



Friends of  
**Wertheim**  
National Wildlife Refuge

Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the enduring protection, management and appreciation of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge and its environs.

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- Michelle Potter  
Refuge Manager, Long Island NWR Complex

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- Bill Kirell

**Newsletter Editor**

- Michelle Pleim

The Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to preserve a national network of lands and waters for the conservation and management of fish, wildlife and plant resources of the United States for the benefit of present and future generations.

**A New Time to Pay Your Annual Dues!**

Happy New Year! We welcome 2017 with our initiation of a consistent date for paying dues: all Friends of Wertheim will now renew memberships in January of each year. We hope this makes remembering your renewal time easier. Pay by check via mail, or come in to The Visitor Center and pay in cash—we'd love to see you at our Nature Store! Remember, all members receive the benefits listed below.

Join or Renew Membership

One year membership	
Friend (single)	\$15
Family	\$20
Non-profit Org.	\$50
Corporate	\$100
White Oak	\$250
Lifetime Membership	
Osprey (unlimited)	\$500

Benefits of Membership

- ⇒ 10% discount at Nature Store.
- ⇒ Invitations to FOW only programs, such as bird hikes and canoe programs.
- ⇒ Four electronic newsletters to keep up-to-date on refuge projects and events.
- ⇒ Invitation to our Annual Membership Meeting.
- ⇒ Your dues and contributions are tax deductible, and;
- ⇒ A sense of accomplishment in providing many opportunities for wildlife-related recreation, education and research.

Again, we wish you a Happy 2017.

Remember, all dues are now to be paid in January of each year!

**Refuge Trails Closed for Downed Tree Removal**

by Ann Marie Chapman

Wertheim's previous Southern Pine Beetle control efforts have left behind a large number of dead and downed trees, and this biomass presents a significant fire danger. Throughout the winter months, refuge staff will be busy clearing dead trees and downed wood from the Black Tupelo and Indian Landing Loop Trails.

The Refuge staff hopes to clear out the trees before the forest greens up again in the spring. Because the work is weather dependent, refuge visitors should inquire at The Visitor Center about the current trail status before heading out.



Thanks to everyone for their patience as the Refuge staff works to improve both our wildlife habitat and the visitor experience!

# A Fond Farewell to Sharon Ware, Rebecca Donohue and Robin Donohue

by Michelle Potter

The New Year is starting out with a bang by bringing several staff changes to our Long Island Complex. We would like to extend our good wishes and a warm goodbye to several of our fellow employees.

- ◆ Sharon Ware has accepted a position as Deputy Project Leader at Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in Massachusetts. She will be transferring to her new duty station in late February. Sharon came to Long Island in 2010. She has been a wonderful asset here.



*Second from left (kneeling): Sharon Ware*

- ◆ Rebecca Donohue is headed south with her husband, Robin. She came to Long Island in 2010 as the Federal Wildlife Officer. She has done a tremendous job here.
- ◆ Robin Donohue came to us in August 2011, just after Hurricane Irene. Little did we know at that time that he would become an invaluable asset for post-hurricane recovery and resiliency. Robin led the post-Sandy debris clean-up and the tree removal projects. He moved on to lead the resiliency project work. He has done an exceptional job for us during his tenure on Long Island. He has secured a permanent, full-time position with the Fish and Wildlife Service in Alabama. Ironically, he will be working on resiliency projects again: this time for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster. He will be greatly missed here.



*Rebecca "Becky" Donohue and Robin Donohue pictured above*

We are grateful for the dedicated work of these staff members and wish them well in their new roles. We will miss them all!



## A Fond Farewell to Rebecca Hopkins

By Claire Goad

Rebecca Hopkins was an intern at Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge from July until the end of December 2016. She was a great asset to us here at the refuge. She co-created a Pokémon GO program for us that continues to be very successful and which is being used as a model for other USFW Refuges around the country! Becky also created original environmental programs to use when she visited neighboring schools. She is intelligent, curious, dedicated and wonderful with children. Her soft-spoken nature and generosity of spirit will be greatly missed by all of us. Becky has returned to school to pursue her Master's Degree at Johns Hopkins. Concurrently, she will be working at a National Park in the Washington, D.C. area.

# Wertheim Marsh Resiliency Project Underway

by Carolyn Comber and Timothy Simmons Jr.

