native riparian vegetation to one of Southeast Oregon's treasured redband trout streams.

Volunteers seemed happy with the food (how about that lasagna?) and a warm place to rest their weary heads... that is when the fire alarm wasn't ringing at 2:00 AM.

After the planting work was finished and the wind died down, a



Volunteers show off the Blitzen River restoration project "tools of the trade." Photo by Alice Elshoff.



Volunteers "harvest" cuttings from the MWA clone bed for planting along the Blitzen River. Photo by Martin Wheeler, USFWS volunteer.

Cal and Alice Elshoff of the Malheur Wildlife Associates (MWA) trained eleven volunteers, most representing the Central Oregon Flyfishers from Bend. Teams of three volunteers lugged around 7'-10' cuttings, started Honda pumps to operate the water-jet stingers, made the holes, and planted the cuttings into the banks of the Blitzen deep enough to reach even the end-of-summer water table. Other than having to use some elbow grease and ingenuity to get through a layer of ice (like sitting on the stingers and bouncing up and down) the stingers were relatively easy to use. This fast-learning, hard-working crew of volunteers donated nearly 200 hours of their time to complete the project.

Most of the cuttings were raised in the MWA clone bed near Frenchglen. Volunteers gathered additional cuttings from the Refuge after the clone bed cuttings were all planted.

Room and board at the Malheur Field Station were compliments of MWA and the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP).

few volunteers fished the Upper Blitzen River near the P Ranch.

On the final day of the project, Rick Roy, Refuge biologist, gave the remaining crew a "behind locked gates tour" of the Refuge, which was like a back stage pass to a rock concert. Rick is more

interesting than any rock star though, and very knowledgeable about management issues facing the refuge today as well as history of the area. The volunteers enjoyed this behind the scenes glimpse of Malheur Refuge and look forward to learning the outcome of their restoration efforts.



Volunteers prepare a planting hole using the water jet stinger. Photo by Martin Wheeler, USFWS volunteer.

## ADDITIONAL NOTE FROM ALICE:

We really won't know the success of our plantings until next spring. Thick, head-high grasses made it impossible to check on them this past summer. Also, during the first growing season, the cuttings put most of their energy into development of roots. Hopefully, they are poised to take off next spring.

**NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES:  
WILDLIFE'S BEST FRIEND**

National wildlife refuges are places in the United States where wild creatures can get what they need to live - food, water, shelter, and space. On national wildlife refuges, the needs of wildlife come first.



## MALHEUR ARCHEOLOGIST HONORED FOR BREAKING CRIME RING

*Steve Farrell, Refuge System Branch of Communications, article from March/April 2005 Refuge Update publication*

Carla Burnside, an archeologist at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge received a Conservation Service Award from Interior Secretary Gale Norton for her role in exposing a crime ring responsible for damaging archeological sites on national wildlife refuges and other federal lands. The award is one of the highest honors presented by the Department of the Interior.

Ms. Burnside was among seven federal employees, including Fish and Wildlife Service special agents Edward Dominguez and Eric Jumper; honored for their contributions to Operation Indian Rock, a criminal investigation that broke up a ring of archeological looters who had been operating for nearly a decade.



Carla Burnside compared confiscated artifacts with those that remained in the collection as she investigated the crime ring. Photo by USEWS.

Throughout the two-year investigation, Ms. Burnside cataloged and established monetary values for thousands of artifacts from sites in Nevada, California, Arizona, and Utah.

"This case brought a lot of attention to archeological crimes. Our investigation led us to dozens of archeological sites, including many that were previously unrecorded," said Ms. Burnside.

## JUDGE CRACKS DOWN ON ILLEGAL ARTIFACT COLLECTION

*Article from Burns Times Herald, September 21, 2005*

William P. Schaff of Burns was sentenced in Federal Court on June 8 to three years of probation for the illegal collection of Native American artifacts in 2003 from Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Under a plea agreement with the court Schaff pled to a felony violation of the Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA). He is prohibited from entering Malheur Refuge during his probation and from collecting Native American artifacts on federal, state, or private lands.

Federal Judge Ann L. Aiken left her sentencing open to accommodate tribal recommendations. Schaff was ordered by Judge Aiken to meet with the Elders of the Burns Paiute Tribe to "discuss ways in which to give back by way of community service, assist in the return of items collected and/or any other appropriate condition

that the Elders recommend to this court." The court will reserve judgment as to whether or not their recommendations will be an added condition, but Judge Aiken said that "she will take strongly their recommendations, and if appropriate, it will be amended into the sentencing order to be completed during the three-year term of probation." Artifacts seized during the case were forfeited to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Schaff was directed to assist with the identification of the location of removal for all the artifacts when he meets with Tribal Elders.

As a part of the same case, on July 29, 2005 as the result of a Plea Agreement, Patrick B. McKelvey of Burns, pled to a misdemeanor under the ARPA. McKelvey was sentenced to one year of federal probation for the illegal collection of Native American artifacts in 2003 on Malheur Refuge. McKelvey was ordered by Judge Aiken to meet with the Tribal Elders to gain an understanding of why his actions were considered so disrespectful to

The interagency task force documented more than \$500,000 worth of damage to 50 archeological sites on federal lands, including Desert and Pahrangat national wildlife refuges. Investigators recovered more than 11,000 historic and prehistoric Native American artifacts, including grinding tools, ancient corncobs, projectile points, fiber sandals, pottery fragments, figurines, baskets and pendants.

