

The Pelican Flyer



October 2015

www.firstrefuge.org

Compiled and written by Carol Lynn Peterson and Tim Glover
This newsletter is available on our website at www.firstrefuge.org/about/librarynewsletters

From the President's Desk

Hello everyone and welcome back to another busy season of activities and events. I hope you are all well rested and ready to put your volunteer hats on! We have already begun preparations for another great Pelican Island Wildlife Festival next year and hope that you can help out. There are opportunities for helping with the planning of our event, or the day-of, so save the date—March 12, 2016, and let us know if you would like to get involved.

This should be a season of many projects and changes at the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, as vacated staff positions are now being filled. The new Refuge Complex Project Leader is Bill Miller who we hope you had the chance to meet at our June General Meeting. Since then, several more new staff have been added and we plan to feature a brief introduction to each over the next several months in our newsletter.

This past year a new organization was formed, serving a similar purpose as PIPS, each in support of the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. This new group is known as the Friends of Pelican Island Refuge and is made up almost exclusively of individuals who have signed up and been trained as refuge “volunteers.” These volunteers put in regular hours on the refuge, helping with some of the routine chores, greeting the public, and giving tours.

Our two groups currently have identical missions. Even though the day-to-day activities of the groups don't usually overlap, the existence of both groups is a hindrance to moving forward with future projects at the Refuge that will require public support and fund-raising. With the assistance of Refuge staff and the National Wildlife Refuge Association, (the umbrella support organization for all refuge “Friends” groups around the country), we explored the possibility of merging the two groups. In the end, though, PIPS has decided to remain an independent organization with a broadened mission, although still with the primary focus of supporting, and being an advocate for, the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. Our Board of Directors has made this decision, as we feel it is in the best interest of the Refuge, and for preserving the twenty-three year heritage of PIPS. As always, we encourage you to support the refuge and volunteer wherever and whenever you can. We thank you for your support on behalf of PIPS and the Refuge!

Steve Massey, President

October General Meeting—Southeastern Beach Mouse

Beach mice inhabit coastal dunes in the panhandle and along the Atlantic coast of Florida. Development of coastal areas has caused a loss of habitat for beach mice and other plants and animals that live in the dunes. Due to this loss of habitat, five of the six subspecies of beach mice found in



Photo: USFWS

Florida are state and federally listed as either endangered or threatened. Human activities such as walking in dunes, bringing pets into the dunes, and removing native vegetation also lead to the loss of habitat and the fragmentation of remaining habitat. Not only does protecting the dunes help to protect beach mice, it also protects the people and structures near the coasts from the effects of hurricanes.

The southeastern beach mouse is one of three subspecies that inhabit the east coast of Florida, although the pallid beach mouse, which occurred in the area of Volusia and Flagler counties, has been considered extinct since 1959. The southeastern beach mouse had a historical range from Volusia to Broward counties. Its range, is now limited mostly to the Canaveral National Seashore area, and sporadically in Indian River and St. Lucie counties, including the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Pelican Island NWR Restoration Coordinator Oliver van den Ende will be the speaker at our meeting this month. He will give a presentation about the southeastern beach mouse, its status on the Refuge, and efforts the Refuge would like to undertake, as part of comprehensive habitat restoration on the refuge. Please join us to learn more about the beach mouse and how you can help minimize impact to this elusive dune critter. You can also help us welcome Oliver, as the “senior” member of new Refuge personnel, and any other staff who may also attend the meeting. Our meeting is Monday, October 26th, 7 pm at the North Indian River County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd. in Sebastian, and all are welcome to attend.



Photo: USFWS

Source: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Wildlife Refuge Week Celebrated

To celebrate the nation’s enduring connections to the natural world and the unique ways nature touches everyone’s lives, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is celebrating National Wildlife Refuge Week from October 11-17, 2015.

