

fall 2018

Teller

WILDLIFE REFUGE

to inspire, educate, and demonstrate conservation in action



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ON THE COVER: A Shiras bull moose beds down on Teller's quiet Gird Creek. A mature bull can stand 7 feet at the shoulder and weigh 1400 lbs.



PETE'S CORNER

Pete Lindbergh, Lands Manager

Once again, the Teller Wildlife Refuge volunteers have outdone themselves in 2018. They stepped up on Stewardship Day to plant trees, remove fencing and trash, prep nesting platforms, tackle yardwork and maintain enclosures and trails. Our small army of volunteers worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this year's TnT our most successful yet. In addition, our crew of summer volunteers has removed old fencing and wildlife friendly fencing to protect our new wetland acquisition. A hearty group of volunteers donned chest waders and hand cleared cattails that were encroaching on the open waters of our wetlands. Volunteers also maintained our nesting boxes, cut firewood, repaired a flood damaged bridge and helped manage weeds.

Thank you to all of our volunteers, and we would like to extend a special thanks to Jan Jost for her tireless work on the office flower beds, and of course to Chuck Burrier, volunteer extraordinaire! Without each and every one of you, Teller wouldn't be what it is today.



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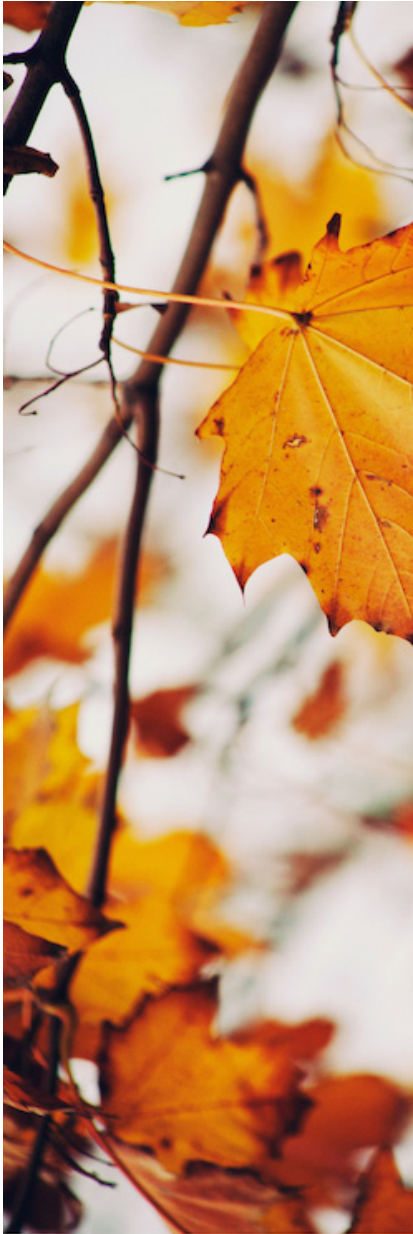
STAFF

Sam Lawry, *Executive Director*

Karen Zumwalt, *Education Coordinator*

Pete Lindbergh, *Lands Manager*

Heather Tellock, *Communications Director*



GREETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TNT has come and gone, summer youth camps are wrapped up and the last passing of wheel line moisture has fallen on the barley fields. Soon, the morning air will turn cool and crisp and the increase of migrating waterfowl will become apparent. With nearly 8 months on board as the Executive Director, I must say I am thrilled to be once again part of a winning team. We had our most successful TNT in Teller history and continue to connect new partners to the Teller story. Upon my return to Teller, I was eager to assess the condition of the conservation projects that Teller initiated nearly 10 years ago, and how they are doing today. All in all, nature has a wonderful way of quickly healing landscapes altered by man, yet when we can assist a bit with that process, results can be impressive. The photo essay on page 6-7 will tell it all. I could not have been more delighted with the status and condition of the projects. As I said many years ago, "We must have our house in order if we are to use it for education." From weeds to wetlands, farming to aspen groves, Teller's house is looking great. My plan for the future is to maintain those projects while adding new conservation practices such as pollinator plantings. I will also continue to grow and explore our education message and overall community linkage. It's been a great start and I look forward to what the future holds. Thanks for all your continued support.





TELLER AWARDED CINNABAR FOUNDATION GRANT: In June, Teller was notified that, once again, our conservation education programs would be receiving financial support from the Cinnabar Foundation. Focused on conservation and education in Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Cinnabar has been a key Teller supporter over the years. This year, we matched funds generated from Lucy's Fund to leverage \$4,000 in Cinnabar Foundation support to assist with Teller summer camps and Youth Expo.

