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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER  
OF FRIENDS OF  
ANAHUAC REFUGE

PO BOX 1348  
ANAHUAC, TX 77514



# Gator Tales

FRIENDS OF ANAHUAC REFUGE

## Refuge Manager's Report

By Jimmy Laurent, Refuge Manager



As we wrap up the 50<sup>th</sup> year of Anahuac NWR I am reminded of all the great things we have accomplished this year. Many of the projects and events would not have been possible if it weren't for the hard working staff, outstanding Friends group and volunteer base that we have. Despite the across-the-board sequester budget cuts, we are still managing to do great things.

Here is a short list of the major projects that were completed this year. Keep in mind that the majority of these projects were funded through grants and the use of partnerships.

### Grandberry Reservoir

Now that the Grandberry Reservoir has been completed we can pump freshwater into Shoveler's Pond by way of the Chambers Liberty County Navigation District canal system. Once the Reservoir is full, we can then divert that water into Shoveler's Pond and target the invasive species Phragmites. We can quickly choke out the Phragmites by raising water levels and encourage submerged aquatic vegetation to re-generate once the water begins to recede.

### Replacing deck boards along the waterfowl hunter accessible blind on the East Unit

This project was completed using our four participants in the Youth Conservation Corps this summer. The boardwalk leading up to the blind had several deteriorated boards and was in poor condition. With the help of Refuge maintenance workers Nathan Kear and John Stevens, the YCC kids were able to replace over 540 feet of deck boards. In addition, they were able to seal the boards and complete the project.

### Aerobic septic system

The new upgrade to the RV site is nearly complete. The septic system, sewer lines, water and electrical lines all have been installed. The new site will have the capability to accommodate 10 new RV pad sites. This much needed upgrade would not have been completed without the help from the fire staff and maintenance staff from both Anahuac and McFaddin Refuge. This was and will continue to be a team building

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## President's Message

By Matthew Jackson, FOAR President

The busy summer started off with another successful Fishing Day in June. Refuge staff and volunteers welcomed nearly 300 visitors to Frozen Point for fishing, games, and crafts. In July, refuge staff, Youth Conservation Corps students, and the Friends hosted over 20 kids at the Junior Ranger summer day camp.

This summer, we also reached out to urban nature centers in Houston with our "Going Wild in the City" blog. Our summer urban outreach included an informational presentation about the refuge at REI-Houston in August.

Our "50 for 50" fundraising goal is progressing as well. We have raised over **\$30,000** so far this year from generous donors. Support continues

to come in for our book project in addition to our other ongoing projects.

As the summer comes to a close, we look ahead to the fall. We are already starting to see some of the migratory species come back to the refuge as they make their long journey south, including our RV volunteers. Having them come back provides a significant boost to the number of things we can do. Fortunately, while they were away, we had several new local volunteers step up to help keep our nature stores open. A **BIG THANK YOU** to our new volunteers!

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### Our Mission

**The mission of the Friends of Anahuac Refuge is to support, preserve, promote, and enhance Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge and its use for recreational, educational and scientific research purposes.**

# Refuge and FOAR Happenings

## June - Fishing Day



## July- Summer Day Camp

## September - GatorFest

Dustin, Levi, James, and Stephanie at USFWS booth



Eddie Taylor from Samson Energy and Glenn Krum, a FOAR member, working at our booth.

# I Just Purchased Something of Value

By Tim Cooper, Project Leader, Texas Chenier Plain NWR Complex

Like every year of my adult life, last week I provided a small amount of funding to purchase a little bit of habitat for wild life. If I add my small contribution to others from a very large group of conservationists, it really adds up! The habitat I will help purchase will be protected and administered as part of a National Wildlife Refuge System, and protected far into the future. For a modest \$15 dollar fee, I know around \$14.70 will go DIRECTLY to purchase of land or perpetual easements for conservation. These land purchases support additions for Aransas, Anahuac, Brazoria, Laguna Atascosa, McFaddin, San Bernard, Santa Ana, Texas Point, Trinity River NWRs or many other refuges across the United States. Since I have done this annually for more than 25 years, I know the collective power of this unrecognized land conservation alliance that has helped all of these locations. At Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge alone this collective effort has funded over 12.4 million dollars to purchase around 87% of the refuge.