Five people pled guilty to felony violations of the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA). One defendant was sentenced to 18 months in prison while another was sentenced to 37 months - the longest sentence ever for an ARPA violation by a first-time offender.

Ms. Burnside is now involved in two other cases.



the Tribe. He will also submit a report of his meeting with the Elders to the court.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge manager, Donna Stovall, said, "these convictions should send a message to artifact collectors, whether for commercial or private collection, that we are serious about protecting the archeological resources on the Refuge. These sites are not only important to the Burns Paiute Tribe, but they are nationally significant and must be preserved for future generations."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeff Kent stated at Schaff's sentencing hearing that this is not a victimless crime. "There are two distinct interests violated by the crimes in this case ... humanity's innate quest to learn more about our past through scientific examination of archeologically significant sites, and Native Americans' spiritual quest to protect the burial and other significant sites of ancestors from disturbances that affect the ancient spirits and themselves."



## "BUNKHOUSE" MORPHS INTO ORCHARD HOUSE

Alice Elshoff, MWA Chair

The Orchard House at Fine Meadows has undergone a change. This tiny, quaintly charming old ranch house, situated at the extreme southern end of the Refuge, and a favorite of visiting volunteers and researchers, failed to meet modern codes for overnight use. (Public sleeping quarters must meet extremely high safety standards.) Very old electrical wiring presented one of the biggest problems. So, what to do?



Bill Swanson shows off the new electrical panel he installed at Orchard House. Photo by Alice Elshoff.

Bill Swanson, volunteer extraordinaire and retired electrician, knew exactly what to do. With

materials purchased by MWA, he contributed about \$2,000 worth of professional skills. In two and a half days, he single-handedly replaced the ancient fuse box with a modern electrical panel, completely rewired the whole building, and installed all new plugs, switches and energy efficient light fixtures. We can't thank Bill enough for his contribution.

While it was physically impossible to do everything necessary to allow overnight use, visiting MWA volunteers can now tent or RV under the elms and use the Orchard House meeting room with fully equipped kitchen and bathroom facilities.

## MOUNTAIN QUAIL REINTRODUCED TO STEENS MT

Jamie Nelson, OSU F & W Research

As part of an effort to return mountain quail to their native habitat on Steens Mountain, 90 birds were released on March 10, 2005. Fifty-six of these birds were radio-marked.

Twenty-four of the radio-marked birds died or were killed by predators for a 57% survival rate. Survival of adult birds released on Steens Mountain is more than twice the rate of survival at two other release sites which showed only 23% and 21% survival.

Twenty-six nests were located during the study. Most incubation began during the second week of June. Five radio-marked quail pairs were discovered with both males and females sitting on separate nests.

The average clutch size is 10 eggs with a range of five to 14 eggs. Twenty of the 26 nests were successful for a 77% nesting success rate. One nest had three California quail eggs in it. The mountain quail kicked those eggs out.

Most of the nests were located under rocks, sagebrush, bitterbrush, or grass clumps. Three nests were found at the base of young juniper trees and three under cut junipers scheduled for burning in the fall.

This project is a cooperative effort among the Burns Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Malheur Refuge, and Oregon State University. If the reintroduction continues to succeed, future Refuge visitors may enjoy mountain quail sightings as the birds spread out into available habitat.



Female mountain quail on nest. Photo by Rick Vetter.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

2005

Annual Dues:  \$10 Individual  I prefer my newsletter by:  Snail Mail  New  
 \$20 Family  Email  Renewal  
 \$50 Donor  
 \$200 Patron  
 \$500 Life Member

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle I

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form with check to: Malheur Wildlife Associates  
 36391 Sod House Lane  
 Princeton, OR 97721

I am interested in hearing about work parties via email. Please add my email address to the project notification list.

# BI NOCULAR-WI ELDING PELICANS MARK ROUTE

Alice Elshoff, MWA Chair

The auto tour route down the 34- mile Center Patrol Road is now complete. Signs bearing a picture of convertible-riding, binocular-wielding pelicans mark the 19 stops along the way.



Attractive signs mark the stops along the new Malheur Refuge auto tour route. Photo by Alice Elshoff.

A script, which interprets the stops, is available at Refuge Headquarters, and can eventually be downloaded from the Refuge web site at [www.malheur.fws.gov](http://www.malheur.fws.gov). The script touches on the natural and cultural history and geology of the area, provides information about the plant and animal life found on the Refuge and highlights current refuge management.

Our hope is that this added information will increase visitor enjoyment of the Refuge, enlighten them as to the needs of wildlife, and encourage support for the National Wildlife Refuge system as a whole.



Malheur Wildlife Associates (MWA) was formed in 1999 to assist the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in its efforts to:

- ◆ Provide, protect and restore wildlife habitat for the diversity of wildlife for which the Refuge is well known.
- ◆ Improve the educational experience of visitors to the Refuge and enhance their appreciation and knowledge of educational systems.
- ◆ Advocate for greater responsibility on the part of the public and elected officials toward the natural world.



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