



Bitter Lake

national wildlife refuge
Roswell, New Mexico



FALL 2009

www.friendsofbitterlake.com

Refuge Roundup

Flooding the Hunter Marsh

Jeff Sanchez wishes to let the members of the Friends know that the hunter's marsh area has not been flooded with water as early as in the past years. Water has been collected for the flooding but the endangered Pecos Sunflowers have not dropped all their seeds. As soon as the seeds mature and drop, the marsh area will be flooded as in past years.

Diverting the Pecos into its old oxbow.

After serious flooding by the Pecos in the 1940's, the river, through the Bitter Lake Refuge, was channelized. The river was "straightened" by dredging new channels to hasten the outflow of water during times of flood. After sixty years, sections of the river that flow through alluvial soil have cut new channels forming a normal meandering path with slow flowing pools. Sections of the river at the southern end of the refuge however, were cut through rock with has prevented the river from assuming its meandering ways. An unintended consequence of the channelization has been to remove substantial habitat for the federally threatened Pecos Bluntnose Shiner (*Notropis simus pecosensis*). A meandering stream with abundant slow flow pools is ideal habitat for the Bluntnose Shiner while fast flowing streams flush their eggs out to downstream areas and reduce their numbers.

During the summer of 2009 a project was undertaken to return the Pecos to it's old oxbow channel. The channelized portion was blocked at both ends by a large net, seined by volunteers and the endangered fish moved to the old oxbow. A large dike was then build across the Pecos at the start and end of the channelized section

forcing the Pecos to assume it's old meandering channel. See the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=te2kzcM9BYI>

Recently a Fish and Wildlife team returned to seine the newly created oxbow section.



Old Oxbow channel

Channel cut in the 1940's

A portion of the report follows
"...The initial fish community sampling at the Oxbow 4 reconnection site is encouraging. The Oxbow 4 reconnection site is more similar to the non-control sites than the control site in total number collected and relative abundance of Pecos bluntnose shiner. Fish assemblage metrics are also encouraging. The control site is numerically dominated by few species, during this trip western mosquito fish, red shiner and plains minnow made up 90% of the fishes collected. The native pelagic spawning guild at the control site was low, only 7.1% of the fish community compared to 39% of the fish community at the Oxbow 4 reconnection site. ... As habitat in the new channel responds to high flows, the Oxbow 4 reconnection site should continue to improve, and provide habitat for native Pecos River fishes."

This may be your only issue!

In order to cut costs, we are changing our newsletter to an online version.

Also, if you are not yet a member, this is our introductory issue. We encourage you to join the Friends of Bitter Lake NWR. You can do so easily by visiting us on our web site at the address above.

If you would like to continue to receive a printed version of this newsletter, please contact the Friends at 625-4011. Be sure to leave your name and address.

The newsletter will continue to be viewable on our web site at the address above.

If you have not yet registered for e-mail updates on the web site, we encourage you to do so to stay abreast of current or special events.

General Membership Meeting

December 12, 2009
12 Noon
Joseph R. Skeen Visitor Ctr.

What's in this Issue?

- Refuge Roundup - what is new at the Refuge
- Newsletter information
- Adopt-a-feeder
- Bat houses

- Changing emphasis
- Message from the President
- Dragonfly Festival follow-up
- Nature Store has great Christmas gift ideas
- December General Membership Meeting
- Friends of Bitter Lake Committees

New Direction



The Newsletter for the Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge is moving in a new direction with this issue. An intricate web of life is clearly evident at the Refuge; the daily cycle of the sun, the onset of seasonal rains, the progression of the seasons. Refuge plants and animals respond dramatically to these cycles. The diversity of habitat

within the Refuge makes for a very complex, multifaceted web of life. Daily, refuge staff, with the support of Friends, are stewards of that web; counting birds, analyzing animal and plant communities, banding birds, improving trails, controlling invasive plants and animals, managing resources. All in an effort to protect and support this intricate web. Efforts are also ongoing to educate the larger community of this web of life and the efforts being made to protect and further it.

This and future Newsletters will have a Refuge Report section, dedicated to informing you of past, current and future projects in this ongoing task of stewardship. It is hoped that as you read of the exciting activities that are ongoing, you will be encouraged to support those efforts (with time or money)

Changing Emphasis for Friends

An informal structure has existed for several years where most of the volunteer projects undertaken by the Friends organization were populated by board members. It has been an active board consisting of individuals who love the Bitter Lake Refuge and work hard to improve and develop it. The Dragonfly Festival and Visitor Center are excellent examples.