You may have guessed already .....I just bought my Federal Duck Stamp.

As always, I was given a little piece of artwork to document my \$15 contribution. This year a Drake Common Goldeneye sits in a still pond with a soft glow of morning light illuminating the various colors in this bird's feathers. As I inspected this miniature piece of artwork, I wondered how many of the FOAR members have a duck stamp or even know about this great conservation tool. Allow me tell you a little bit of the story.

In the 1930s waterfowl were in very real and immediate trouble in the country. The dustbowl, drought and the Great Depression had gripped everyone, and life was hard for people and wildlife alike. Many people truly believed that waterfowl were headed rapidly to extinction. Great debates were held to consider closing all sport hunting in the early 1930s to slow the decline of almost all waterfowl. Something needed to be done. In 1934, the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act was passed. It required that waterfowl hunters purchase a "Federal Duck Stamp" to hunt migratory birds. The proceeds of stamp sales would help secure habitat. The first stamp artist was J.N. Ding Darling, a political cartoonist, and the Director of the Bureau of Biological Survey, which is the predecessor to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Ding Darling also drew up the "Blue Goose" design that decorates our refuge signs to this day.

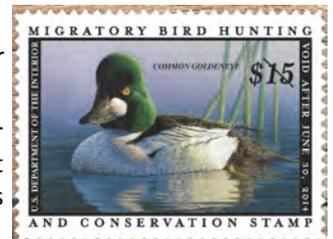
After Ding produced the first artwork, he kicked off the only Federally Sponsored Annual Art contest to select the next Duck Stamp art. This 80- year old contest is still used to select the art for the Duck Stamp. I have had the privilege of meeting some of these talented artists, and I can confirm they are dedicated to winning this competition. They receive no compensation except the recognition that their work won the most esteemed natural art competition in history. Each contestant is an expert in this work, and they study their subject well. Each year the artists are given five waterfowl species to pick from for their work. The competition is fierce and when artwork is selected, that painting is used to make the next year's stamp. Successful artists are required to sit out three years to allow other artists to share in the recognition of being the "Federal Duck Stamp" Artist. It is a coveted title that continues to draw the best wildlife artists in the world.

In the 80 years that this stamp has been produced it has contributed over \$700 million dollars for land protection and been used to conserve over 5.5 million acres of habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. This is a unique funding source that has helped create the largest network of lands devoted to conservation in the world.

It is a misconception that you need to hunt or be a hunter to purchase this stamp. Although duck hunters have carried the bulk of stamp sales over the years, stamps should be considered by anyone who values land conservation. Though the stamps started for waterfowl habitat protection they have protected countless other species on a number of refuges. Wetlands, bottomland hardwoods, and even prairie have all been protected with this tool. Stamp funding has always stayed focused on land protection from 1934 through today.

So what do you get for this purchase? You get free admission to **ALL** National Wildlife Refuges for the time that the stamp is valid which ends next June 30th.

If kept in good condition for more than a couple of years, you could usually expect to get all of your money back and then some. If you had the original 1934 stamp, which sold for \$1, you could expect it to retail for \$750 in mint condition. A stamp cost 7.50 cents in 1982, and even in used condition is retailing today for \$30.00 according to the Mystic stamp catalog.



Finally, if you're like me, you'll be comforted knowing, despite many challenges, waterfowl as a whole are no longer considered to be facing extinction. And being part of the success story is worth a lot more than the cash value of the stamp.

Hopefully you agree the Duck Stamp represents a good investment on many levels. Duck Stamps can be purchased at most Post Office locations. The Refuge Office also carries a few in stock for sale, but please call ahead and ask for Maria at 409-267-3337, just to make sure we have not sold out.

# Calendar of Events

To be successful, these events require volunteers to help with various tasks - whether it be physical labor, interacting with the public, recruiting members and volunteers, working with kids, etc. Please RSVP with USFWS Volunteer Coordinator Stephanie Martinez if you are able and willing to help. You may e-mail her at [Stephanie.Martinez@fws.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Martinez@fws.gov) or call her at 409-267-3337

## Volunteer "FOAR" A Day



Saturday, September 28, 2013

9 a.m. to noon

FOAR will be hosting a work day near the Willows Trail and Butterfly to help trim trees and clean up around the Butterfly Garden. No training or equipment needed. We just need you!!

