

# National Friends Workshop

April 28–May 1, 2023



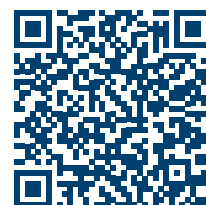
USFWS





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# Agenda

## Friday, April 28

|                               |            |                           |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| 3 pm–9:30 pm                  | Main Entry | Check-in                  |
| 5:30 pm–7:30 pm <i>Dinner</i> |            |                           |
| 6:30 pm–9 pm                  | Commons    | Meet and Greet (Optional) |

## Saturday, April 29

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| 6:30 am–9 am <i>Breakfast</i>  |  |  |   |
| 8 am–8:30 am   | Main Entry of Auditorium   | Check-in and Registration  |   |
| 8:30 am–9 am   | Robert Byrd Auditorium (250)   | Welcome and Introduction to the 2023 National Friends Workshop— <i>Linda Schnee, National Friends Program Coordinator</i>  |   |
| 9 am–10 am   |  | The Importance of Partnership - How Friends Groups and the Service Work Together to Achieve Our Goals— <i>Cynthia Martinez, Chief NWRS</i>                               |   |
| 10 am–10:30 am <i>Break Service Turner (IE) &amp; Lemon (IW) Buildings</i>                     |  |  |   |
| 10:30 am–Noon  |  |  |   |
| Turner Building <i>Instructional East (IE)</i>   |  |  |   |
| IE-103 (24)  | IE-105 (36)  | IE-107 (24)  | IE-114 (45)   |
| Open Workspace   | Tell Your Story, Share Your Passion - Getting Over the Fear of the Elevator Speech!<br>— <i>Joann Van Aken</i> | Realty 101: What is the Role of Friends in Land Acquisition?<br>— <i>Eric Alvarez</i>  | Understanding FWS Internship Programs and the Ways Friends Can Help— <i>Chelsea McKinney, Susan Wojtowicz</i>                             |
| Lemon Building <i>Instructional West (IW)</i>  |  |  |   |
| IW-151 (60)  | IW-158 (24)  | IW-160 (36)  | IW-161 (45)   |
| Excellence and the Friends Board: Strategies for Getting (Even) Better<br>— <i>Cathy Allen</i> | National Wildlife Refuge Association - Who We Are and What We Do!<br>— <i>Marco Aguilar</i>                    | Hang Out with Coalition of Refuge Friends & Advocates & Brainstorm Ideas to Expand Our Friends' Network of Support— <i>Cheryl Hart, Lisa Jansen-Rees, Joan Patterson</i> | The Subtle Differences Between Friends and Volunteers: Juggling the Hats We Wear<br>— <i>Sue Hix, Jackie Jacobson, Helen Strackeljahn</i> |
| Noon–1:30 pm <b>Lunch</b>  |  |  |   |

**1:30 pm–3 pm**

**Turner Building *Instructional East (IE)***

| <b>IE-103 (24)</b> | <b>IE-105 (36)</b>   | <b>IE-107 (24)</b> | <b>IE-114 (45)</b>  |
|--------------------|--|--------------------|---|
| Open Workspace     | Strengthening Your FWS/Friends Partnership<br>—Jennifer Owen-White, Kathy Woodward | Open Workspace     | Beyond Diversity: Organizational Culture & Systems of Change<br>—Ashleyann Perez Rivera |

**Lemon Building *Instructional West (IW)***

| <b>IW-151 (60)</b>   | <b>IW-158 (24)</b>                                       | <b>IW-160 (36)</b>  | <b>IW-161 (45)</b>  |
|--|--|---|---|
| Are You Fluent in Budgetese? Understanding the Federal Budget Process<br>—Eric Alvarez | Co-Stewardship is Not a Naughty Word<br>—Steve Delehanty | Engaging With Our Community: How the Standards of Excellence Apply to Everyone<br>—Dan Messier, Angelina Yost | A Vision to Increase Support and Recognition for America’s Wildlife Refuges—Kristen Gilbert, Dan Puskar |

**3 pm–3:30 pm Break Service Turner (IE) & Lemon (IW) Buildings**

**3:30 pm–5 pm**

**Turner Building *Instructional East (IE)***

| <b>IE-103 (24)</b> | <b>IE-105 (36)</b>                                       | <b>IE-107 (24)</b>   | <b>IE-114 (45)</b>   |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| Open Workspace     | Co-Stewardship is Not a Naughty Word<br>—Steve Delehanty | Mentor Program? What’s a Mentor Program?—Moderator: Cheryl Hart; Panelists: Sue Hix, Joan Van Gorp, Kathy Woodward | Building Your Digital Skills Toolkit<br>—Nicole Feldman, Ashleyann Perez Rivera, Eden Taylor |

**Lemon Building *Instructional West (IW)***

| <b>IW-151 (60)</b>   | <b>IW-158 (24)</b>  | <b>IW-160 (36)</b>   | <b>IW-161 (45)</b>   |
|--|---|--|--|
| Grow Your Impact by Growing Your Capacity: Tips, Tricks, and Opportunities for Raising Unrestricted Funding<br>—Jocelyn Boss, Aryn LaBrake, Joann Van Aken | Engaging With Our Community: How the Standards of Excellence Apply to Everyone<br>—Dan Messier, Angelina Yost | Combining Culture and Science: Best Practices from Arctic Village, Alaska<br>—Allyssa Morris | “Bus-Proofing” Your Friends: Ensuring Seamless Succession for Every Role<br>—Cathy Allen |

**5:30 pm–7:30 pm Dinner**

**7:30 pm–9 pm Free Time—Socializing & Networking  
Fire Pit, Commons—Roosevelt Room & Lounge**

Notes: Room capacities are shown in (). All concurrent sessions are offered twice.

# Sunday, April 30

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <b>6:30 am–9 am Breakfast</b>  |   |  |   |
| <b>8:15 am–8:30 am</b>   | <b>Robert Byrd Auditorium (250)</b>   | Plan for the Day/Housekeeping— <i>Linda Schnee</i>   |   |
| <b>8:30 am–10 am</b>   |   | Co-Designing Conservation With (not for) Communities— <i>Kayla Cranston, PhD, Director of Co-design Science and Innovation at Antioch University New England</i> |   |
| <b>10 am–10:30 am Break Service Turner (IE) &amp; Lemon (IW) Buildings</b>                     |   |  |   |
| <b>10:30 am–Noon</b>   |   |  |   |
| <b>Turner Building Instructional East (IE)</b>   |   |  |   |
| <b>IE-103 (24)</b>   | <b>IE-105 (36)</b>  | <b>IE-107 (24)</b>   | <b>IE-114 (45)</b>  |
| Open Workspace   | Tell Your Story, Share Your Passion - Getting Over the Fear of the Elevator Speech!<br>— <i>Joann Van Aken</i>    | Mentor Program? What's a Mentor Program?<br>— <i>Moderator: Cheryl Hart; Panelists: Sue Hix, Joan Van Gorp, Kathy Woodward</i>                                   | A Vision to Increase Support and Recognition for America's Wildlife Refuges<br>— <i>Kristen Gilbert, Dan Puskar</i> |
| <b>Lemon Building Instructional West (IW)</b>  |   |  |   |
| <b>IW-151 (60)</b>   | <b>IW-158 (24)</b>  | <b>IW-160 (36)</b>   | <b>IW-161 (45)</b>  |
| Excellence and the Friends Board: Strategies for Getting (Even) Better<br>— <i>Cathy Allen</i> | Understanding FWS Internship Programs and the Ways Friends Can Help<br>— <i>Chelsea McKinney, Susan Wojtowicz</i> | Combining Culture and Science: Best Practices from Arctic Village, Alaska<br>— <i>Allyssa Morris</i>   | Are You Fluent in Budgetese? Understanding the Federal Budget Process<br>— <i>Eric Alvarez</i>                      |
| <b>Noon–1:30 pm Lunch</b>  |   |  |   |

Notes: Room capacities are shown in (). All concurrent sessions are offered twice.

**1:30 pm–3 pm**

**Turner Building Instructional East (IE)**

| <b>IE-103 (24)</b> | <b>IE-105 (36)</b>  | <b>IE-107 (24)</b>  | <b>IE-114 (45)</b>  |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Open Workspace     | Making the Friends Partnership Agreement Work for You: Using Policy to Make Our Jobs Easier<br>—DC Carr, Linda Schnee | Realty 101: What is the Role of Friends in Land Acquisition?<br>—Eric Alvarez | The Subtle Differences Between Friends and Volunteers: Juggling the Hats We Wear—Sue Hix, Jackie Jacobson, Helen Strackeljahn |

**Lemon Building Instructional West (IW)**

| <b>IW-151 (60)</b>   | <b>IW-158 (24)</b>  | <b>IW-160 (36)</b>   | <b>IW-161 (45)</b>   |
|--|---|--|--|
| Building Your Digital Skills Toolkit<br>—Nicole Feldman, Ashleyann Perez Rivera, Eden Taylor | Funding Opportunities to Support Visitor Access Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law<br>—Laura Whorton | Hang Out with Coalition of Refuge Friends & Advocates & Brainstorm Ideas to Expand Our Friends' Network of Support—Cheryl Hart, Lisa Jansen-Rees, Joan Patterson | “Bus-Proofing” Your Friends: Ensuring Seamless Succession for Every Role<br>—Cathy Allen |