While the efforts and results have been exemplar, one unintended consequence has been to ignore the many members of Friends of Bitter Lake who would like to volunteer for short projects but do not have a large amount of time to devote. Beginning this fall we hope to reform the various committees, adding members of the Friends of Bitter Lake with a board member as chairman to insure continuity. This issue of the newsletter has a list of the current committees and a survey of member interests. Please reply as soon as possible so we can formulate plans for the next general meeting on Saturday, December 12th.

Board members and refuge staff are also discussing the possibility of holding special events for members of the Friends of Bitter Lake such as a "behind the scenes" tour of the refuge, or a discussion of the management activities and goals of the refuge. If you have any ideas as to special events for members, please let us know via e-mail or a message at the Friends of Bitter Lake web page.



Adopt-a-Feeder

Refuge staff have set up two bird feeding stations near the Visitor Center to attract birds this fall and winter. This will provide opportunities for novice bird watchers to see many of this winter's feathered visitors. A small pond has been created near the southeast corner of the Visitor Center and trees planted near by for cover. For the last couple of weeks a covey of scaled quail have been utilizing the feeding station. One may sit in the gliding Adirondack chairs and watch the birds at the feeding station outside. A thermos of coffee or tea and a pair of binoculars can make for a pleasant morning for older visitors, like the author. The chairs also overlook one of the impoundment's used by snow geese, ducks and shore birds adding to the enjoyment. Another feeding station near the butterfly trail will provide bird watching within an easy walk.

The Friends of Bitter Lake would like to start an "Adopt a Feeder" project to support the purchase of bird seed for the feeder stations. A fifty pound bag of bird seed costs approximately \$15 and during inclement weather can go rather quickly. A donation to support a feeder would provide hours of viewing enjoyment for visitors to the refuge. You may go to the Friends web page at www.friendsofbitterlake.com to make a donation with a credit card or stop by the Visitor Center and make the donation in the Donation Box near the information desk. You may also make a donation at the cash register in the Nature Store. Please include a note with the donation indicating you wish to support the feeders if you use the Donation Box.



Dragonfly Festival

The Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge held our annual Dragonfly Festival September 11-13 at the Refuge. We would like to sincerely thank all of our sponsors for the contributions made to the success of the festival. Many members of the Friends of Bitter Lake, refuge staff, BLM staff, Spring River Zoo staff, local EMT's, Pioneer Bank, Xcel Energy, Newman Signs, Roswell National Bank, J&G Electric, City of Roswell Lodger's Tax, New Mexico Tourism Department, many local businesses, NMMI, the Roswell Garden Club, KBIM Radio, Jack FM, the Hampton Inn & Suites, Holiday Inn Express, Comfort Inn, and Cable One all made significant contributions to the success of the festival.

A great time was had by all, regardless of the weather. Temperatures fell, the sky opened and a great deal of much needed rain came down and dampened the festivities. Since this is the first time we had tours cancelled due to rain, we are looking forward to the next 8 years with no showers. We hope to see you the week end after Labor Day in 2010 (Sept. 10-13) for another bigger and better Dragonfly Festival.

We also would like to extend an invitation to the residents of Chaves County to visit the refuge. We are open from sunup to sundown every day. It is migrating season right now and you never know what sort of bird may surprise you by showing up. We are also hosting monthly tours of the refuge. Call 625-4011 for more information or visit us online at www.friendsofbitterlake.com for more information.



A young participant shows off the dragonfly she caught.

For more photos of the Festival, visit us online at friendsofbitterlake.com

Friends of Bitter Lakes Committees

Friends of Bitter Lake Committees shall be chaired by a board member and consist of members of the Friends of Bitter Lake. The chairperson shall report decisions to the board.

Nature Store - a committee to oversee the Bitter Lake Nature Store. It shall consist of a board member who will function as chairperson, the manager of the Nature Store and 1 or 2 additional members of the Friends organization. In consultation with the Nature Store manager the committee shall approve inventory purchases proposed by the manager, discount items and other matters relevant to the operation of the store. Committee actions having budget impact shall be brought to the full board by the chairman and Nature Store manager for approval.