**We'll feed you lunch!**

## Wildlife Expo



ANAHUAC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
NOVEMBER 16, 2013  
10 A.M. - 2 P.M.

Come and meet Troy Broussard and Harlan Hatcher from Swamp People!

October 4, 2013 Texas Rice Festival Winnie, TX

We'll have a booth publicizing the refuge and the Friends group. If you like talking to the public, talking about the refuge, or just plain talking, then we can use you! Visit the Texas Rice Festival website for more event information...

<http://www.texasricefestival.org/>



October 12, 2013 Bike Around the Bay

Last year, nearly 1,000 bicyclists pedaled around Galveston Bay, making stops at our Visitor Center on FM 563 and on the refuge. Refuge volunteers and Friends members will again be supporting the riders by handing out snacks and drinks and speaking about the refuge.

<http://www.bikearoundthebay.org/>



## WATERFOWL HUNT MEETINGS

- ◆ Learn about waterfowl hunting opportunities on area National Wildlife Refuges and State Wildlife Management areas
- ◆ Talk to Refuge staff
- ◆ ID waterfowl
- ◆ Obtain your Refuge permits
- ◆ Win prizes

**Sunday, October 13, 2013 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Open Q&A  
Anahuac NWR Visitor Center  
4017 FM 563  
Anahuac, TX 77514

**Thursday, October 17, 2013 5 p.m.**

Gander Mountain  
5855 Eastex Freeway  
Beaumont, TX 77706

For more information please call

Tami Schutter  
409-267-3337

### Waterfowl Season Dates:

**Early Teal** - Sept. 14 - 29, 2013

**Youth Only Hunt** - Oct. 26 - 27, 2013

**Regular Duck** - Nov. 2 - Dec. 1, 2013 and Dec. 14, 2013 - Jan. 26, 2014

**"Dusky" Duck** - Nov. 7 - Dec. 1, 2013 and Dec. 14, 2013 - Jan. 26, 2014

**Light Geese** Nov. 2 - Jan. 26;

**Canada Geese** Nov. 2- Jan. 26

**White-fronted Geese:** Nov. 2 - Jan. 12

Here are the links to waterfowl hunt regulations for the three refuges:

[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/mcfaddin/visit/visitor\\_activities.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/mcfaddin/visit/visitor_activities.html)

[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Anahuac/visit/visitor\\_activities/hunting.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Anahuac/visit/visitor_activities/hunting.html)



# Nature Store Report

By Kay Lovelace, Nature Store Manager

Could it be true that summer is behind us and the cooler days of fall are ahead? We've seen migrating birds coming through the refuge and ducks are flying in for their winter stay. Fall has arrived!!

There are several reasons to come by the Visitor Center so please drop in to enjoy the walk down to Lake Anahuac in the cooler weather and come inside to take advantage of many bargains we have to offer in the Nature Store. Several of our t-shirts are marked down for clearance to make space for new ones. Also see what's new: t-shirt designs, sun catchers, night lights, bird houses, decorative birds, new plush gators, miniature glass collector animals, new magnets, and more.

The Visitor Information Station will be in the new building late this fall and we are very excited to show it off to you (photo below). Not that we don't love our little storage building converted into a temporary Visitor Information Station but the new station will be beautiful and the view will be stupendous!!!! Watch for more news later in the fall regarding the opening.

We would be delighted to have YOU as a volunteer in one of the stores, or as an occasional helper as your schedule permits. Stephanie Martinez is the volunteer coordinator with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and can be reached at (409) 267-3337 or via email at [Stephanie\\_Martinez@fws.gov](mailto:Stephanie_Martinez@fws.gov). You may also contact me at (409) 252-3454 or via email at [kay3454@windstream.net](mailto:kay3454@windstream.net).

See you in the Nature Stores!



Recent insect sightings on the refuge. See our Facebook page for these and more photos, along with their IDs.