**3 pm–3:30 pm Break Service Turner (IE) & Lemon (IW) Buildings**

**3:30 pm–5 pm**

**Regional Breakouts for Networking**

**Turner Building Instructional East (IE)**

**Robert Byrd Auditorium (250)**

| <b>IE-105 (36)</b>   | <b>IE-114 (45)</b>   | Region 5 (CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV)<br>—Facilitators: Bill Durkin, Sue Wojtowicz |
|--|--|--|
| Region 1 (ID, OR, WA, Pacific Islands)<br>—Facilitators: Bonnie Anderson, Hope Presley | Region 2 (AZ, NM, TX, OK)<br>—Facilitators: Sarah Meyer, Allison Newberg |  |

**Lemon Building Instructional West (IW)**

| <b>IW-151 (60)</b>  | <b>IW-158 (24)</b>  | <b>IW-160 (36)</b>  | <b>IW-161 (45)</b>   |
|---|---|---|--|
| Region 3 (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, MO, OH, WI)<br>—Facilitators: Kumiko Highley, Sue Hix | Region 7 (Alaska) and Region 8 (CA, NV)<br>—Facilitators: DC Carr, Mary Deschene, Tara Schmidt, Helen Strackeljahn, | Region 6 (CO, KS, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY)<br>—Facilitators: Karen Holzer, Jackie Jacobson | Region 4 (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, PR, Virgin Islands)<br>—Facilitators: Katasha Cornwell, Natalie Gardetto |

**5:30 pm–7:30 pm Dinner**

**7:30 pm–9 pm Free Time—Socializing & Networking**  
*Fire Pit, Commons—Roosevelt Room & Lounge*

# Monday, May 1

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>6:30 am–9 am Breakfast</b>  |   |   |  |
| <b>8 am–9:15 am</b>  | <b>Robert Byrd Auditorium (250)</b>   | Doing Our Work Through the Lens of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility—<br><i>Moderator: Shannon Smith; Panelists: Bonnie Anderson, Ty Benally, Mariana Bergerson, Jennifer Owen-White</i> |  |
| <b>9:15 am–9:30 am Quick Break No Service</b>  |   |   |  |
| <b>9:30 am–11 am</b>   |   |   |  |
| <b>Turner Building Instructional East (IE)</b>   |   |   |  |
| <b>IE-103 (24)</b>   | <b>IE-105 (36)</b>  | <b>IE-107 (24)</b>  | <b>IE-114 (45)</b>   |
| Open Workspace   | Making the Friends Partnership Agreement Work for You: Using Policy to Make Our Jobs Easier<br>—DC Carr, Linda Schnee | National Wildlife Refuge Association - Who We Are and What We Do!<br>—Marco Aguilar   | Beyond Diversity: Organizational Culture & Systems of Change<br>—Ashleyann Perez Rivera  |
| <b>Lemon Building Instructional West (IW)</b>  |   |   |  |
| <b>IW-151 (60)</b>   | <b>IW-158 (24)</b>  | <b>IW-160 (36)</b>  | <b>IW-161 (45)</b>   |
| Grow Your Impact by Growing Your Capacity: Tips, Tricks, and Opportunities for Raising Unrestricted Funding<br>—Jocelyn Boss, Aryn LaBrake, Joann Van Aken | Funding Opportunities to Support Visitor Access Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law<br>—Laura Whorton           | Strengthening Your FWS/Friends Partnership<br>—Jennifer Owen-White, Kathy Woodward  | Continue the Conversation and Ask Questions (Co-Designing Conservation With (not for) Communities)<br>—Dr. Kayla Cranston<br>*Offered only once. |
| <b>11 am–11:15 am Break Service Turner (IE) &amp; Lemon (IW) Buildings</b>   |   |   |  |
| <b>11:15 am–11:45 am</b>   | <b>Robert Byrd Auditorium (250)</b>   | Applying Lessons Learned—Linda Schnee, National Friends Program Coordinator, USFWS  |  |
| <b>Noon–1:30 pm Lunch (Or pick up a bagged lunch.)</b>   |   |   |  |
| <b>Dulles International Airport Shuttles</b>   |   |   |  |
| <b>11 am Departure*</b>  |   | Arrives at airport at 1pm<br>*Based on need. This shuttle is not guaranteed   |  |
| <b>1:30 pm Departure</b>   |   | Arrives at airport at 3:30 pm   |  |
| <b>4:30 pm Departure</b>   |   | Arrives at airport at 6:30 pm   |  |



# Session Descriptions



# Plenaries

## The Importance of Partnership—How Friends Groups and the Service Work Together to Achieve Our Goals

- *Cynthia Martinez, Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System*

### Saturday 9 am

The mission of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Friends groups are a unique and invaluable part of this equation. Hear directly from our Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System, Cynthia Martinez, about why we love our Friends, and the many ways Friends can support the sites they love.

## Co-Designing Conservation With (not for) Communities

- *Kayla Cranston, PhD, Director of Co-design Science and Innovation at Antioch University New England*

### Sunday 8:30 am

A growing number of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sites are realizing that equitable and meaningful engagement of local community members in the development of programming is essential for catalyzing the durable, long-term action needed for wildlife conservation. Many who attempt to co-design programs with (not for) communities find that choosing the most effective strategies to accomplish this task is crucial and can often feel daunting. In this talk, Kayla will identify 5 psychological principles that USFWS sites are currently using to guide their co-design work and how the Friends network can help their local Service sites engage their surrounding communities in the co-design of locally relevant conservation programming. *Q&A follow-up session offered Monday morning.*

## Regional Breakouts

### Sunday 3:30 pm

Gather with others from your region to network, share ideas, and collaborate.

## Doing Our Work Through the Lens of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

- *Moderator: Shannon Smith, Connected Communities Coordinator, USFWS*
- *Bonnie Anderson, Executive Director of Friends of Tualatin River NWR, OR*
- *Ty Benally, Refuge Manager, Baca NWR, San Luis Valley NWR Complex, CO, USFWS*
- *Mariana Bergerson, Deputy Refuge Manager, John Heinz NWR, PA, USFWS*
- *Jennifer Owen-White, Refuge Manager, Valle de Oro NWR, NM, USFWS*

### Monday 8 am

The work that we do hinges on working together, in partnership with each other and with the community at large. Approaching our work through the lens of JEDIA—Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility—isn't just “a good thing to do” or a box to check; it can help us to reach our goals and do our work more efficiently, with richer and longer-lasting results. Our panelists will talk about their experiences, both personal and professional, in working with their communities to create stronger ties and include all voices.

## Applying Lessons Learned

- *Linda Schnee, National Friends Program Coordinator, USFWS*

### Monday 11:15 am

This wrap-up session will focus on how to put the discussions and best practices learned during this workshop into action when you get back home. Let's spend some time talking with each other and making concrete plans to stay in touch, continue sharing information, and translate new knowledge into action.

# Concurrent Sessions

## Are you Fluent in Budgetese? Understanding the Federal Budget Process

- *Eric Alvarez, Secretary, Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and Chief, Divisions of Realty and NWRS Budget, Performance and Workforce (Headquarters), USFWS*

**Saturday 1:30 pm, Sunday 10:30 am**

On March 9, the Biden administration formally announced the proposed federal budget for fiscal year (FY) 2024, which includes a \$83.312 million increase for National Wildlife Refuge System funding. Join us as we walk through the major steps and timing of the annual budget cycle. We'll talk about what's in the president's budget request for national wildlife refuges and how Friends can engage in budget formulation and execution. We'll also discuss how funds are allocated to meet national priorities.

## Beyond Diversity—Organizational Culture & Systems of Change

- *Ashleyann Perez Rivera, Digital Media Ranger, NWRS Branch of Communications and Digital Services, USFWS*

**Saturday 1:30 pm, Monday 9:30 am**

In our endeavors to 'diversify' boards and increase recruitment and retention of folks from communities of color, we often overlook the organizational culture that contributes to the systems that uphold barriers to inclusion, equity, and justice. This session will unpack and address the organizational culture that frequently contributes to hidden values, expectations, and practices that ultimately inform organizational priorities and actions. During the presentation we will collectively identify the mechanisms and tools available to dismantle and disengage from systems that uphold barriers to inclusion, equity, and justice. Ultimately, we will increase our familiarity with diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice principles, and identify how shifting behaviors and expectations can yield a more welcoming and inclusive board culture.

## Building Your Digital Skills Tool Kit

- *Nicole Feldman, Digital Content Consultant, Public Lands Alliance*
- *Ashleyann Perez Rivera, Digital Media Ranger, NWRS Branch of Communications and Digital Services, USFWS*
- *Eden Taylor, Communications Manager, National Wildlife Refuge Association*

**Saturday 3:30 pm, Sunday 1:30 pm**

Our stories affect how we inspire change, bolster support, and empower future leaders. Effective communication is key to building successful partnerships and establishing meaningful connections with communities. Meanwhile social media, online blogs, podcasts, and videos are constantly shaping how we tell these stories. During the presentation we will explore trends and provide practical tips and tricks on creating engaging content that resonates with your target audience and platforms. We will cover topics such as crafting compelling messages, creating engaging visual content, and measuring the effectiveness of your communication efforts.

## "Bus-Proofing" Your Friends: Ensuring Seamless Succession for Every Role

- *Cathy Allen, The Board Doctor, LLC*

**Saturday 3:30 pm, Sunday 1:30 pm**

It's a cliché question but many groups still don't have a very good answer: If someone with a key role in your group were hit by a bus, would the organization still thrive? Or would a huge hole be created, knocking everything and everyone off course? It is the responsibility of the board of directors to make sure the organization is on track for the long haul, and that involves a healthy dose of planning. Join us as we take the mystery out of "succession planning" with strategies for building a pipeline of talent, cross training, and documentation.

