



# **Friends of the National Conservation Training Center**

## **Annual Report 2018-2019**

## **Mission**

To build a strong, educated, and committed community of conservation-minded individuals to support and advocate for the mission of the National Conservation Training Center.

## **Accomplishments for 2018-2019**

Working with NCTC staff, our small but truly dedicated group of volunteers had an impressive number of accomplishments over the past year.

- Raised Funds for travel expenses for Refuge Volunteers to attend NCTC courses to improve both the Refuges and the visitor experience. The Friends have offered scholarships for volunteers for over ten years. The Fish and Wildlife Service now provides the scholarships and we cover transportation, making this opportunity available to all. The funds for this come from grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Fish and Wildlife Visitor Services and from our own funds. We are currently seeking further funding for this exciting project.
- The Friends provides funds to maintain the camera on the Eagle Cam. The Friends maintain an ongoing fund drive to make sure the Cam can be kept functioning. Lightening strikes have required replacement of some equipment.
- Sponsored the award for Best Student film in the American Conservation Film Festival. A cash prize is awarded and some funds are available for the winner to travel to the Festival.
- Managed brick sales for the Fallen Comrades Courtyard. This Courtyard honors FWS employees who lost their lives serving the FWS. Many of those represented are firefighters.
- Sponsored the NCTC Conservation lecture series. Four presentations a year are open to the public. Members are sometimes invited to have dinner with the speakers and may be invited to “members only” presentations such as the two about Teddy Roosevelt. We are able to pay the speakers with funds from membership and a significant gift from a Friends member. Distinguished speakers and outstanding films are presented in the beautiful Byrd Auditorium. Four Seasons Books is our partner in book sales.

## *Friends of the National Conservation Training Center*

- Sponsored naturalist guided kayaking programs for NCTC Friends and students. These trips are seasonal and done weekly, weather and water conditions permitting. The program is in cooperation with River and Trail, a local company.
- Planted trees at NCTC to restore the native forest. Working with NCTC's land manager volunteers from the Friends participated in tree planting, helping the local ecology while learning from NCTC staff experts. We have had two events this year.
- Friends Conservation Corps: Scheduled monthly events to assist NCTC Land Manager Phil Pannill with selected projects at NCTC. The Pollinator Garden at Byrd Auditorium entry has been one of several projects.
- This year and last year we sponsored a paid internship for a student to assist Phil Pannill the NCTC Land Manager. These interns have accomplished a lot, including habitat maintenance and working on the reforestation project. We hope to offer this internship again net year.
- Supported SCC and National Friends conferences at NCTC.
- Helped with the Deer Census at NCTC. A ride around the whole campus after dark!
- Helped with the annual deer hunt to maintain a healthy population of deer at NCTC.
- Acquiring funding for a third film about visiting a refuge, showing how families can enjoy the outdoors together. We have a grant to help the filmmaker complete a film about restoring buffalo herds to a refuge.
- Hosted an annual Friends Social at NCTC.
- Partnering with a class of West Virginia fourth grader to name this year's eaglet.
- Sponsoring the NCTC Discover Nature App for mobile devices. This app encourages active visitor participation and is designed to help the general public more fully experience the attractions of Refuges. Over 20 refuges are currently using the app.
- Updated the MOA with River and Trail and filed a required report for OIG.

## **Past Projects of the Friends include:**

- Provided over 100 scholarships for Refuge volunteers to come to NCTC . This was done through a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Foundation.
- Acquired funding for 2 films about visiting a refuge, showing how families can enjoy the outdoors together.
- Contributed to the installation of the memorial statue in the Fallen Comrades Courtyard.
- Organized trips to local Refuges.
- Sponsored an online and local conservation book club called “Wild Read.”
- Played an instrumental role in the founding of the Children’s Tree House Child Development Center and the NCTC Library.
- Sponsored the creation of two films regarding the importance of children and nature. Both of these films were made possible by generous grants from Friends members.
- Provided “Student Climate and Conservation Congress (SC3) “ scholarships for youth.
- Hosted NCTC lecturers, and conducting book sales and signings for them.
- Participated in “Weed Warriors” to help NCTC eliminate exotic and invasive plant species.
- Sponsored “Friends Connect”, a national online meeting place for Friends members from across the country.
- Signed a Partnership Agreement with USFWS so that The Friends may continue to support NCTC.
- Two presentations on Teddy Roosevelt for members only.
- Conducted an outside audit to make us a better candidate for grant applications

- Providing scholarships for youth to the Student Climate and Conservation Congress
- Running an area-wide cell phone recycling drive
- Supporting maintenance of the Outdoor Classroom, a pilot project at NCTC to help get children involved with the natural world
- Sponsored an intern in the USFWS Archives. This helped start a program to digitalize and web-host some of the valuable historic items in the Archives. This would make these resources available to the public.
- Sponsored an online book club called “Wild Read”

## **Future Needs**

The Friends of the National Conservation Training Center operates with a small, dedicated group of volunteers. We welcome those of you who can join us in supporting conservation education. Grant writing, membership development and outreach are a few of our pressing needs.

As volunteer service is increasingly important to our Refuges, we will continue to support educational opportunities for those volunteers using money from our membership dues, donations and grants. Winning new grants is an increasingly important source of revenue for us. With your support we hope to increase our grant funding.

Thank you for everything you do already. We look forward to continuing and expanding our work together.

