

Winter Issue

February 2011

Birding Hikes at Steigerwald Lake and Pierce National Wildlife Refuges

Seven guided birding hikes are currently scheduled at Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) at the Gibbons Creek Wildlife Art Trail. Five of the hikes will be led by Ron Escano:

- Sunday, April 17, and Saturday, May 7, starting at 8:00 a.m.
- Sunday, May 15, International Migratory Bird Day, one hike starting at 8:00 a.m. and a second starting at 3:00 p.m.
- Saturday, May 21, starting at 8:00 a.m.



Great blue heron, photo by Harry Leslie

For reservations for these hikes, contact Eric Anderson at (360) 887-4106 or eric_anderson@fws.gov.

Backyard Bird Shop will host birding trips at Steigerwald Lake NWR on March 5 and March 12. Participants for these two trips will meet at the Backyard Bird Shop at 8:00 a.m. to carpool to the refuge, or meet at the trailhead at approximately 8:30 a.m. Please contact the Backyard Bird Shop for additional details 360/944-6548. No registration is required.

There are also four hikes scheduled for the Pierce National Wildlife Refuge:

- Saturday, March 26, led by Tom Wood
- Saturday, April 16, led by Tom Wood
- Saturday, April 23, led by Randy Fortish
- Saturday, May 21, led by Randy Fortish

For reservations for the Pierce Refuge hikes, contact Eric Anderson at (360) 887-4106 or eric_anderson@fws.gov.

***E-news from the Columbia Gorge Refuges:
Steigerwald Lake, Franz Lake & Pierce National Wildlife Refuges***

Refuge Stewards Announce Photo Contest

The Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards are announcing a refuge photo contest for students from Camas and Washougal High Schools. The contest is being sponsored by Pro Photo Supply of Portland.



Prizes will be a \$100 gift card to Pro Photo Supply for first place, a \$75 gift card for second place, a \$50 gift card for third place, and \$25 gift cards for honorable mentions. Plus winners will get a free family membership in the Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards. Entries are due no later than May 2nd. Digital images should be submitted to

www.prophotosupply.com/events/contests.htm.

For contest rules, please go to our website at www.RefugeStewards.org or www.ProPhotoSupply.com. Students can call John Broughton at (360) 883-5311 or contact him by email at photosbyjohninfo@gmail.com if they would like a photographer-escort to accompany them on the refuge.

Winners will be displayed at Camas Days in July and other venues in the Camas-Washougal area. Noting the desire to keep the first contest small and manageable, Stewards president Gay Leslie pointed out that the contest might be expanded to other schools in the future.



Great egrets, photo by John Broughton

***E-news from the Columbia Gorge Refuges:
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Environmental Education at Steigerwald Moving Forward

An Environmental Education Program for 6th grade students in Camas and Washougal Schools is moving closer to fruition. A committee of educators, volunteers and representatives of the Fish and Wildlife Service is working to identify ways that the habitats and wildlife of Steigerwald Lake NWR can be used to demonstrate some of the things that the students are expected to learn in their classroom science lessons.

Goals for students at that grade level are to learn what constitutes the environment, diversity of life, populations and ecosystems.



One of the products of the committee's efforts will be to produce a companion guide for classroom teachers to use to showcase the science curriculum lessons. The guide will also be used to train volunteers to assist

teachers as they take their classes around the Refuge.

We hope that the program will be ready to implement in the fall of 2011. FWS will recruit additional volunteers to be trained to assist teachers when their classes visit the Refuge. If you would like to become a volunteer when the program is launched, please contact Refuge Manager Jim Clapp at 360/835-8767 or jim.clapp@fws.gov.

Refuge Stewards Now on

The Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards now have a page on Facebook. To see it, you can go to www.facebook.com/RefugeStewards.



Once you are on our page, you can see what's going on at Steigerwald NWR. We urge you to be part of the conversation on Facebook, to join and post to the wall if you have any great wildlife sightings or other encounters while you are out at Steigerwald, and don't forget to tell your friends to "like" us too! The more people we can reach out to, the more people become aware of the Refuge and come to enjoy it.