## Co-Stewardship is Not a Naughty Word

- *Steve Delehanty, Refuge Manager, Alaska Maritime NWR, USFWS*

**Saturday 1:30 pm, Saturday 3:30 pm**

Co-stewardship can be viewed as threatening by those of us who love refuges. But it is truly an opportunity for better conservation. Using examples, mainly from Alaska, we will explore ways in which co-stewardship can turbocharge your national wildlife refuge.

## Combining Culture and Science: Best Practices from Arctic Village, Alaska

- *Allyssa Morris, Environmental Education Specialist, Arctic NWR, USFWS*

**Saturday 3:30 pm, Sunday 10:30 am**

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge hosts an annual culture and science camp for students in Arctic Village, Alaska—a Gwich'in Athabascan community where residents continue to practice a rich cultural and subsistence lifestyle. Camp Goonzhii brings traditional knowledge and western science together for local students. In this session, we'll look at how working closely with Indigenous communities involves strong communication and continued relationship building. Allyssa will share best practices learned from hosting this camp and offer a basic framework for others to use to engage with their local Indigenous communities.

## Continue the Conversation and Ask Questions—Co-Designing Conservation With (not For) Communities

- *Kayla Cranston, PhD, Director of Co-design Science and Innovation at Antioch University New England*

**Monday 9:30 am, Offered only once.**

A growing number of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sites are realizing that equitable and meaningful engagement of local community members in the development of programming is essential for catalyzing the durable, long-term action needed for wildlife conservation. Many who attempt to co-design programs with (not for) communities find that choosing the most effective strategies to accomplish this task is crucial and can often feel daunting. In this talk, Kayla will identify 5 psychological principles that USFWS sites are currently using to guide their co-design work and how the Friends network can help their local Service sites engage their surrounding communities in the co-design of locally relevant conservation programming.

## Engaging with Our Community: How the Standards of Excellence Apply to Everyone

- *Dan Messier, Board Member for Friends of the NWRs of Rhode Island*
- *Angelina Yost, National Coordinator, Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, USFWS*

**Saturday 1:30 pm, Saturday 3:30 pm**

States, Native Groups, local communities, neighbors, partners, industries, customers, and other stakeholders help us leverage resources, understand community priorities, and ensure the benefits of fish, wildlife, and habitat conservation are realized by all. In 2011, the Service's Conserving the Future Strategic Vision identified the need to expand and diversify public engagement in conservation. As a result, the Service designed a community engagement framework to improve equity and inclusion in Service-wide conservation delivery. This framework is called the Standards of Excellence and it is grounded in social science research and internal case studies. This session will explain and provide examples on how Friends can adopt the Standards of Excellence in their work at all Service sites.

## Funding Opportunities to Support Visitor Access Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

- *Laura Whorton Branch Chief for Transportation and Data Management, NWRs, USFWS*

**Sunday 1:30 pm, Monday 9:30 am**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) has expanded the grant opportunities available to FWS stations and/or partner organizations to improve public access and recreation to public lands. There are many more opportunities than stations are able to pursue. Friends groups can really help us support visitor access. This presentation and discussion will give an overview of funding sources available through the BIL that could best fit the needs of the local community, provide tools and resources to prepare a successful active transportation project and grant application, provide guidance on how to register in the System for Award Management (SAM) and grants.gov, and showcase project highlights and program success stories.

## Grow your Impact by Growing your Capacity: Tips, Tricks, and Opportunities for Raising Unrestricted Funding

- *Jocelyn Boss, Director of Development, Public Lands Alliance*
- *Aryn LaBrake, Consultant, Public Lands Alliance and Owner, A.Rae Consulting*
- *Joann Van Aken, past Executive Director for the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance in support of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, MI, currently on the Board of Directors for the Public Lands Alliance*

**Saturday 3:30 pm, Monday 9:30 am**

Friends groups do an astronomical amount in support of national wildlife refuges and are always in need of innovative and simple ways to raise funds and engage supporters to sustain, and ultimately grow, their impact. Resource experts from the Public Lands Alliance, along with Friends peers, will provide their insights and replicable examples for creating a strategic and manageable fundraising program for your organization. Focusing on ways to raise unrestricted income for your organization, as well as tips for increasing support for your programs, the team will present several actionable opportunities for growing the capacity of your organization. This will increase your impact and further your mission for the national wildlife refuges you love and care for.

## Hang Out with Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates and Brainstorm Ideas to Expand Our Friends' Network of Support

- *Cheryl Hart, Vice-President of Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates (CORFA), President of the Friends of Tualatin River NWR, OR*
- *Lisa Jansen-Rees, Director of Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates (CORFA), Board member and volunteer for Friends of the Wichitas, OK*
- *Joan Patterson, President of the Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates (CORFA)*

**Saturday, 10:30 am, Sunday 1:30 pm**

You've known it since grade school—life is just more fun when you're hanging out with friends. Networking, talking, learning, sharing best practices, lamenting about obstacles and joining forces to face those challenges. Together! Isn't that one of the biggest benefits of this time at NCTC? Well, that's what the Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates (CORFA) is about. Join us to get the inside scoop on all our networking opportunities. We want to hear from you! Let's brainstorm how our amazing community of Friends can connect with each other and boost our ability to support each other, our U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sites, and our communities.

P. S. If you can, bring an item that has your Friends logo and we'll have some fun swapping items.

## Making the Friends Partnership Agreement Work for You: Using Policy to Make Our Jobs Easier

- *DC Carr, Visitor Services Planner, Pacific Southwest Regional Office, USFWS*
- *Linda Schnee, National Friends Program Coordinator, USFWS*

**Sunday 1:30 pm, Monday 9:30 am**

We all know that the Friends Partnership Agreement (FPA) is required for Friends groups, so let's make it work for us instead of it just being more work. Join us to discuss how the FPA can help Friends groups and Service staff clarify goals, roles and responsibilities, and can help us plan together. We'll also discuss the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Friends Policy in general, and tips around the process of getting the FPA signed and in place.

## Mentor Program? What's a Mentor Program?

- Cheryl Hart (moderator), Vice-President of Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates (CORFA), President of Friends of Tualatin River NWRC, OR
- Sue Hix, Friends of Sherburne NWR, MN
- Joan Van Gorp, President, Friends of Neal Smith NWR, IA
- Kathy Woodward, Board member, Friends of Great Swamp NWR, NJ

### Saturday 3:30 pm, Sunday 10:30 am

Did you know that FWS provides a mentor program for Friends groups and their Service partners free of charge? The program is designed to provide a team of specially trained Friends and Service representatives who work with the Friends group and site Service Staff for a full year to strengthen the Friends group and the partnership. You and your partners get to choose the topics to be the focus of mentoring, things like how to get more members, how to attract board members, how to re-energize a lagging organization, how to raise funds, how to strengthen the Service-Friends partnership and many more.

Please attend this session if:

- You've never heard of the Mentor Program and want to know more
- You've heard of it but don't understand exactly what it might have to offer for your Refuge or Hatchery partnership
- You think the mentor program is a great resource and you'd like to find out how you can become a mentor

Cheryl Hart will facilitate this session. The presenters for this will be a panel of experienced mentors, both Friends and Service Staff, and some folks who are part of Friends and Service Sites who have received mentoring in the past. There will also be lots of time for Q & A to help you decide if participating in this program might be right for you or your partnership.

## National Wildlife Refuge Association —Who We Are and What We Do!

- Marco Aguilar, Chief Operating Officer National Wildlife Refuge Association

### Saturday 10:30 am, Monday 9:30 am

The National Wildlife Refuge Association is a non-profit exclusively focused on protecting, promoting, and enhancing the 850-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest network of lands and waters set aside for wildlife conservation.

Learn about our work that is largely focused in Washington, DC. We vigilantly watch for policies and legislation that undermine the integrity of the National Wildlife Refuge System, while advocating for efforts that advance wildlife conservation.

We will discuss how the National Wildlife Refuge Association addresses Refuge System funding, management, and strategic growth, while also promoting programs that maximize the system's conservation impact.

## Excellence and the Friends Board: Strategies for Getting (Even) Better

- Cathy Allen, The Board Doctor, LLC

### Saturday 10:30 am, Sunday 10:30 am

It's Nonprofit Board Excellence Day at NCTC! Join us for a thorough exploration of what makes a nonprofit board of directors truly healthy and strong, capable of promoting its organization's mission as a strong partner for the USFWS. In this fast-paced, interactive session, we will provide a definition of "governance", review the legal duties of board members, and discuss their basic responsibilities. Other topics covered will be strategies for productive meetings, tips for improving committees, and steps for planning that sticks. We'll wrap up with a robust list of resources for learning more.

## Realty 101: What is the Role of Friends in Land Acquisition?

- *Eric Alvarez, Secretary, Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and Chief, Divisions of Realty and NWRS Budget, Performance and Workforce (Headquarters), USFWS*

**Saturday 10:30 am, Sunday 1:30 pm**

Do you know how land acquisition priorities are determined for the USFWS? Can Friends acquire lands? Do you wonder how your Friends can support land acquisition efforts? These topics and more will be covered in this session on land acquisition. We will talk about the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, as well as the America the Beautiful initiative. If you have questions about the role of Friends in land acquisition, then this session is for you.

## Strengthening Your FWS/Friends Partnership

- *Jennifer Owen-White, Refuge Manager, Valle de Oro NWR, NM, USFWS*
- *Kathy Woodward, Board member, Friends of Great Swamp NWR, NJ*

**Saturday 1:30 pm, Monday 9:30 am**

The partnership between staff and a Friends group can be productive and beneficial to their hatchery or refuge and all parties involved. In this session we will review the legal basis of the partnership and learn tips about how to structure expectations, survive transitions, and share experiences of growth and celebration.