**New website address** ... Our website address has changed slightly: You can find us now at [www.friendsofanahuacnwr.com](http://www.friendsofanahuacnwr.com) (Notice the .com - this formerly ended in .org)

## New Procedure for Activating Kroger Card

We would like to thank all our members and supporters who have participated in Kroger's Neighbor to Neighbor program in the past. Kroger's has changed their program this year, so we will no longer be using the printed letter and barcode.

We are now part of a new program for Texas and Louisiana called Kroger's Community Rewards. You can still help Friends of Anahuac Refuge (FOAR) by registering your Kroger Plus Card on-line and linking it to the Friends of Anahuac Refuge organization. Then, each time you shop using your card, Kroger will contribute a portion of their proceeds to FOAR. Share this information with friends, relatives and neighbors. The donation from Kroger is used for Refuge projects in support of our mission. The directions to register and link your card to Friends of Anahuac Refuge are as follows:

### To link your Kroger Plus Card to the Friends of Anahuac Refuge:

If you already have an on-line Kroger Account	If you DO NOT have an on-line Kroger Account
Go to <a href="http://www.kroger.com">www.kroger.com</a>	Go to <a href="http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com">www.krogercommunityrewards.com</a>
Log into your account	Scroll down to TEXAS
Go to MY ACCOUNT	Click on ENROLL NOW
Scroll down to the bottom right corner, there should be a box there that says "Community Rewards". If you don't see this, click on Account Settings and look for "Community Rewards".	Enter your information: You will need your Kroger card. They will ask for your card number, which is located on the back.
Click EDIT (fill in form if requested)	
Enter #82267 or click search and select Friends of Anahuac Refuge	You will be asked, which community organization you would like to support. Enter #82267
Click Save.	You may have to confirm your e-mail address.
That's it. Now every time you shop using your Kroger Plus Card, you'll be supporting FOAR. Thank You!	That's it. Now every time you shop using your Kroger Plus Card, you'll be supporting FOAR. Thank You!

***Thanks to Paula Webb for working up this set of instructions.***

***If you have any problems or if you'd like to link your card to FOAR and do not have internet access, the volunteers at the Visitor Center on FM 563 should be able to help. Stop by during normal operating hours.***

*(President's Message, continued from page 1)*

The first week of August, I returned to the Friends Academy to share our achievements over the past year with this year's class. It was a privilege to speak about our group because of the things we have accomplished in the last year in addition to our upcoming plans. I could not say we are the largest group, have the most volunteers or the biggest budget, but I can say with confidence that ***no refuge Friends group has more potential than us.*** It all starts with outreach and recruiting. September and October offer several opportunities for those near the refuge and in Houston to learn about the refuge and FOAR. November marks the return of the [Wildlife Expo](#) on the refuge. Lots of activities are planned and several other nature organizations are partnering with us to help put on the event.

With over 80 percent of U.S. citizens living in urban areas, it is hard to ignore the impact of urban outreach. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has recognized the need to reach out to these areas because many people are unfamiliar with refuges, much less the outdoors in their own backyard. Our organization has a tremendous opportunity to reach out to Houston residents. I can recall one moment while visiting the [Houston Museum of Natural Science](#) for our "Going Wild in the City" blog. As I looked at the Texas coast wildlife display, I couldn't help but watch a father point out animals to his two curious children. Youth today are losing touch with nature because of technology and reality television, and yet, they are still captivated by their natural surroundings. The refuge provides the best reality show of all...*nature!* Thank you for your support and making **YOUR** National Wildlife Refuge a reality.

***See you this fall at the refuge and at Wildlife Expo!***

exercise. There are however a few items still needing to be completed which include: the culvert installation near the site entrance, bringing in rock to all the pad sites, finish building the electrical control room and level off the entire work site. Once everything is complete, the refuge will have several live oak trees installed later this year. These trees were purchased through the Lagow's (one of our refuge neighbors) and will be planted later this fall near the back of the RV site.

## **VIS**

The Visitor Information Station rollercoaster that we have been riding for several years now is almost over. Hang in there folks! The roof components have been installed, the bathroom is nearly complete, the walkway and entrance ramps are done. Over the next two months we expect to have all the exhibits installed by Capital Exhibits and soon a new building to call home. This new building will be rated to Texas Windstorm standards and was built in a hexagon shape to deflect/defer winds and water energy should we have another hurricane.

