

Newsletter No. 32

Summer 2015

Owl Prowl at Erie National Wildlife Refuge

Come Prowl the woods of the Erie National Wildlife Refuge in the hope of hearing and maybe even spotting some owls! The Friends Group of ENWR will be sponsoring our Fall Owl Prowl on Saturday, October 31st at 6:30 PM rain or shine. We will be meeting at the Refuge Headquarters building, 11296 Wood Duck Lane, Guys Mills, PA 16327.

The night will begin with an educational and fun presentation about owls given by Judy Acker from Audubon PA. Then we will venture out into the woods and with any luck hear from a Great Horned or Barred Owl, the most common species of owls known to nest on the ENWR. This is a FREE family-friendly program, but space is limited so preregistration is a must. Reserve your spot by calling the Refuge at 814-789-3585. Please dress for the weather, wear suitable footwear for hiking and bring a flashlight. Owl see you there!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are committed to providing access to this event for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, close captioning, or other accommodation needs to Erie National Wildlife Refuge, 814-789-3585, FW5RW_ERNWR@FWS.gov, TTY 800-877-8339 with your request by close of business July 1st.

Don't Forget The Erie NWR's Nature Photo Contest

The Erie National Wildlife Refuge in cooperation with the Friends of Erie National Wildlife Refuge and the Presque Isle Audubon Society announces the FOURTEENTH BIENNIAL NATURE PHOTO CONTEST to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week. Competition will be held in three major categories: plant life, wildlife and landscape. Ribbons and cash prizes sponsored by Friends of ENWR. Official entry forms can be obtained by visiting <http://friendsofenwr.org>.

Judging will occur on Sunday, October 18, 2015. An open reception will be held to present awards at 1:30 p.m. that day. Light refreshments will be served. The photographs will remain on display at the refuge until the end of October. Entries may be picked up after that date. For more information, telephone 814-789-3585.

Terrible Weather Didn't Keep Visitors Away From Summer Fest

Yes the attendance was down this year because of an all day downpour, but 150 people braved the weather to participate in the 8th Annual Erie National Wildlife Refuge Summer Fest. Some said they come every year and the rain wasn't about to stop them.

What keeps so many coming back? It could be the education... This year's theme was "Nature Myths" and there was information on bats, reptiles, humming birds and hellbenders. Or maybe it is the fun, hands on activities for kids... Youngsters could get their face painted, practice casting with a fishing pole, or shoot an arrow into a target. Possibly it is the opportunity to make something with your own hands... A sun catcher or a nature notebook with a pounded flower cover.

Some just come to look. They check out the displays and the "Trash To Treasure" entries. Others like to bid on the "Silent Auction" items and possibly take home a treasure of their own. Whatever is your preference there is something for the whole family at Summer Fest.

Stop Invasive Species in Your Tracks

Everybody has a role to play in stopping the advance of invasive species – those plants, animals and microorganisms that are not native to a particular area and wreak havoc outside their normal range.

A new campaign called PlayCleanGo: Stop Invasive Species in Your Tracks is a clear call to action to people who are regularly outdoors, whether working or recreating. PlayCleanGo complements the ongoing Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers campaign.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a partner in PlayCleanGo, along with more than 160 conservation groups nationwide. Together they are calling on the public to:

- Be informed, attentive and accountable for preventing the spread of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.
- Arrive to recreational sites with clean gear.
- Burn and use local or certified firewood, mulch, decorative rocks and soil.
- Use local or weed-free hay.
- Stay on the trails.
- Clean gear before leaving, including removing mud and seeds.

Homeowners are encouraged to learn about and use native plants in their yards. Workers are advised to burn wood waste that may harbor plant pests from another part of the country or world.

When you sign on as a partner, you receive a free welcome kit with educational materials and access to additional materials including signs, brochures and banners. Your organization's logo can easily be added to materials, along with messaging to fit your local situation. More information: www.playcleango.org.

The Conversation Yet To Be Had

By Cynthia Martinez
Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System

I became Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System on May 11. Just four years and three months earlier, I was the manager of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex, overseeing the four national wildlife refuges in Southern Nevada. Those four -- Desert, Ash Meadows, Pahrangat and Moapa Valley -- called me and are the reason that I am devoted to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

There are many “firsts” associated with my selection -- first woman, first Hispanic, first to have worked in Ecological Services. Heck, we could also say that I am the first from New Mexico, where we love our green chili! At the end of the day, it matters to a lot of people. It matters to my family, who is prouder than anyone might expect. As much as my family means to me -- and they mean the world -- it matters to a lot of people on the ground working on national wildlife refuges....and that matters to me.