## The Subtle Differences Between Friends and Volunteers: Juggling the Hats We Wear

- *Sue Hix, Friends of Sherburne NWR, MN*
- *Jackie Jacobson, Visitor Services Manager, USFWS, Mountain-Prairie Region*
- *Helen Strackeljahn, Volunteers, Friends, Youth, & Urban Outreach Coordinator, Alaska Region*

**Saturday 10:30 am, Sunday 1:30 pm**

Participants will define Friend and Service Volunteer and learn to distinguish the roles for each. You will test your knowledge by participating in scenarios describing situations that may occur on hatcheries and refuges and conclude with a Jeopardy challenge. Service Friends and volunteer policy will be woven into the discussion.

## Tell Your Story, Share Your Passion— Getting Over the Fear of the Elevator Speech!

- *Joann Van Aken, past Executive Director for the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, MI*

**Saturday 10:30 am, Sunday 10:30 am**

Have you ever experienced that moment when asked, “What’s new with the refuge?” and you think, I don’t even know where to begin? Join us in this session to learn some tricks in training yourself to share your message with passion. The result: Developing relationships that may lead into building both human and financial capacity for your Friends organization.

## Understanding FWS Internship Programs and the Ways Friends Can Help

- *Chelsea McKinney, Regional Intern and Fellows Coordinator, Pacific Northwest and Pacific Islands Region, USFWS*
- *Susan Wojtowicz, Intern and Fellowship Coordinator, Northeast Region, USFWS*

**Saturday 10:30 am, Sunday 10:30 am**

Friends often want to support U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff as they bring on interns, but it can be overwhelming to understand the different hiring programs and the role that Friends can play in those efforts. If that's what you're feeling, you are not alone. Please join us as we navigate the intern hiring process and various hiring authorities that allow candidates to land permanent jobs. You will also find out how your Friends organization can become part of the FWS Youth Corps, allowing you to confer Public Lands Corps certificates to interns and fellows that you hire to do work for the Service. It is easier than you think!

## A Vision to Increase Support and Recognition for America's Wildlife Refuges

- *Kristen Gilbert, Branch Lead for Communications and Digital Services, Division of Visitor Services and Communications, USFWS*
- *Dan Puskar, President and CEO, Public Lands Alliance*

**Saturday 1:30 pm, Sunday 10:30 am**

Since 2017, the National Wildlife Refuge System has been embarking on a re-branding journey to ensure these special public lands are positively received by diverse visitors, broadly recognized by the public, and authentically represented by our most ardent brand ambassadors, Friends, volunteers, and employees. After much planning we are the verge of implementing new brand elements including new visual identity elements. Also, in close partnership with the Public Lands Alliance, we are planning a national public awareness campaign and exploring ways to direct more philanthropic support to the Refuge System. In this session we will provide an overview of recent accomplishments, preview the new public awareness campaign launching Summer 2023, discuss fundraising priorities, and describe ways Friends can participate.



# Instructor Bios



### **Marco Aguilar, Chief Operating Officer National Wildlife Refuge Association**

Prior to joining the National Wildlife Refuge Association, Marco was Principal and COO at Lang Strategies, LLC. A business consulting firm that he co-founded. He was responsible for the day-to-day operations and also led the Business Development practice area for the organization. Marco spent eight years as Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the DC Chamber of Commerce. He was responsible for the organization's day-to-day operations and led the Chamber from its financial challenges to one of the strongest and most fiscally responsible business groups in Washington, DC, and the entire region.

Prior to his time at the DC Chamber, Marco served as Executive Director of the Hispanic Council on International Relations (HCIR), where he streamlined operations, directed fundraising initiatives for individuals, foundations and corporations, and facilitated communications on foreign affairs issues to the Administration, Congress, affiliate Hispanic groups and organizations and the general public. He also managed core academic institutes and educational initiatives aimed at students interested in the field of international affairs during his time at the United Negro College Fund Special Project Institute for International Public Policy (IIPP).

Marco holds a Master's degree in International Studies from Durham University in the United Kingdom and an undergraduate degree in American Studies from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Marco has lived in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and many parts of Latin America. He enjoys reading and traveling.

### **Cathy Allen, The Board Doctor, LLC**

Cathy's mission is to help volunteers who serve nonprofit organizations as board members understand their unique role, embrace their responsibilities, and organize their work for maximum effectiveness and minimum headache. She is a BoardSource-certified governance consultant with a passion for national wildlife refuges and other public lands. Cathy has served on two Friends boards and has worked with many other Friends to revitalize their board, grow their membership, and increase their impact.

### **Eric Alvarez, Secretary, Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and Chief, Divisions of Realty and NWRS Budget, Performance and Workforce (Headquarters), USFWS**

Since 2001, Eric has served as the Division Chief for the Service's Realty program where he manages all aspects of the land acquisition program including planning, budgeting, acquisitions, and disbursements from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and Land and Water Conservation Fund. Since November 2021, he has also served as the Chief of the NWRS Headquarters Division of Budget, Performance and Workforce, overseeing the National Wildlife Refuge System's budget.

### **Bonnie Anderson, Executive Director of Friends of Tualatin River NWR, OR**

Bonnie has been with the Friends since 2009. Bonnie is responsible for the long-range planning and day-to-day operations of the Friends. She works very closely with all aspects of the refuge complex including visitor services, environmental education, and restoration programs. Bonnie is responsible for creating and implementing many of the outreach programs that the Friends champion. Before Bonnie discovered the rewarding world of nonprofit work, she managed one of the largest buying responsibilities within in her company. A native Oregonian, Bonnie attended Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

### **Jocelyn Boss, Director of Development, Public Lands Alliance**

Jocelyn Boss is the Director of Development for the Public Lands Alliance (PLA) where she is responsible for leading fundraising and sponsorship activity of PLA. Since joining PLA's staff in 2019, Jocelyn launched the organization's first fundraising campaign "Our Voices, Our Lands," and is the lead on fundraising efforts related to PLA's partnership with the National Wildlife Refuge System, including the annual national event, Walk for the Wild. Jocelyn has worked with nonprofits supporting public lands since 2004 including the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, the National Museum of Wildlife Art, and Grand Canyon Conservancy.

### **Mariana Bergerson, Deputy Refuge Manager, John Heinz NWR, PA, USFWS**

Mariana has worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since 2009. She is currently the Deputy Refuge Manager at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum in Philadelphia, PA. She and the refuge team work to meet with the community to

know and better understand the stressors, joys, and needs of the community and work with community leaders/organizations to find and take on solutions. Along with the team at Heinz, she works with the community to provide job opportunities throughout the year, restore community green space, program community green space, improve environmental education opportunities in elementary schools, and works with the community to alleviate impacts to the community such as flooding.

Her previous conservation work with various organizations includes: The National Science Foundation GK-12 Partnership, Student Conservation Association, National Park Service, Wagner Free Institute of Science, and a variety of nonprofits.

She holds a B.S. in Biology and Environmental Science from Ursinus College and a M.S. in Biology from Saint Joseph's University.

### **Ty Benally, Refuge Manager, Baca NWR, San Luis Valley NWR Complex, CO**

Ty has worked at the South Texas National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Havasu NWR in Arizona, Hawaiian Islands NWR and Midway Atoll NWR in the Pacific islands, and both the Regional Office and Yukon Delta NWR in Alaska. Ty has counted seabirds (including Wisdom) and helped untangle sea turtles, sea birds, and monk seals from collapsing seawalls on the remote islands of Hawaii. Ty administered special use permits in Alaska, where he worked closely with Tribes, State, and other federal land managers to conserve wildlife and cultural resources on NWRS lands. Most recently, he helped produce a children's activity book that includes wildlife names in English and Yupik, a first for the FWS, to target Alaska native youth. Ty, who is enrolled with the Navajo Nation, has a bachelor's degree in wildlife science from New Mexico State University and an MBA in management from Hawaii Pacific University. Ty enjoys renting cabins, snorkeling, scuba diving, hiking, and traveling with his husky, Kona.

### **DC Carr, Visitor Services Planner, Pacific Southwest Regional Office, USFWS**

Born and raised in Indiana, DC Carr has worked in conservation for Nature Forward (formerly Audubon), U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during a career that started in 1998. A graduate of Northland College, in Ashland, Wisconsin, DC has a bachelor of science in outdoor education and is an NAI certified interpretive guide

and an experienced park ranger. He's worked in the Service's Sacramento Regional Office since July of 2010 and lives in Oakland, California.

### **Dr. Kayla Cranston, Director of Co-design Science and Innovation at Antioch University New England**

Dr. Kayla Cranston is Director of Co-design Science and Innovation at Antioch University New England where she leads environmental professionals and surrounding communities through co-design processes to collaboratively create conservation programming with the humans who will be most impacted by that programming. She designs and implements science-based strategy to increase long-term engagement in conservation programming with an eye to inclusive evaluation practices to promote a sustainable relationship between a diverse population of humans and nature. Visit [www.kaylacranston.com](http://www.kaylacranston.com) for more on the framework Dr. Cranston created to integrate the science of human behavior into the development of capacity for biodiversity conservation.

### **Steve Delehanty, Refuge Manager, Alaska Maritime NWR, USFWS**

Steve Delehanty is the refuge manager of Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge ("Thousands of Islands, Millions of Birds"), a vast, remote refuge with connections to dozens of Tribes and Alaska Native organizations. Steve has worked on national wildlife refuges and wetland management districts in Regions 3, 6, and 7 since the dawn of time. Well, since 1986 anyway.

