

Bitter Lake News

May 2024

UPCOMING EVENTS AT BITTER LAKE

Saturday, June 8 @11:30 a.m. – Summer General Membership Meeting at the Visitor Center. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. The main dish will be provided. Our guest speaker will be a representative from BLM to talk about the prairie chickens in New Mexico. Meeting will follow after presentation and lunch.

* Friday, September 6 @ 6:30 p.m. – Presentation about Dragonflies in Visitor Center Auditorium with dragonfly expert, Karen Gaines. Come learn about dragonflies and their cool adaptations! Then join us afterwards with Roswell Astronomy Club for stargazing and looking through powerful telescopes.

* Saturday, September 7 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.—Save the Date!! Join us for the Annual Dragonfly Festival!

* Sunday, September 8 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Continuation of guided dragonfly tours.

* Saturday, November 9 @ 4:00 p.m. – Cranes and Cocoa

*More information available on <https://www.friendsofbitterlakenwr.org/>



A beautiful February snow day at the refuge

Volunteers Wanted!

If you know dragonflies and would like to be a part of the Dragonfly Festival, we need your help and expertise! Guides are needed to join the tours on the 2 days of the festival. You would be riding on the vans and would be available to answer questions from the visitors on each tour. These are small, informal groups, and each tour lasts about an hour, with breaks between each tour. The Dragonfly Festival will be September 7, with tours being held on the 7th and 8th. If you would be interested in putting your knowledge to use, please contact refuge staff, Steve Alvarez, at 575-244-6256, for more information.



Dragonfly tour guides presenting during 2022 Festival

President's Corner

By Merideth Hildreth

Summer is on the verge in the Pecos Valley. Even though there's a 70% chance of rain on the day I'm writing this, NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is predicting a hotter, drier Summer of 2024 in the Southwest.

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/multi_season/13_seasonal_outlooks/color/churchill.php

Bitter Lake NWR and the Fish & Wildlife Service continue to devise and implement adaptation strategies to protect wildlife and habitat. Congratulations to Wildlife Biologist Carl Jacobsen and the Refuge's biology team, partners, and volunteers for their heroic efforts to rescue a portion of grain-of-sand sized federally endangered springsnails from a section of Bitter Creek that had dried up during the hot and dry summer of 2023. See the following FWS article,

<https://www.fws.gov/story/2023-10/biologists-spring-action-save-springsnails> that documents the successful saga.

Thank you to all the elementary students (and educators) who participated in this year's Dragonfly Festival Art Contest! A special thanks to refuge staff Steve Alvarez, volunteers Don Weld and Jana Burch for coordinating with area schools. A special thank you to our judges who took time out of their busy schedules to help with judging. Congratulations to all the winners and to this year's grand prize winner whose artwork will become this year's festival logo. The winning artwork will be scanned and shared on the Friends of Bitter Lake website for all to view and will be shared in our next newsletter.

Please save the date and join us for the 2024 SUMMER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING & POTLUCK on Saturday, June 8th at 11:30 a.m. We invite you to attend the summer meeting, renew your membership, and shop in the amazing Nature Store! The main dish will be provided and we invite you to bring your favorite side dish or desert to share. A representative from BLM will present about conservation research on prairie chickens and their habitat.

Check out the Fish & Wildlife Service website on programs and initiatives: <https://www.fws.gov/> and Planning Policies: <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2024-04/service-announces-final-updated-planning-policies-national-wildlife-refuge>

Conservation Conversation at Stellar Coffee

The first Friends of Bitter Lake "Conservation Conversation" was held at Stellar Coffee on the 22nd of February. There were about 15 attendees. Three of them placed membership with our Friends group. The presenters were biologist Carl Jacobsen and biological technician Eric Dow, who talked about the work they have done with the springsnails. Everyone who attended agreed that this meeting was a great success, and there is quite a bit of interest in seeing the "Conservation Conversation" become a regular program in the future.