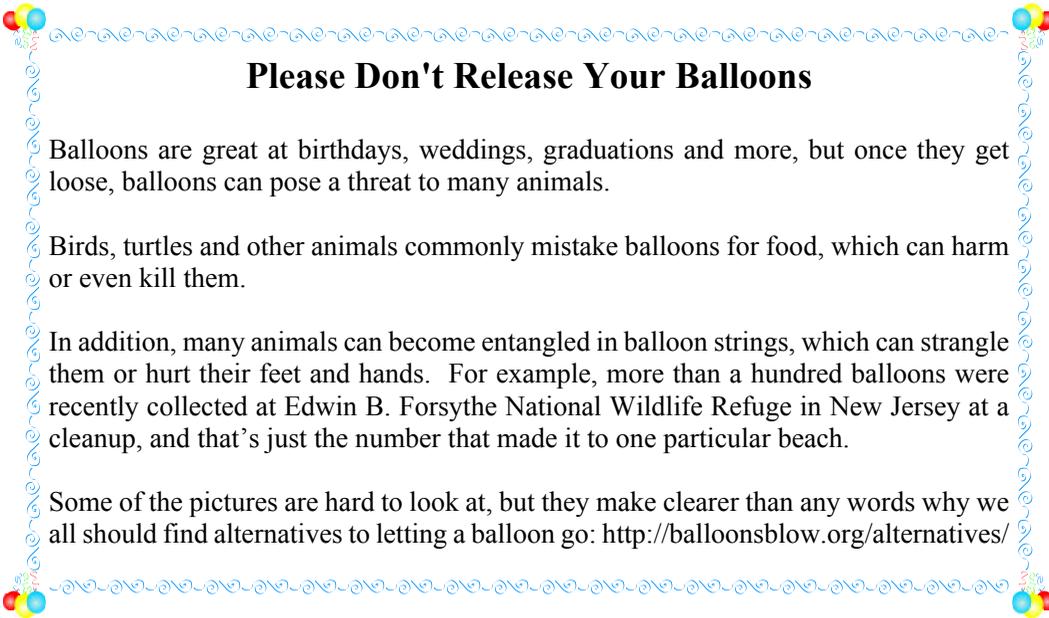
On the topic of my appointment, Lynn Greenwalt, former Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System, wrote, “A truly big-time ‘first’ for everyone and an event too long in coming. I do have to say, though, that I am delighted that it waited for you to come along and are the one to have broken the gender barrier for the Refuge System. (My wife) Judy is even more ecstatic, since she is a graduate of the era when women just did not stand a chance. As she has pointed out more than once, ‘I could not possibly become a refuge manager, so I married one.’ It was that difficult, once upon a time.”

My first act as Chief was to attend the Ambassadors Program team meeting at the National Conservation Training Center. There, we set the stage to develop the training that will offer folks the tools to engage our surrounding communities. As much as connecting to urban communities is a priority, we should not forget those rural communities within which we work and live.

The first national wildlife refuge I visited after being named Chief was J. Clark Salyer in North Dakota, a fitting choice, as it is the namesake of the first Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

At the end of the day, I’m grateful for your emails and good wishes. And rest assured that we have our vision set forth in [*Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation*](#). As much as I look forward to seeing the majestic places that we are entrusted with managing, I most look forward to the conversations yet to be had with each of you who embrace the challenge of wildlife conservation.

Thank you for all that you do for wild places and wild creatures. I look forward to our next conversation.



Please Don't Release Your Balloons

Balloons are great at birthdays, weddings, graduations and more, but once they get loose, balloons can pose a threat to many animals.

Birds, turtles and other animals commonly mistake balloons for food, which can harm or even kill them.

In addition, many animals can become entangled in balloon strings, which can strangle them or hurt their feet and hands. For example, more than a hundred balloons were recently collected at Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey at a cleanup, and that's just the number that made it to one particular beach.

Some of the pictures are hard to look at, but they make clearer than any words why we all should find alternatives to letting a balloon go: <http://balloonsblow.org/alternatives/>

Friends of ENWR
c/o Erie National Wildlife Refuge
11296 Wood Duck Lane
Guys Mills, PA 16327