### **Nicole Feldman, Digital Content Consultant, Public Lands Alliance**

Nicole started her communications career at Stanford University in 2015. She quickly found her niche in multimedia visual storytelling, combining writing with photography, video, graphics, and more, then leveraging social media and newsletters to reach the right audience. While covering health and international policy at Stanford, Nicole managed an array of social platforms, a Medium blog, and the World Class podcast. In 2019, she moved to Southeast Asia where she developed a communications plan for the UN's Community-Based Enterprise Development program and interviewed more than 30 members of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. Nicole is a UC Berkeley graduate and enjoys traveling, hiking, the beach, and Disneyland.

**Kristen Gilbert, Branch Lead for Communications and Digital Services, Division of Visitor Services and Communications, USFWS**

Kristen leads a team to improve the public's user experience with the National Wildlife Refuge System. In addition to her communications and digital media expertise, she has an extensive background in visitor services program management at the field and regional levels. Her professional interests include preventing wheel reinvention, improving customer experience, and organizational change.

**Cheryl Hart, Vice-President of Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates (CORFA), President of Friends of Tualatin River NWR, OR**

Cheryl has been working with nonprofit organizations for over 30 years serving in both staff and board positions with various groups. She joined Friends of Tualatin River NWR when she moved to Portland in 2005 and has served on the board since 2006. She is Chair of the Store Committee and actively serves on several other Friends committees. She is currently President of the Board, a position she served in from 2011- 2015. She was on the National Wildlife Refuge Association Board and Chair of the Friends Committee for that organization. Cheryl is proud to be a member of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Friends Mentor Program since 2014. Advocacy for the Refuge System and her refuge is one of her favorite things to do.

**Sue Hix, Friends of Sherburne NWR, MN**

After leaving a 30-year banking career as vice president in charge of the bank's training program, Sue did some consulting and worked part-time for the community education department of the local school district. Now fully retired, she focuses her energy on promoting and supporting the refuge through the work of the Friends. Sue has been a mentor in the Friends Partnership mentor program since 2014. She is also a Service volunteer, helping to manage and lead the refuge's nature education program to introduce the next generation to the wonders of the natural world around them.

Sue earned a B.A. in English and French at Wartburg College and an M.A. in English at Southern Illinois University. She has also completed training and now volunteers for the MN Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs. She loves working to restore her native landscape (no lawn mower!) as well as biking, hiking, canoeing, cross-country skiing, and almost anything that takes her outdoors.

**Jackie Jacobson, Visitor Services Manager, USFWS, Mountain-Prairie Region**

Jackie serves as a regional visitor services manager, and coordinates the Friends and Volunteer programs in the Mountain Prairie Region. She also assists National Wildlife Refuge System and National Fish Hatchery staff with visitor opportunities and design of visitor services-related products and facilities—exhibits, interpretive panels, publications, signs, trails, and other facilities.

Jackie received her education at North Dakota State University, where she earned a B.S. in Biological Sciences Education. She has worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the field at Audubon National Wildlife Refuge and for the regional office. In her free time, Jackie enjoys hiking on the prairie, flower and vegetable gardening, and spending time with family and friends.

**Lisa Jansen-Rees, Director of Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates (CORFA), Board member and volunteer for Friends of the Wichitas, OK**

Lisa is passionate about working with the Friends community and brings to it her experience of planning, directing and evaluating programs and services for Soldiers and their families. She is a certified trainer for the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Franklin Covey, Scream Free Institute and Imago Relationship Therapy. In addition to her efforts with Friends, she volunteers for the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma. Lisa and her husband Jim, an Army veteran, have hiked, camped, geocached, and kayaked extensively in the U.S. and Europe.

**Aryn LaBrake, Consultant, Public Lands Alliance and Owner, A.Rae Consulting**

Aryn LaBrake is a consultant for the Public Lands Alliance (PLA) supporting the development of signature impact programs and the fundraising model for PLA's partnership with the National Wildlife Refuge System. Aryn was previously the Executive Director of the Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in Albuquerque, New Mexico (2016-2021). Beyond her work with PLA, Aryn consults with organizations that support public lands and the environment including Friends organizations of national wildlife refuges, national nonprofits, grassroots organizations, and local and state agencies. Her efforts are focused on identifying new ways to

engage community and stakeholders, especially those historically excluded, to foster new partnerships and stewards of their mission.

### **Cynthia Martinez, Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System**

A fifth-generation New Mexican, Cynthia is the first woman and Hispanic to lead the Refuge System. She began her career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1993. She became Chief of the Refuge System in 2015.

During her tenure as Chief, Martinez has championed the implementation of numerous recommendations from the 2011 FWS vision document “Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation.” These include transforming and modernizing Refuge Law Enforcement and promoting an internal re-branding effort to ensure that all Americans recognize that wildlife refuges are necessary for both humans and wildlife to thrive. Through the creation and expansion of the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, she has led efforts to take wildlife conservation to the places where most Americans live—cities and suburbs. The Urban Program engages people and communities traditionally excluded from wildlife conservation to provide opportunities to experience nature and strengthen local conservation outcomes. During her tenure, the Refuge System expanded exponentially when, on August 26, 2016, President Barack Obama signed a Proclamation expanding Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The Refuge System now encompasses over 855 million acres of lands and waters.

Cynthia holds a bachelor’s degree in biology from New Mexico State University and a master’s degree in fisheries and wildlife management from the University of Arizona. Cynthia and her husband, Kenny, have a daughter, Keisha, and a son, Marcus.

### **Chelsea McKinney, Regional Intern and Fellows Coordinator, Pacific Northwest and Pacific Islands Region, USFWS**

Chelsea McKinney is the Regional Intern and Fellows Coordinator for the Pacific Northwest and Pacific Islands Region. She has been working for the FWS since 2004, starting as an intern herself, and understands the processes first hand of trying to land a permanent job. She is based in Sherwood, Oregon and enjoys time in the Pacific Northwest with her six-year-old and partner.

### **Dan Messier, Board Member for Friends of the NWRs of Rhode Island**

Dan has been a “Friend” of the National Wildlife Refuge System for over 15 years. He served as a board member of the Friends of the Patuxent Research Refuge from 2012 to 2015. During this time, Dan also volunteered in Washington, DC as an Education Guide, providing teacher development workshops, and hosting city students on a guided tour of the Maryland refuge.

Dan was a science teacher for over thirty-three years in Rhode Island, which created his love for environmental education. Currently, Dan serves on the board for the Friends of the National Wildlife Refuges of Rhode Island and is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service volunteer. In this dual role, Dan provides support for the Rhode Island national wildlife refuges and the Providence Urban wildlife Conservation Partnership. He collaborates with several conservation partners, to build and maintain native plant gardens, create urban bird habitats in Providence (Urban Bird Treaty City) and tackles invasive plant control. In addition, Dan, with partners, offers teacher development training and provides environmental education, to Providence students, usually for their first trip to a national wildlife refuge. Dan experiences first-hand the “stepping stones of engagement,” (Standard 2 of the USFWS Standards of Excellence.) He knows that the Providence students are learning about nature year-round in their community park, with support of the Providence Urban Partnership. This way, when the students arrive at Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge, they come with a sense of wonder and not with a sense of fear. Dan, along with the urban coordinator, teaches them the importance of a national wildlife refuge. He believes environmental education, at all levels, is the best way to help save the planet.

### **Allyssa Morris, Environmental Education Specialist, Arctic NWR, USFWS**

Allyssa Morris is an Environmental Education Specialist for three refuges based in Fairbanks, Alaska: Arctic, Kanuti and Yukon Flats NWRs. Allyssa received a B.A. in Geography at Kennesaw State University and M.S. in Natural Resource Management, Environmental Education from University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. She started her journey with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern in 2009. Allyssa leads classroom programs within the Fairbanks North Star Borough and in numerous Indigenous communities focusing on various life science topics. She coordinates the Voices of the Wilderness Artist in

Residency program and enjoys working with artists to communicate science through their art. In June 2023, Allyssa will join the staff at Kealia Pond NWR in Maui, Hawaii as the new Visitor Services Manager.

### **Jennifer Owen-White, Refuge Manager, Valle de Oro NWR, NM, USFWS**

Jennifer Owen-White is the first Refuge Manager of the new Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Valle de Oro is the first urban refuge built from the ground up under the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program as part of a larger push by U.S. Fish and Wildlife to reach urban audiences and connect them to the important habitats and wildlife that the Service protects. Before taking the position at Valle de Oro, Jennifer was the Refuge Manager at the Santa Ana NWR and also served as the Visitor Services Manager for the South Texas Refuge Complex. Jennifer is proud to be both a biologist (Conservation Herpetologist) and visitor services specialist. She was born in Chicago, grew up in Houston, and, as an urban girl, loves sharing her passion for the outdoors and the diverse ways people can connect with nature in urban areas.

### **Joan Patterson, President of the Coalition of Refuge Friends and Advocates (CORFA)**

Joan is the past Director of Grassroots Outreach at the National Wildlife Refuge Association. At the Association she was responsible for the daily interaction and communication with Friends including mobilizing Friends to support national wildlife refuges. Based on that experience, she knows that within the Friends community there is an abundance of skills and experiences that Friends are willing to share. She has been to Capitol Hill to testify on behalf of the Friends community and the Refuge System. Since 1995, she has been active in Friends groups first with the Friends of the Tualatin River NWR in Oregon working to acquire the resources necessary to open the refuge to the public, then with the Friends of the Potomac River Refuges in Northern Virginia and the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp. Joan and her husband Phil are the proud parents of two wonderful young women who as preschoolers helped to advocate for the Refuge System.

### **Ashleyann Perez Rivera, Digital Media Ranger, NWRS Branch of Communications and Digital Services, USFWS**

Ashleyann Perez Rivera is a Digital Media Ranger at the National Wildlife Refuge System Headquarters' Branch of Communications and Digital Services. Ashleyann supports the NWRS team with strategic

communications, coordinating with partners like the Public Lands Alliance on re-branding, creating, and supporting with internal communication and use of the NWRS SharePoint, contributing to social media, and co-leads the Multilingual Accessibility Community of Practice.