DOVE BANDING ON TELLER

Rebecca Mowry, FWP Biologist

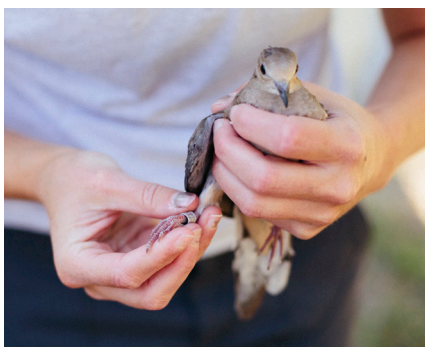
Every summer since 2003, state and federal biologists across the country have been capturing mourning doves in order to evaluate populations and harvest rates.

This year, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks biologists have increased their efforts to contribute to this national, long-term project, with staff all across the state setting out with traps and banding pliers to locate trapping locations and catch their quota of birds. Banding doves in the Bitterroot can be tricky, with the invasion of nonnative Eurasian collared-doves and lack of areas of high mourning dove concentrations; thankfully, Teller Wildlife Refuge stepped up and offered their property.

Once captured, doves are given a leg band with a unique ID number, evaluated as adult or hatch-year, and released. Hatch-year birds often cannot be distinguished as male or female, but for adult birds, this information is recorded as well.

The bands help biologists determine dove distribution, population status, and survival. Hunter participation is key. Doves are one of the most popular game birds in the United States, and when a hunter harvests a bird with band during the dove season, he or she is asked to turn it in to a state or federal wildlife official. Band returns—along with hunter harvest surveys and recaptures of banded birds during future trapping efforts—give biologists information about harvest rates, survival, and abundance, all of which help managers set sustainable harvest regulations.

Although some doves likely live in the Bitterroot year-round, many will migrate south for the winter. So it's not out of the realm of possibility that a dove banded at Teller Wildlife Refuge may wind up being harvested on a ranch in Texas—and without bands, how would we ever know?



TELLER LOSES A FRIEND

Dr. Stanley Falkow | 1.24.1934 - 5.5.2018

Mike Presley, Teller supporter & friend of Stanley

Known to many in the world of Microbiology and Immunology as the father of microbial pathogenesis, Stanley, husband of longtime Teller board member Lucy Tompkins, was also known to many of his friends here in the Bitterroot Valley as a loyal supporter of TWR and numerous other local charities and organizations. His support and contributions to Teller Wildlife Refuge for virtually every major need or project over the past three decades has been nothing short of significant. Stanley was an accomplished fly fisher and fly tier, having fished with Lucy the far reaches of North and South America numerous times. Aside from being a world renown scientist, it will be Stan's compassion and willingness to help others, his dry sense of humor, his pleasant sense of humility and his ability to make those around him feel appreciated that we will all remember. Stan quietly touched countless lives here in the Bitterroot Valley and the world beyond, he has been a blessing to us all and will be greatly missed.



An avid fisherman, Dr. Falkow shows off his catch.



Mike Presley and Sam Lawry dedicate Stanley's favorite Teller fishing hole to the late doctor.

LIZ CLAIBORNE AND ART ORTENBERG FOUNDATION: In May we received word that Teller's 2018 Conservation Education Grant \$10,000.00 proposal was approved. Established in 1989, the LCAOF "...is actively involved in conservation in the United States, particularly in Montana and those Western states historically dependent upon extractive industries and agriculture. It encourages local initiatives addressing the problems of diminishing natural resources. It emphasizes conservation through collaboration, cooperation, persuasion and the development of sustainable economic alternatives to resource degradation and depletion." The proposal was one of the first approved for Teller's expanding education program. We hope this partnership can continue to grow along with our conservation education programs. Funding will focus on youth summer camps, field trips, website and newsletter upgrades.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS

revisited

ASPEN ENCLOSURES: In 2009, 4 separate aspen enclosures were constructed in partnership with USDA to stimulate regeneration of aging aspen groves on Teller. Today the response has been drastic with 4 new stands of healthy aspens.



WETLAND ENHANCEMENT: In 2009 approximately 30 acres of wetlands were enhanced including the establishment of 3 separate ground water ponds. Barren at first, the ponds have blossomed into highly productive wetland habitat.