Regional Award

Carl, Eric, refuge biological technician Anna Lee, Ecological Services biologist Melissa Fry, and the Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center (SNARRC) fisheries team from Dexter, NM were recognized for their conservation efforts during a terrible drought to help save several small springsnail populations

from becoming extinct in areas at risk of drying up in Bitter Creek, which is critical habitat for these species and others. The team put together an emergency action and collected springsnails and housed them at the hatchery in Dexter. The team safely returned the springsnails once the water returned in Bitter Creek and the threat of the drought had passed. The effort was very successful as the springsnails doubled their population while in captivity! We are excited that the team was recognized in a regional award ceremony in Albuquerque for their hard work and corrective action. It will lead to a better understanding of springsnail habitat needs and future work with more potential with captive rearing to help save this endangered species.



L to R: Regional Director, Amy Lueders, Melissa Fry, Carl Jacobsen, and SNARRC Director Wade Wilson, Gary Frazer Deputy Director for Operations. Not pictured: Eric Dow, Anna Lee, SNARRC staff: Nathan Frassen, William Knight and Jesse Trujillo (Photo courtesy of Al Barrus, Office of Communications).

Meet Our Refuge Volunteer

Refuge volunteer Laura Powers returned to Bitter Lake on March 7, and will be volunteering through September. If you ask Laura where she is from, she will tell you “everywhere and nowhere.” Born in Germany to a military family, she has traveled widely. Her husband was with the civil service, and she continued moving after her marriage. Laura and her husband had visited our area and decided to retire here. They purchased land down in Midway, but tragically, her

husband passed. She then sold the land, purchased an RV, and enjoys volunteering at Bitter Lake for a part of the year. She is also active in Roswell, teaching hula lessons and playing with the community band. We are very appreciative of her help and involvement! Laura also helps with watering the plants and trees around the Visitor Center and any other tasks. Come into the Visitor Center on Tuesdays, Thursdays or Fridays and meet Laura!

Sidney Guterrez Middle School Helps Out

Students from Sidney Guterrez, a Roswell Charter School, volunteered their time and energy to come out to Bitter Lake NWR. They cleaned up the Butterfly Trail by weeding the flower and cacti beds. The class also came out to help celebrate Earth Day, which was celebrated on Monday, April 22nd. Their work helped prepare for the planting of 40 native wildflowers along the Butterfly Trail. A big thank you to Sidney Guterrez! Come walk the Butterfly Trail and learn more about our native plants!



Special Guest Star!

An inquisitive swallow wanted to find out what all the fuss was about. He had heard about the fantastic store inside the Visitor Center, and really wanted to do some shopping. However, he was intercepted between the outer and inner doors and was returned to his more normal habitat outside. He did not seem too unhappy to give up his dream of becoming the Kardashian of swallows and flew off to design a nest instead.





Refuge and New Mexico Fire Zone personnel completed spring prescribed burns

Butterfly Trail Work Day

Saturday, April 20th was the day for the annual Butterfly Trail Work Day. Even though the weather was cool and cloudy, eight enthusiastic helpers were there to clean the trail and help plant new foliage to spruce things up and to provide some beautiful blooms for our native pollinators and hummingbirds! If you have not seen the result of all their hard work, come by the Visitor Center and take a stroll down our beautiful Butterfly Trail.



Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

4200 E. Pine Lodge Rd., Roswell, NM 88201 Contact phone: 575-244-6256

e-mail: bitterlakefriends@gmail.com, <https://www.friendsofbitterlakenwr.org/>



Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Membership Form



- Individual \$25 Family \$35
 Business \$50

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Are you interested in volunteer opportunities?

Yes! No

Mail to:

Friends of Bitter Lake NWR

4200 E. Pine Lodge Rd.

Roswell, NM 88201

Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge
Membership Form Instructions

Just two easy steps to join:

1. Complete the form on the left side of the sheet and mail it with your dues to the Refuge.
2. Complete the Membership Card below and keep it for your records.

(Fold Here)



Friends of Bitter Lake
Membership Card

www.friendsofbitterlakenwr.org

(575) 244-6256

E-mail: bitterlakefriends@gmail.com

Name: _____

Date: _____

*Membership expires 1 year from above date.

Friends of Bitter Lake NWR
4200 East Pine Lodge Road
Roswell, NM 88201