Prior to her role at the Service, she worked at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation as a Marine and Coastal Programs Coordinator. In 2017, she worked with the Urban Wildlife Conservation Programs as a fellow in the Hispanic Access Foundation's MANO Project.

### **Dan Puskar, President and CEO, Public Lands Alliance**

Dan has led the Public Lands Alliance (PLA) since 2013, renewing the organization's commitment to connect, strengthen, and represent the nonprofit partners of America's public lands. Under his leadership, PLA has more than doubled its nonprofit membership, expanded its corporate partnerships, and was selected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as its national fundraising and marketing partner to re-brand the National Wildlife Refuge System. Dan has been called by both Republican and Democratic leaders to testify on Capitol Hill regarding public lands funding, infrastructure, and partnerships. Prior to his current role, Dan served in partnership-focused roles at the National Park Foundation and National Park Service. He lives in Washington, DC

### **Helen Strackeljahn, Volunteers, Friends, Youth, & Urban Outreach Coordinator, Alaska Region**

Helen joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 6 years ago after working for the National Park Service for 10 years. She enjoys assisting Alaska region staff with all of her varied programs, but has an affinity for youth engagement.

Prior to joining the Park Service, Helen was an accountant and a middle school and elementary school teacher in St. Louis, Missouri. Helen has a BS in Accounting from the University of Missouri-Columbia, teaching certification from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and a MS in Education from Southwest Baptist University.

Helen and her husband Sam enjoy camping, hiking, biking, kayaking and exploring the great outdoors of Alaska as well as time at the beach.

### **Linda Schnee, National Friends Program Coordinator, USFWS**

Linda Schnee joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in March 2020 as the National Friends Program Coordinator. She began her work with the Department of the Interior as the National Volunteer Program Lead at the Bureau of Land Management in 2012. Prior to that, she was a Program Officer with the Corporation for National and Community Service, now known as AmeriCorps.

After graduating from the University of Vermont in 1992, Linda served as a VISTA volunteer in Tacoma, Washington, working as a volunteer coordinator with a nonprofit organization that supported young women transitioning out of foster care and the juvenile justice system. She then worked as a volunteer coordinator for a domestic violence advocacy program in Bellevue, Washington and as an English as a Foreign Language instructor in Wroclaw Poland. After moving back to the U.S. she worked with the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program in Seattle, Washington and completed a master's degree in Organizational Psychology with Antioch University Seattle. She served as the Program Director for Washington Campus Compact in Bellingham, WA from 2005-2009.

Working as the Friends program lead in the Refuge System, she says, has been a wonderful way to engage and support vital community partnerships. In her spare time, Linda enjoys hiking, camping, travel, and live music with friends and family.

### **Shannon Smith, Connected Communities Coordinator, USFWS**

Shannon received her Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Biology at Humboldt State University in California. She currently serves as the Connected Communities Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Throughout her 29-year career with the Service, Shannon has used her skill sets to bring together communities, partners, youth, and volunteers to forge and strengthen relationships that ensure people and wildlife thrive into the future. Shannon worked at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in eastern Washington, with the endangered California Condor in southern California, and at Tijuana Slough NWR before becoming a permanent Service employee.

Shannon worked as a permanent employee at San Diego NWR, Humboldt Bay NWR Complex, and Kaua'i NWR Complex. In 2015, she left the field to become the Deputy Division Chief for Natural Resources and Conservation Planning for the entire National Wildlife Refuge System. She has remained committed to

justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in conservation and has communicated the importance across various platforms in each step of her career path. Outside of work, Shannon enjoys kayaking, birding, attempting to garden and spending time with her 17-year-old twins, three rescue puppies, and two fostered/adopted cats.

### **Eden Taylor, Communications Manager, National Wildlife Refuge Association**

Eden is responsible for advocating the National Wildlife Refuge Association's message to a broader audience by leveraging communications tools. She manages the Refuge Association's website, email marketing, and social platforms while continuing to study the trends that will better connect people to the Refuge Association's mission and create a movement of support for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Eden continued her education at Louisiana State University, where she earned a B.S. in Natural Resources Ecology & Management with a concentration in Conservation Biology. She hopes to help bridge the gap between conservation science and the public through compelling communication.

In her free time, Eden enjoys hiking, finding quaint places to read under trees, and paying attention to the smaller things in life that often get overlooked.

### **Joann Van Aken, past Executive Director for the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance in support of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, MI, currently on the Board of Directors for the Public Lands Alliance**

Joann enjoyed 13 years as Executive Director with the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance in support of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge in southeast Michigan (2009 - 2022). She has much to share on developing and maintaining partnerships and fundraising. She has been a member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mentoring Team the past nine years helping others develop stronger Friends organizations for their Service sites, and is currently on the board for the Public Lands Alliance to help further connect, strengthen and represent those who continue to work on our public lands.

### **Joan Van Gorp, President, Friends of Neal Smith NWR, IA**

After completing the Iowa Master Gardener course, Joan was looking for a place to complete the community service hours needed for certification and what better place than at the Neal Smith NWR, five miles from her home. Joan began volunteering at the refuge in 2002, joined the Friends board in 2007 as Community Coordinator and became president in November 2012. She also leads guided walks, works in the Nature Store, does the ordering for the Nature Store, organizes special events and schedules the exhibits in the Ding Darling Gallery. An avid photographer, Joan provides photos for the Friends and Refuge Facebook pages. She is also in the process receiving Professional Guide certification from Iowa State University.

Joan and the Friends of Neal Smith NWR participated in the Mentoring Program in 2017-2018, with a focus on building capacity, increasing the number of Friends members and volunteers, and, increasing awareness of the Refuge and building on many successful programs. The Friends are still using the Action Plans developed during the Mentoring Program.

### **Laura Whorton, Branch Chief for Transportation and Data Management, NWRS, USFWS**

Laura Whorton is the Branch Chief for Transportation and Data Management in the National Wildlife Refuge System at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She started with the Service in 2012 as a Presidential Management Fellow and worked in the Office of Budget in budget formulation on behalf of a variety of Service programs. Laura began her career with The Trust for Public Land in the Seattle regional office where she worked in marketing and communication for several western states. She holds a BA in Environmental Studies from Washington University in St Louis and a MBA from Willamette University.

### **Susan Wojtowicz, Intern and Fellowship Coordinator, Northeast Region, USFWS**

Susan Wojtowicz is the Northeast Region's Intern and Fellowship Coordinator, a new position for the Service. Previously, Sue served as the Northeast Region's Friends, Volunteers, and Refuge Youth Coordinator. She lives in Hadley, MA with her partner and two teenage boys, and together they enjoy skiing in the winter and boating in the summer.

### **Kathy Woodward, Board member, Friends of Great Swamp NWR, NJ**

A dedicated and enthusiastic conservationist, Kathy Woodward has contributed over 11,000 volunteer hours to Great Swamp NWR. A founding member and past president of Friends of Great Swamp NWR, Kathy serves as a Friends board member, leads educational walks, greets at the Visitor Center and boardwalks, assists with the environmental book group, helps with special events and organizes volunteers in removing invasives. In 2018, Kathy received the Outstanding Conservation Partner Award from Groundwork Elizabeth, the refuge's Urban Partner.

Kathy is a trained mentor for Friends groups and staffs. She has worked on the planning team for national and regional Friends events. She represented volunteers on the National Wildlife Refuge Association board for four terms. Kathy and her husband, Carl have visited more than 130 refuges and are still counting!

### **Angelina Yost, National Coordinator, Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, USFWS**

Angelina has been working over 25 years in the field of interpretation, education and visitor services, including 11 years with the National Park Service. She met her Irish husband while working as a Peace Corps volunteer science teacher in Namibia, Africa. Angelina worked for nine years at Big Bend National Park, Texas, where both of her children were born. From 2008-2015, she was the Visitor Services Manager at the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Las Vegas, Nevada. From the lessons of growing up in a bi-racial family, Angelina has become committed to combining the goals of conservation and social justice. She is honored to be leading the efforts for a more inclusive conservation future by working for the UWCP in headquarters for nearly eight years.