Dragonfly Festival - a committee to oversee the Bitter Lake annual Dragonfly Festival. It shall consist of a board member who will function as chairperson and 1 or 3 members of the Friends organization. In consultation with Refuge staff the committee shall plan the annual festival, see to the preparation schedule to assure timely completion of tasks, oversee the selection of speakers, vendors, and the procurement of food for the volunteers and speakers. The committee shall also plan the schedule of activities, see to the scheduling of tours and the procurement of vans and drivers. Following the festival an after-action report shall be prepared listing what went well and what needs work. The after action report of the previous festival shall be a guide for the current festival.

Membership - a committee to recruit members and plan activities. It shall consist of a board member who will function as chairperson and 1 or 2 members of the Friends organization. A list of members shall be maintained with last name, first name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and anniversary date. In consultation with the publicity chairman (web master), the committee shall create a procedure to notify members when their anniversary date is coming. Also in consultation with the publicity chairman, the committee shall create a procedure to welcome new members to the organization and inform them of the mission, bylaws, agreement with the Refuge and opportunities for service. The chairman shall periodically report to the board on membership.

Advertising - a committee to oversee advertisement for the annual Dragonfly Festival. It shall consist of a board member (graphics chairman) who will function as chairperson and 1 or 2 members of the Friends organization. Efforts shall be coordinated to develop and maintain a "brand" for the festival and organization across the web page, print advertisements, and newsletter. In coordination with the Fund Raising committee, a budget shall be developed and brought to the full board for approval.

Fund Raising - a committee to coordinate fund raising for the organization. It shall consist of a board member (president) and 1 or 2 members of the Friends organization and members from the Honorary board who will function as advisors when needed. In coordination with the Advertising committee, this group will procure donors to support the annual Dragonfly festival; motel rooms, food stuffs, Roswell Loggers Tax, NM Tourism department grand and other sources. In addition the committee will see to the development of a list of refuge projects in coordination with refuge staff. The list shall consist of multiple pages for each project detailing goal, materials needed, time line and a projected budget suitable for presentation to a possible donor.



Nature Store Has Items for Your Christmas List

The Nature Store is continually adding to its books in stock. We have several children's pop-up books, reference books, coloring books and picture books for the children and young at heart on your Christmas shopping list. For the hard to buy adults and teens on your list, search through the nature books, reference books, and bird song cd books. The Store also has some great books for that artist (quilters, porcelain painters, handwork creators) in your family. These books include origami paper art, stained glass, drawing, photography how-to and coloring books that are great for those crafters, hobbyist and collectors. A new adult pop-up habitat song book will make a great conversation sofa table book or a great gift for that teen on your list.

The store also has soft dragonfly patterned designer pillows, bird art work (a trio of these would be wonderful framed over a sofa or in a bedroom for that designer look!), children's note cards (with stamps included would be great for that shut-in), one-of-a-kind ceramic magnets (for your co-workers or club members), ceramic table serving dishes, hand-crafted jewelry and yard signs.

The Nature Store will have new items coming in the the first week of December. The new 2009 dragonfly pin has been ordered and they will also be here before Christmas. So come out, visit the store for a gift for your special person and view all of the wonderful migratory birds on the refuge right now.

Remember, if you are a Friends member you will receive a 10% discount on your book purchases. If you are not a member, fill out the membership form in this newsletter, mail it in and you will receive your discount just in time for your Christmas purchases. The Refuge is truly Roswell's best kept secret and a wonderful place to bring those holiday visitors! Where else could you come see over 10,000 cranes or so many species of ducks!

Bat Houses

One of the presentations at this years Dragonfly Festival was a well attended session on bats. There were many questions following the presentation and some asked about bat houses. Providing bat houses can help build the populations of many valuable bat species. Providing houses furnishes places for bats to roost, hibernate and raise young. This is, in addition to and when, natural sites are not available.

Most likely to inhabit bat houses are little brown bats, big brown bats, eastern pipistrelle and the eastern long-eared bat. In the northern two thirds of the U.S. and Canada, most bats migrate south in the winter. Most bats that inhabit bat houses will move to caves, or mines. Tree roosting bats will fly south. Bats find houses by sight. If a house in the proper location, meets the requirements and is needed, the bats will move in on their own. The majority of bats that use houses are females using the house as nurseries.

Why put up a bat house?

Folks are frightened by bats because they think they are vampires. Some people are frightened because they don't understand. Really, bats are our friends, especially the insect-eating bats. They eat a huge amount of mosquitoes.