National wildlife refuges, managed by the Service, have been part of America’s rich natural heritage since 1903, when President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island in Florida. Today, you can visit a refuge to fish, hunt, hike, birdwatch or simply commune with nature. While you’re there, learn how refuges protect natural spaces and improve life for you and your community.

“Americans are fortunate to have access to a wide network of national wildlife refuges close to where

they live, from protected areas near cities like Philadelphia and Los Angeles to the coasts of the Pacific Northwest and Southeast,” said U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell. “National Wildlife Refuge Week highlights the value of these protected spaces to wildlife and people alike and is a great time to explore your local refuge.”

“National Wildlife Refuge Week provides an ideal opportunity to discover the precious legacy that refuges represent,” said Service Director Dan Ashe. “I hope Americans use this occasion to visit a refuge and recommit to preserving these special places for generations to come.”

Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, September 29, 2015

If you missed out on the activities of National Wildlife Refuge Week, you may be interested in the “Ding” Darling Days at the J. N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island. If you happen to be in the area of Ft. Myers this week, October 18-24th, stop by and enjoy their celebration, and be sure and say “hi” to Paul Tritaik, who previously was manager at the Pelican Island NWR. For more information, visit them at <http://dingdarlingsociety.org>.

Who’s Who at the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge

Over the next several issues we plan to feature a brief biography of each of the staff who have joined the Pelican Island NWR recently. And since one of them is the speaker at our meeting this month—who better to start off with than Oliver van den Ende!

Ever since he can remember, Oliver has had a keen interest in anything biological, especially aquatic life. His observations and experiences in Africa, western Europe, and North America have made him aware of the limits of our Earth’s natural resources, and rate at which these are being depleted. Born in The Netherlands, he spent his childhood in Tunisia, Kenya, Liberia, and The Netherlands before moving to the US to attend college. After completing his undergraduate studies in marine biology in Melbourne, Florida he obtained a master’s degree in fisheries management at the University of Maine, Orono.

Following his studies, Oliver first worked as contract project manager in NASA’s space life sciences division at Kennedy Space Center, helping provide ground support for biological experimentation on the Space Shuttle, Mir Space Station, and International Space Station. In 2005, he began working for an environmental consulting firm, where he developed natural resource management plans, conducted field studies, and provided other environmental services to a range of federal and state agencies in the Carolina’s, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and New York. In 2011, he was hired by the Service as a regional planner, working primarily on land protection efforts, including Cape Romain, Everglades Headwaters, Pee Dee, Mountain Bogs, and Paint Rock River refuges.

In December 2013, Oliver joined the Everglades Headwater Complex team as a restoration coordinator (wildlife refuge specialist) in close collaboration with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). His primary duties include oversight of a variety of wetlands restoration projects in Florida. These wetlands are located on private lands, where landowners have formed conservation partnerships with NRCS to restore and maintain these fragile resources. Other duties include assisting the Complex with biological work, NEPA, land acquisition, and special projects.

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Find Your Way Outdoors

Explore trip ideas. Build a trip. Find places to go and things to do on national wildlife refuges, national parks and other public lands in the largest inventory of federal land in America at www.recreation.gov.

The site includes information to help you find permit locations and wilderness areas as well as tours. Articles will help you search find a range of activities.

This month's featured destinations include places "for a haunted good time...." America is filled with spooky little hidden corners and old colonial towns with legends, ghost stories and other lore. Old spirits, energies, tales, impressions or whatever you want to call them—even inhabit our wide open spaces.

Itching for a little rush of adrenaline and a few bone-chilling history lessons this Hallows' Eve, or any time of year? Look into one of these American "haunts."

"Spooky" destinations in Florida include the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument in St. Augustine and the De Soto National Memorial in Bradenton.

The PIPS newsletter is published in the months of January, April, June and October. Subscription is included with membership and delivered by e-mail only, unless requested otherwise, or no useable e-mail. Please contact us to notify of change of address or e-mail.

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Thank you!

Pelican Island Preservation Society
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