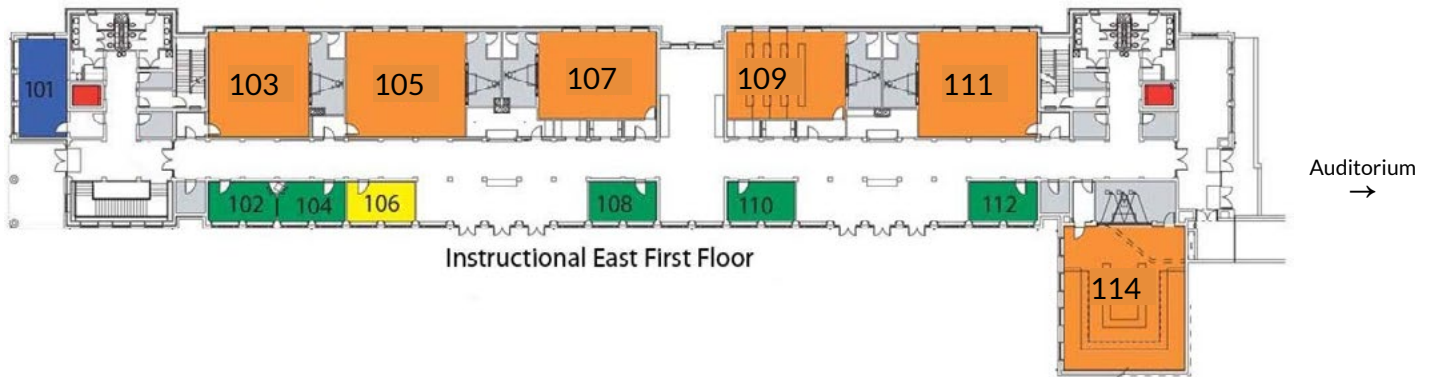
# Getting Around



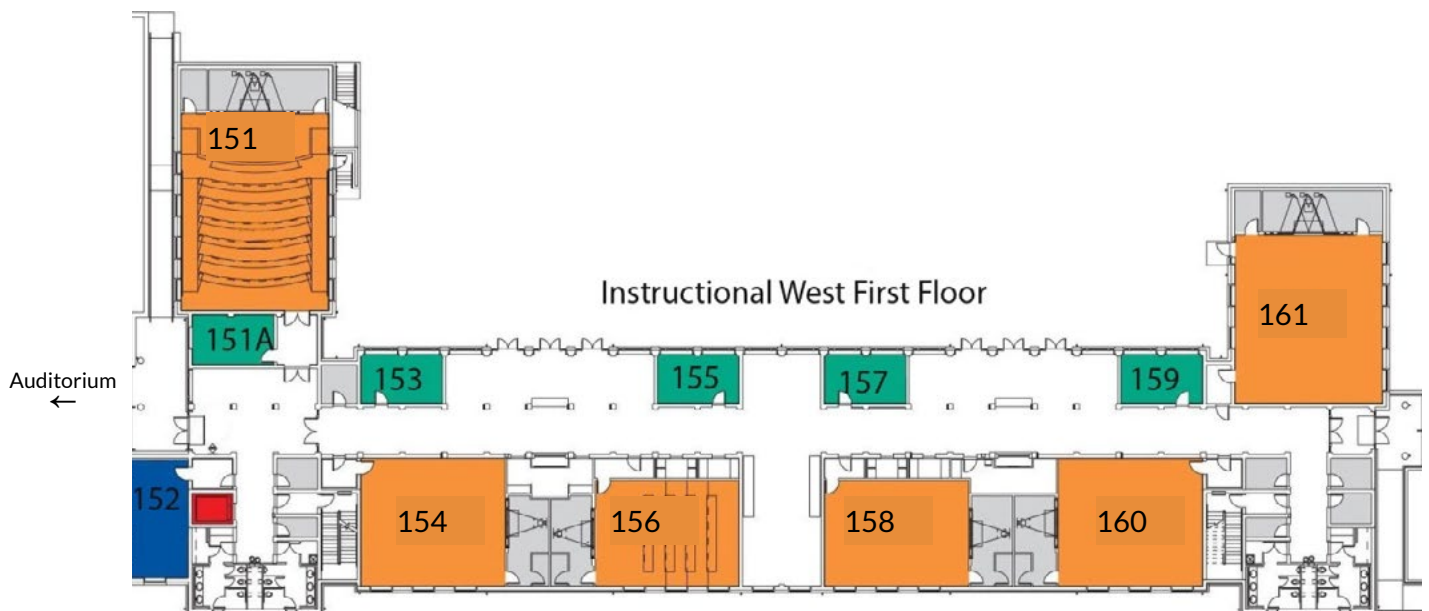


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# Turner Building Instructional East (IE)



# Lemon Building Instructional West (IW)



- 
 CLASSROOMS
  CONFERENCE ROOMS
  ELEVATORS
- 
 SEMINAR ROOMS
  ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

## NCTC Frequently Asked Questions

### *Welcome to the National Conservation Training Center!*

As your hosts, we want to ensure that you have the most productive and enjoyable time possible while you are staying with us. If you have any questions or need assistance, give us a call by dialing "0" from any phone on campus. We have staff at the desk 24 hours a day.

#### **If I receive a fax, how will that be handled?**

If you receive a fax before your class or meeting ends for the day, it will be folded and posted with your name on it on your classroom door. If your fax arrives after hours, we will call your room and leave a message for you if you are not available. It will be available for pick-up from the Front Desk any time, day or night.

#### **Can I receive phone calls directly to my room?**

Yes, every room has its own direct-dial phone number. To give the number to someone off-campus, tell them to dial "304/876" and your 4 digit room number. For example, room 7403 would be 304/876 7403.

#### **I have difficulty walking, and this is a walking campus. How can I move around the facility easily?**

We have several motorized carts available for guests at the Front Desk. Simply dial "0" and let us know that you would like a cart, and we will deliver it to your door.

#### **How do I control the heat in my room?**

The lodges are centrally-controlled by our Maintenance Department's computer system. The lodges are set to one temperature (for example, 70 degrees,) and then the guest may fine-tune the temperature by about four degrees, warmer or cooler. There are two sets of controls in your room. The thermostat is located by the bed. It is a sliding lever that may be behind a plastic flip-cover. Do not push the lever to the absolute top or bottom position; this will turn the system off in your room. There is also a fan speed control located by the closet where you can control the amount of air coming into your room. If this is set to the OFF position, your room will not receive any heating or cooling. If you are uncomfortable, please dial "0" for Guest Services, and we will contact Maintenance to raise or lower the temperature in your room.

#### **Does my room have high-speed Internet?**

Yes! Wireless and wired Internet connections are in every room. We also provide a LAN cable for you in the room, in case you left yours at home.

#### **Are there any laundry facilities on campus?**

Yes, in every lodge, on the ground floor, you will find a laundry room with washer, dryers, and complimentary laundry detergent. We do ask that you try to finish your laundry before 10 pm, in order to avoid disturbing other guests who may be sleeping.

#### **Where are the closest vending machines?**

They are located on the ground floor of each lodge. In Instructional East and West, they are located in an alcove in the center of the buildings on the first floor.

#### **Where can I go if I need to use a computer, print documents, or send a fax?**

There are computers available for use, with Internet connections, along the hallways in Instructional East and West. The Conservation Library in the Commons also has computer stations available, and is open until 8 pm Monday, through Thursday. If you need to send a fax, or print documents, the Faculty Lounge, in room 106 Instructional East has a laser printer attached to the computer. There is a fax machine in the room as well.

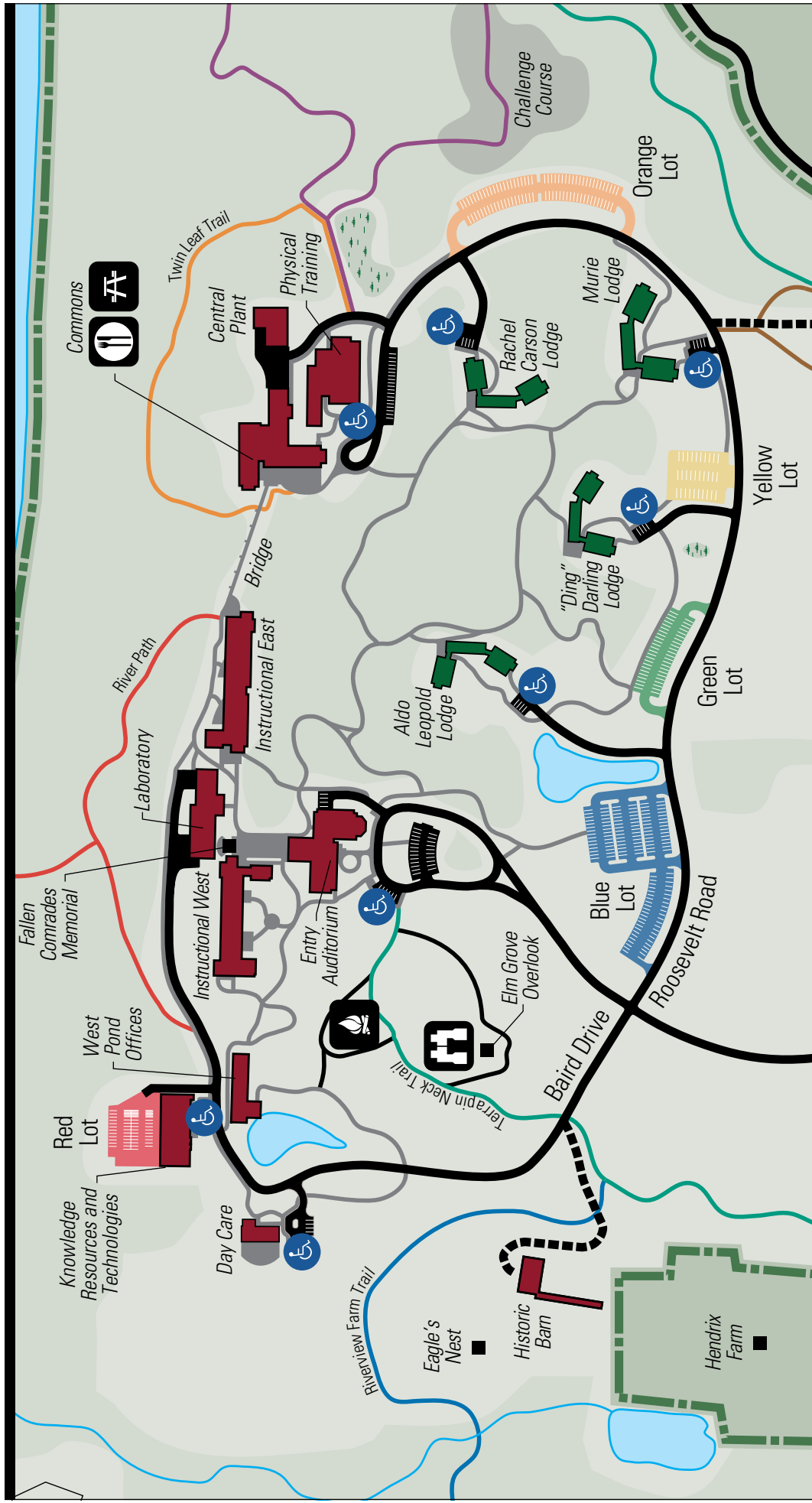
#### **I'm checking out very early in the morning on the day I'm departing. Should I check out the night before?**

No need! We provide express check-out for you the night before you depart. We will slip a receipt for your stay under your door late in the evening, as well as a sheet with shuttle information if you are using this service. To check out in the morning, simply take your receipt with you, sign the outer envelope, and leave the envelope and room key in the room. Please dial "0" to let us know when you leave.