The brown bat, for instance, noshes on so many mosquitoes a day, that its consumption is roughly analogous to a 10-year-old eating 250 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

Bat House Placement

Bat boxes should be hung at least 15' above the ground--the higher, the better. Research shows that they are more successful if they have at least 8 hours of sun. The morning sun is most important. Bat houses should face the south or southeast. In northern areas the top third of the house should be painted brown or black with a latex water base paint to aid in warming the box. In southern parts of the country, the boxes can be painted latex water base white, if there is too much direct sun. Bat houses mounted 20' away from trees are inhabited twice as quickly as those in wooded areas.

http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia_SI/nmnh/batfacts.htm

http://www.amnh.org/science/papers/bat_fossil.php



Friend's Membership Query

We always welcome help from the Friend's members. In order to best utilize your talents and interests, we are asking that you fill out this very short survey and send it back to us as soon as possible. We want you involved!

You can also fill this out online on our web site at <http://www.friendsofbitterlake.com>

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ E-mail: _____

Thank you for your interest in The Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

As you may know, the purpose of The Friends group is to promote the Refuge and its relationship with the community through increasing awareness of regional wildlife, conservation techniques and environmental issues.

In order for us to provide on-going assistance to the Refuge we need your help in a variety of ways. Please let us know how you would like to be involved with The Friends of Bitter Lake by completing and returning the below information.

As the need arises, I am interested in helping the Friends of Bitter Lake with:

- Refuge Bird Counts
- Dragonfly Festival Committee (planning details for the annual festival held in early Sept.)
- Dragonfly Festival (hands-on helpers during the festival)
- Special Refuge Projects (e.g., trail maintenance, bird-banding, Buffalo Jump Project, etc.)
- Information Desk-Nature Store
- Nature Store Committee (inventory & merchandizing)
- Promotion Committee (marketing & image development)
- Fund Raising Committee (identify & develop funding sources for Friends' projects, including Dragonfly Festival)
- Membership Committee (recruit & retain members; develop membership "perks")
- Help at The Friends' "booth" at various community events
- Financial only
- Assist staff w/community education & outreach:
 - Environmental education (e.g., school groups)
 - Leading Guided Tours of Refuge
 - Other: _____

Please bring this with you to the December General Friends' Meeting or mail back to us.

4065 Bitter Lakes Road, Roswell N.M. 88201

Thanks very much. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

The Friends of BLNWR

Date: _____

General Membership Meeting

Friends of Bitter Lake will hold the annual Christmas meeting at noon on Saturday December 12th at the Skeen Visitor Center. As in past years it will be a "pot luck" lunch. Board members will bring a meat or main course entree. Friends members are asked to bring a favorite dish with a recipe. We will put the recipes on the web page so all can try it later at home. A short presentation will be given by the new manager, Joe Saenz, on projects and developments at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

Goshawk
*Freezing winter morn
 doves huddle against the wind
 death comes on silent wings.*

*Morning fog creeping
 hoarfrost covering the ground
 warm dove huddle
 Goshawk on motionless wings
 swiftly comes a silent death*



PRSRT STD
 US Postage
 PAID
 Roswell, NM
 Permit 30



4065 Bitter Lakes Road
 Roswell, NM 88201

Message from the President - Fall 2009



Bill Siders
 Board President

The fall migration is well underway with song birds, shorebirds, and hawks moving south for the winter. Sandhill cranes are arriving as are ducks and geese. It is a great time to visit the refuge at dawn or sunset to watch the cranes fly out and return to roost at night. If you haven't sit on the bluff on the southern end of the refuge and watched thousands of cranes return

from feeding in area farm fields you have missed one of the unique events in southeastern New Mexico.

Refuge staff and Friends have also started the monthly early morning tours the first Saturday of each month. If you have wondered about restricted areas, endangered species protection, or wildlife management in general this is a wonderful opportunity for an educational experience for the family. Call 625-4011 for more information and topics or visit us online at friendsofbitterlake.com.



If you love nature and want to become more involved in the activities at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, then we would love to have you join the Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge. For a very low fee, you can stay informed with information affecting our Refuge as well as special projects we are involved in such as bird banding, counting, education and the annual Dragonfly Festival.

For more information on how to join our group or for a membership form, please speak with our representative at the Nature Store.

www.friendsofbitterlake.com