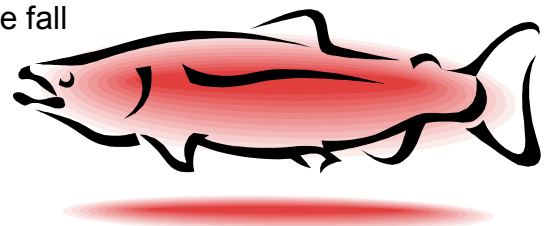




Photo by Harry Leslie

Trail Art Installation at Steigerwald Almost Complete

By the time the next issue of E-news comes out, the installation of the art works on the Gibbons Creek Wildlife Art Trail should be complete. This door marks the closure of the east fork of the trail from October 1st to April 30th. During that time, a host of waterfowl and other species use the wetlands north of the trail for feeding and resting. The trail is closed then to protect the wintering wildlife from disturbance by users of the trail.

Work Party Schedule Expanded

The schedule of work parties at Steigerwald Lake NWR has been expanded for the next couple of months. While regular **3rd Saturday** work parties will continue, additional work parties have been scheduled every Saturday and Sunday in January, February and March. Seven new team leaders are joining our existing eight team leaders in leading volunteers to plant 6,000 native trees and shrubs along the ridgeline south of Gibbons Creek.

If you would like to volunteer but planting sounds too strenuous for you, volunteers are also needed to roll tubes to be placed around the new plantings to protect them. If interested, please contact Jim Clapp at (360) 835-8767.

For more information, go to our website at www.RefugeStewards.org and click on calendar. Then you can click on a particular work party date for more details.



*Volunteers, here planting willows, are out working on the refuge every Saturday and Sunday from January through March.
Photo by Dave Miller*

***E-news from the Columbia Gorge Refuges:
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Old Barn Gone, New Storage Shed Replaces It

The stimulus projects at Steigerwald Lake NWR are completed. We showed you earlier the spiffed up Refuge headquarters building with its improved insulation and non-toxic siding.

Gone now is the old barn remnant that threatened to fall down on the equipment stored in it.



Now take a look at the new and improved storage building.



This 1,500-square-foot building was constructed to match the siding and roofing of the office improvements described in an earlier e-newsletter. With the expanded space, two stories on the inside (to accommodate tractor maintenance as needed), and greatly improved lighting, this building is a significant improvement over the previous one.

Communications Coordinator Joins the Team

In our last newsletter, we asked if any of our readers was interested in helping us out as a Communications Coordinator. We were extremely fortunate in having Brette Greenwood-Wing join us last month in this capacity. Brette has already been instrumental in developing and sending out our announcement flyer for the native tree-shrub planting described above. She is also working to spread the news about the work the Refuge Stewards are doing through our Facebook page and a rebuilt website. She hopes to engage the community through future outreach projects such as regular features in local newspapers. You can reach Brette through our email address volunteer@refugestewards.org.



Become a Member of the Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards

We invite you to join us in our efforts to support the Columbia Gorge Refuges. By joining the Refuge Stewards, you support the fish, wildlife, plants, and public use activities which occur on the Gorge Refuges, assuring that they can be enjoyed by future generations. If you have any questions, please visit our website at www.refugestewards.org or contact us at volunteer@refugestewards.org. To join, see below.

Member Benefits

Members receive periodic news about the Refuges, Stewards' activities, and special opportunities to visit the Refuges. Providing your email address helps us save money in distributing this information. Members also are invited to go on special members-only tours, attend board meetings, participate in committees, and vote at the annual meeting.

Choose Your Membership Level

\$15 Individual

\$25 Family

Donation (please indicate amount \$_____)

All dues and donations are fully tax deductible. Just send your check to

*Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards
PO Box 827
Washougal, WA
98671*



Gibbons Creek, March 2010. Photo by Dave Miller

Steigerwald Lake, Franz Lake & Pierce National Wildlife Refuges