## **Wildlife Exposition**

For the first time since Hurricane Ike, we will be bringing back the Wildlife Expo. What a great time to bring the expo back as we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Anahuac NWR, to promote refuges by allowing the public a free opportunity to participate in recreational opportunities on the Refuge.

This is a great event for outreach in the local community. We expect to have about 700 visitors and 75 volunteers to come out and participate in this event, local newspapers that promote this event and local news stations that request us to provide them with interviews featuring this event. By consistently having this event every year, we will be able to reach out to more and more communities in the local area, including urban populations, minority groups, and those with disabilities. We have local senior groups that attend this event because it is a unique and accessible experience that improves their quality of life, and allows them to visit the Refuge and participate in recreational opportunities.

In addition to all those projects, we have great events in October, including The Rice Festival, Galveston Bay Foundation's Bike around the Bay, and the Big Sit. **So come out and see us soon!**

## **Wildfires**

*By Tami Schutter, USFWS Ranger*

Have you ever stepped out of your home to see a fog all around, and the smell of something burning, and wondered what it is? Aside from being a strange smelling cloud, this could actually be an uncontrolled fire, or wildfire. This is not to say that there is a wildfire in your neighborhood and you need to evacuate, but it definitely could be evidence of what is going on around you.



There have been a handful of times that I have gone to visit my parents, who live about 30 minutes north of Galveston, and have smelled and seen smoke from a wildfire that was burning on the other side of Galveston Bay.

What causes wildfires, you ask? Well, they can be caused by a number of things. They can be caused by unsupervised kids playing with fireworks, an overheated vehicle traveling over dry grass, or even a brush fire that gets away from someone. There are; however, ways that wildfires start which have nothing to do with human actions. Before humans inhabited this land, wildfires were being started by lightning strikes. These lightning strikes would hit a tree or maybe a dry clump of grass, and start a process that has been occurring in nature since the beginning of time.

Though wildfires can seem scary and dangerous, they are actually very beneficial to soil and to plant life. The charcoal produced by the wildfire is left on the ground and absorbed into the soil. This serves as an addition of nutrients into the soil, which is much needed food that encourages plant growth.

Even though wildfires, and controlled fires for that matter, may seem to be a nuisance and can cause your allergies to go crazy, please keep in mind the benefits. There is no way for us to spread fertilizer on all the land that has been set aside for conservation, so let's be happy there is a natural way to keep our lands looking great and serving as healthy habitat for our wildlife.



# Gator Tales

## Friends of Anahuac Refuge

PO Box 1348

Anahuac, TX 77514



[www.friendsofanahuacnwr.com](http://www.friendsofanahuacnwr.com)

Your Friends of Anahuac Refuge Board of Directors meets the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the US Fish and Wildlife headquarters at 4017 FM 563.

You are welcome to come and share your ideas.

### F.O.A.R. Board of Directors

**President** — Matt Jackson

**Vice-President** — Travis Lovelace

**Secretary** — David Sarkozi

**Treasurer** — Tommy Harris

#### At Large Members:

Rose Bolt      Carolyn Harris      Linda Ann Jackson

John Kemp                      Kay Lovelace

Darlene Prescott              Paula Webb

If you prefer to receive your e-mail as a PDF file via e-mail, notify the newsletter editor at [crharris1221@gmail.com](mailto:crharris1221@gmail.com)

*Comments? Questions? Send us an e-mail at [friendsofanahuacrefuge@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofanahuacrefuge@gmail.com)*

### Membership Application/Renewal

New       Renewal       E-mail Newsletter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- \$15.00 — Regular Membership
- \$22.50 — Family Membership
- \$50.00 — Sustaining Membership
- \$75.00 — Family Sustaining Membership
- \$100.00 — Corporate Membership
- \$300.00 — Lifetime Membership
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Donation (any amount)

Complete and mail with membership fee to:

**Friends of Anahuac Refuge**  
PO Box 1348  
Anahuac, TX 77514  
or join/renew online