#### **Where can I see the NCTC bald eagles?**

If you are facing the Entry Auditorium building, you will be able to see their nest in the large sycamore tree to your far left. Since they are nesting and are sensitive to disturbances in their environment, we request that visitors do not walk too near the eagles' nest. If you would like a close-up view, we have a Web cam that is constantly keeping watch over the eagles, unobtrusively (it even has night vision.) Simply go to the following Web address in your browser:

<http://training.fws.gov/eagle/>



# National Conservation Training Center

## Campus Map



- Accessible Parking
- Firepit
- Elm Grove Overlook
- Dining Hall
- Picnic Area
- Paved Trails
- Paved Roads
- Gravel Roads
- Points of Interest

**Campus Store**  
*Extension 7350*  
 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

**Conservation Library**  
*Extension 7304*

**Dining Services**  
*Extension 7353*

Breakfast 6:30 AM – 9:00 AM  
*Hot Food until 8:30 AM*

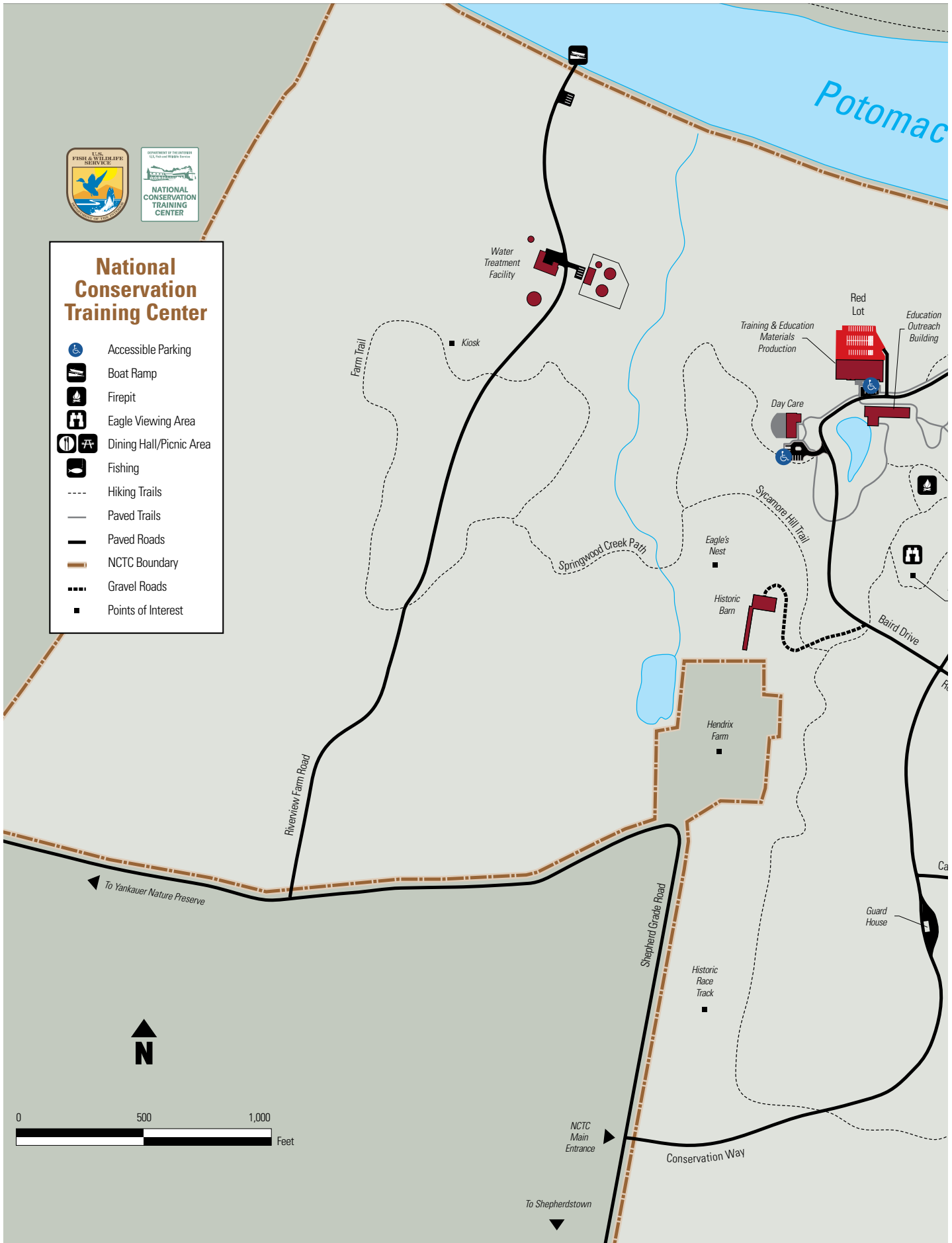
Lunch 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM  
*Hot Food until 1:00 PM*

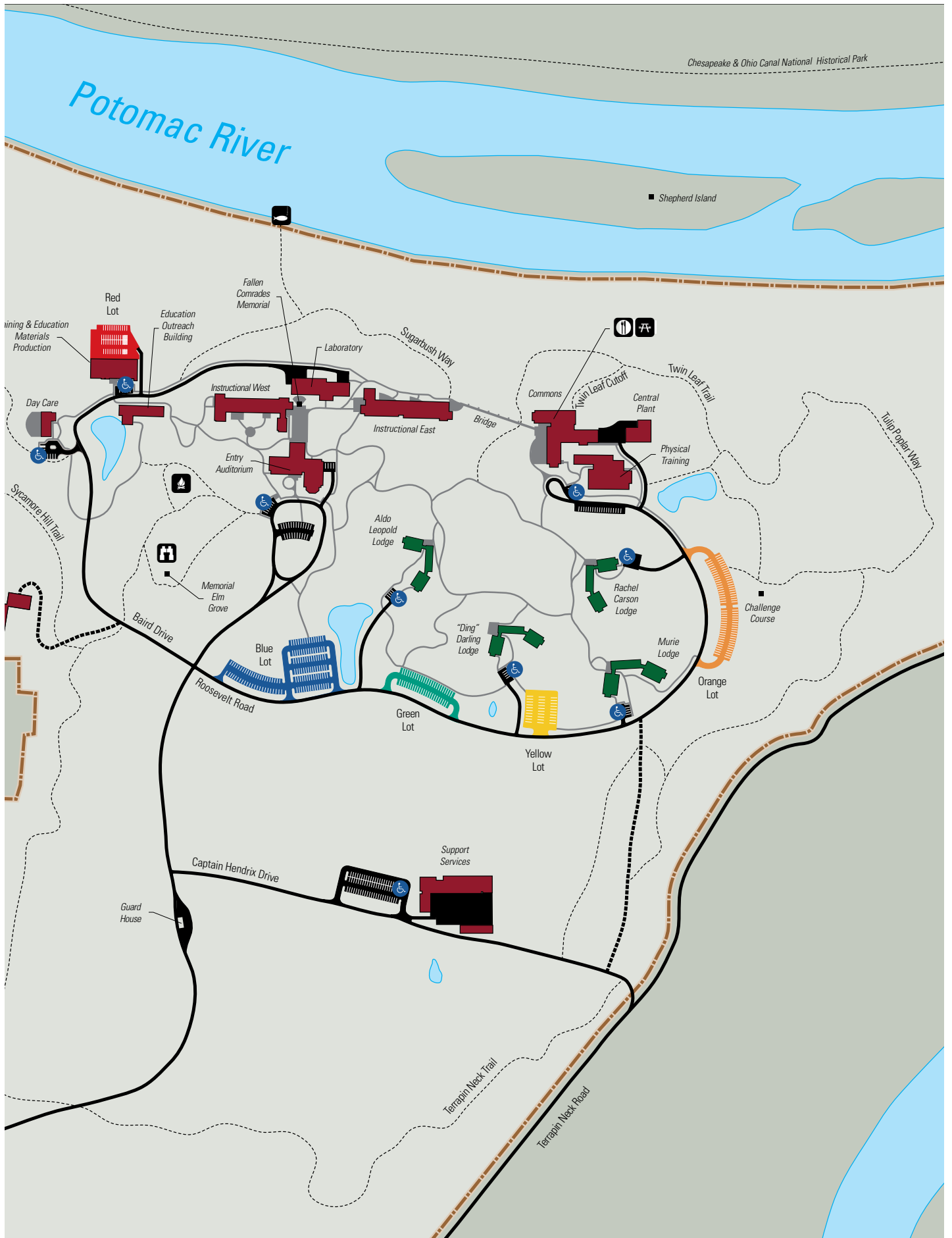
Dinner 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

**Commons Lounge**  
*Extension 7351*  
 5:30 PM – 11:00 PM

**Physical Training Center**  
*Extension 7341*  
 Sunday – Thursday 6:00 AM – 10:00 PM  
 Friday 6:00 AM – 4:30 PM

# Trail Map









Thanks to our planning committee members:

Marco Aguilar  
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