## Friends of NCTC Board Members

**Ellen Andersen: Chair** Ellen has a Ph.D. in epidemiology from the University of California, Los Angeles. She also has an M.S. in Global Leadership from the University of San Diego; and a M.A.: National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College. Ellen retired as Assistant Course Director, Military Tropical Medicine at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland and spends some of her retirement hours as an Adjunct Professor in Biology at Shepherd University. She has published numerous papers and has won awards for her work for the Navy, including the Navy Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy League of the United States Military Women of Achievement Award. Ellen's hobbies include beekeeping and organic gardening.

**Steve Hatleberg: Secretary.** Steve recently retired as physician in Internal Medicine at Meritus Hospital in Hagerstown, Md. He received his MD from Georgetown University School of Medicine and did his residency at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pa. Steve also has an MS in Pharmacology from UC Davis and has been actively involved in smoking cessation programs. He and his wife Lois have three grown children and three grandchildren. Steve has been a Friends Board member for many years and recently inspired the group to begin visiting nearby Wildlife Refuges. He is also President of the Washington County Historical Trust and has actively supported establishing trails for walking and biking. In his spare time, he bikes these trails and the C&O Canal, collects rocks, and studies geology.

**Anne Kerfoot: Treasurer.** Anne, is a retired Professor of Computer and Information Systems at Shepherd University, where she taught software programming. She has a BA in English and a BS in Business with a concentration in Computers, both from Shepherd, an MA in History from Shippensburg University, and an MS in Computer and Information Sciences from Hood College. In addition to her long service as Treasurer for NCTC Friends, Anne volunteers to help others prepare taxes through the AARP at Martinsburg Library and the VA Center.

**Richard Malsbary Chair, Finance Committee:** Richard and his wife, Dorothea, are retired from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services where they administered federal health care programs. He earned college degrees in business administration and psychology while living in New Hampshire. As an army Vietnam veteran and a certified master gardener Richard enjoys volunteer work in the local VA Hospital therapy garden. He also helps maintain hiking trails and shelters with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. He has served on various not-for-profit boards including a community health center in Montgomery County, MD and the Berkeley County Farmland Protection Board. Richard is interested in environmental, economic and agricultural issues and enjoys local and international travel. Richard and Dorothea are members and participants of the Berkeley County Historical Society, Preservation of Historic Winchester and the C&O Canal Association.

**Janet Olcott: Chair Elect** Janet, married to Mike Shepp, is a veterinarian with the Hillside Veterinary Clinic in Charlestown. She has a B.A. in Biology from Mount Holyoke College, a DVM from the University of Missouri, and practices veterinary acupuncture. Janet spends much of her time carriage driving, caring for two full sized and seventeen miniature horses, which participate in local events like the recent parade celebrating Shepherdstown's 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration. Janet organized and continues to maintain the Brick Fund Project which offers the opportunity to commemorate individuals by paving the courtyard of the FWS Fallen Comrades Memorial. Besides the many hours she spends with Friends of NCTC and various conservation activities, Janet is involved in professional organizations .

**R. Michael Shepp: Past Chair** Mike is a retired owner of a engineering/land surveying company. He is Chairman of the West Virginia Board of Professional Surveyors. Mike has 40 years experience in surveying and project management. He is a recognized and experienced zoning and land use expert. He has an AB in Applied Mathematics from Brown University. Mike has served as President of the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, the West Virginia Society of Professional Surveyors, The Old Opera House Board of Directors, and the Jefferson County Council on Aging, Mike and Janet reside just outside of Shepherdstown, with Janet's 18 miniature horses, Mike's mule, Janet's halflinger, three goats, two dogs, and a cat.

**Nancy Streeter: Nancy**, married, is retired after 20 years with the National Park Service and 16 with US Fish and Wildlife at NCTC. She has a BA in Geology from East Carolina University and an MA in Liberal Studies from State University of New York. She is a talented wood sculptor and teaches classes in wood carving locally. Having many interests, it is clear Nancy knows how to balance multiple tasks simultaneously. Nancy has served two years a board chair. Beside her activities with NCTC Friends, she is a Board member for the Heritage Craft Center of the Eastern Panhandle and the Washington Street Artists Cooperative in Charles Town.

**Susan Holloway:** Susan is currently an independent consultant. She helps clients with their issues with Federal Government contract compliance. She has spent the past 5 years as an Audit Manager performing contract audits for a CPA firm of contractors engaged with USAID, Department of Energy and the Department of Education projects. Prior experience included working on a two-year special assignments in Saudi Arabia and a two year assignment in Saipan and the Northern Marianas for the Department of Interior. Susan and her husband John have lived in Shepherdstown for over 20 years. She has three children from a prior marriage and two step-children. She and John have 5 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. She holds a BA in Business Administration/Accounting from the University of Virginia and has completed the Public Administration Master's Program University of Oklahoma and maintains the education requirement to support requirements for the Federal Yellow Book. Her hobbies includes 5 Dogs and in creating jewelry with polymer clay.

**Joseph Spurgas:** Has a BS in Forestry and Wildlife from Virginia Tech, a BA in Elementary Education from Shepherd University, and a MA in Secondary Education from WVU. He retired as a principal at Harpers Ferry Middle School. His hobbies include combined driving with horses, gardening, and horticulture. He is chairman of the Shepherdstown Elementary School School Improvement Council. He is a classroom reader at Shepherdstown Elementary School. He is a Hike Leader at Harpers Ferry Middle School in collaboration with the Harpers Ferry National Park Service Tiger on the Trail program.

**Karmann Kessler:** Has a BS in biology concentrating in ecological sciences. Her career has resulted from a love of nature. She strives in every aspect of her life to promote diversity and its' conservation. Currently she is working in the aquatic ecology department of the USGS, but she plans on continuing her education.