The construction phase of the coastal resiliency project began at Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on November 1, 2016.



Timothy Simmons Jr. USFWS-Coir logs

Using low ground pressure equipment, contractors began excavating new meandering channels to promote the flow of tidal water on and off of the salt marsh. Additional work includes filling the old nonfunctioning mosquito ditches, using both excavated marsh sediment and coir logs made from coconut fibers. To date, the contrac-

tors have completed work on the east side of the Carmans River and are currently working on the west side. The refuge staff expects to finish the marsh work at Wertheim in February of 2017.



Timothy Simmons Jr. USFWS-Equipment

Also, resiliency efforts will resume at Seatuck NWR in the beginning of February, and continue through March. Restoration work at Seatuck will include the grading of dredged material and a widening of the east-west channel in the marsh to enhance tidal flow.

Overall, the goals of the resiliency project are: to improve marsh resiliency for the absorption of future storm waters, which will help to protect neighboring communities; to enhance marsh habitat for native plants and wildlife; and both to reduce mosquito breeding as well as to reduce the need for using pesticides in the refuge marshes. The new channels will reduce standing water and allow native predatory fish to access the marsh and feed on mosquito larvae.

In April the Yaphank Creek fish passage portion of the resiliency project will begin. This includes the replacement of an existing culvert with a much wider open-bottom culvert, as well as creating step pools leading up to the LIRR culvert—both of which will allow for the improved passage of native brook trout.



Carolyn Comber USFWS-Channels/equipment

## VISIT OUR FRIENDS OF WERTHEIM NATURE STORE

by Eileen Oakes

**N**eed a winter pick-me-up? Come down to the refuge and enjoy the warmth of the Nature Center. Shop in a relaxing environment surrounded by beauty, and take pride in supporting a local group dedicated to making nature a part of your life. The products we carry are educational, interesting, and helpful in encouraging enthusiasm for our local environment.

Stay inside on those cold snowy days and color, read, or do a jigsaw puzzle! We also have a wide selection of adult and children's books to stir the imagination.

Take advantage of this season to "study" for the spring. We carry a large selection of guide books and laminated foldouts for animal, bird and wildflower identification: become familiar with the pictures and learn the names of things to look for at the refuge.

You will be surprised by the wide array of nature-related items we carry, so remember us for any special occasion when you need a gift. And, when your shopping is done, purchase one of our canvas tote bags to take it all home!

Members of Friends of Wertheim receive a 10% discount on every purchase.

**We look forward to seeing you!**



Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge  
 PO Box 376  
 Brookhaven NY 11719

www.FriendsofWertheim.org

*Reminder: Monthly Board meetings are the second Thursday of the month at 7pm,  
 All members are always welcome to attend.*

## **Celebrating Earth Day!**

On April 22, 2017, at 10:30 a.m., Friends of Wertheim will proudly present the film,  
*Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time.*

We have rented the Plaza Cinema and Media Arts Center in Patchogue for this showing. A Green Fire advocate, Wes H. Triani, will hold a Q&A session after the film. The theatre seats sixty-eight people; tickets will be five dollars each. They may be purchased at our Nature Store, located at WNWR, 340 Smith Road, Shirley. [Phone is (631) 286-0485.] Be sure to get your tickets early!

The Plaza Cinema and Media Arts Center will be showing *Seeds—The Untold Story* from March 4<sup>th</sup> through March 9<sup>th</sup>. Please check their website, [plazamac.org](http://plazamac.org), for additional information.

### **Save the Date!**

WHAT: A Student Art Show Reception and Exhibit

WHO: Friends of Wertheim and Theresa Bianco, WFSD Art Department Chair

WHEN: Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> (reception) April 29<sup>th</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup> (exhibit)

WHERE: WNWR Visitors Center gallery-340 Smith Road, Shirley, N.Y. 11719

WHY: To showcase student artists (K-12) from William Floyd School District

HOW: Mark your calendars! Stay tuned—more information to come!

### **THANK YOU ALL!**

The Friends of Wertheim gratefully thank the following donors:

Bayport Flower House

Ralph Beuttenmuller

Carmans River Canoes and Kayak Rentals

Jim and Dianna Davies

Plaza Cinema and Media Arts Center

Jennifer Clement

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*Our Wine and Cheese Fundraiser was a great success due to their generous donations!*