ELECTRIC RIPARIAN ENCLOSURE: In an attempt to regenerate cottonwood and alder trees, Teller installed a 7 foot deer proof fence around 5 acres in 2007. Today, healthy stands of both provide structural diversity and benefits a host of bird species.





after | 2018



after | 2018



after | 2018

Bitterroot Barn Weddings

AT TELLER WILDLIFE REFUGE



2019 Wedding Package

Our wedding package includes use of the historic Slack Barn and acres of surrounding grounds for an entire weekend, along with lodging for 14 people at our heritage homes.

Host a rehearsal dinner, ceremony, reception and your family or friends all in one place!

Also included in the package:

- park-like grounds -
- volleyball court and croquet -
- new tables and chairs for 200 -
- assorted wooden benches, tables, chairs and stands -
- dance floor -
- trash removal -
- indoor restroom facilities -

\$3,999

(paid in 3 installments)

CONTACT BITTERROOT CABINS

406.363.2258 | sherrie@bitterrootcabins.com

bitterrootcabins.com/bitterroot-barn-wedding

find us on Facebook: bitterroot barn weddings

WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ ABOUT?

Teller Wildlife Refuge celebrated National Honey Month this September by getting up close and personal with our resident honey producers. The Corvallis High School FFA houses bee boxes on Teller and invited us along to witness the honey extracting process. With the help of our friends from Beekeepers of the Bitterroot, students “robbed” the hives by removing frames from the bee boxes. From there,

the outer wax coating was removed using an uncapping knife. Once the wax is removed, the frames make their way to an extractor. The extractor spins the frames, leaving you with ready to jar honey. Want to learn more about beekeeping? Head to beekeepersofthebitterroot.org for more info.



TELLER TO HOST WOMEN'S WATERFOWL WEEKEND



State and Federal Fish and Wildlife Agencies depend on funding from hunting and fishing license and permit sales to manage wildlife populations. In an attempt to address national declines in hunting license sales, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has joined other State Wildlife Agencies across the country to implement the R3 Initiative. R3 focuses on hunter and angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation. Non-profit conservation organizations, like Teller, have embraced R3 as well. In the fall of 2018, Teller stepped up to partner with MTFWP and BOW, (Becoming an Outdoors-Women) to offer a Women's Waterfowl Weekend. The class will offer novice women hunters the opportunity to learn all about waterfowl. Education sessions will include waterfowl conservation in Montana, Duck ID, firearm safety and shooting practice, duck calling and waterfowl processing and cooking. The women will then take their lessons to the duck blinds with an instructor and be able to experience a duck hunt. We hope that this is the first of many programs that teach outdoor skills and inspire people to share what they have learned with others. More information about the R3 Initiative can be found at <http://www.cahss.org/what-is-r3/>



Thank you to our sponsors, donors, attendees and volunteers who supported Teller Wildlife Refuge's 24th Annual TnT Dinner & Auction on June 16, 2018, a fun and special celebration at Teller's Slack Barn in the name of wildlife conservation and conservation education in the Bitterroot Valley.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Auctioneer: Rick Peverley, assistant Ron MacDonald
MC: Sam Lawry
Catering: Burns St. Bistro
Table Wine: Buehler Vineyards
Bar Service: The Rainbow Bar
Flowers: Bitterroot Nursery

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TALES FROM CAMP

Amanda Bestor, Teller Nature Connections Camp Director

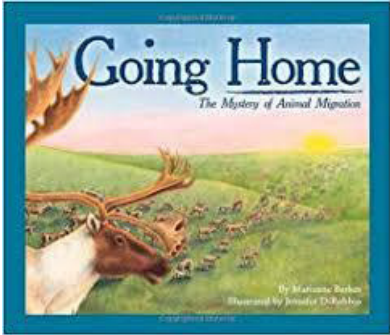
July brought new and returning campers to Teller Wildlife Refuge for 3 weeks of lessons in nature, laughter, and some rather muddy and wet clothes. This year we had one camper that has attended all 5 years of camp in addition to campers from far off places; two siblings that spend their school year in India, six campers from California, and one from New Mexico. We sighted Sandhill cranes, woodchuck, white-tailed deer, osprey, Bald eagles, muskrat, a kingfisher, many crayfish, and countless minnows.

My favorite camp memory was from the last week of camp. When students are journaling or playing a game, I call them back to me with my best version of a coyote howl. Campers are to freeze, return the howl, and run back to me. It was sunny and warm and we were having a nice time together, but it was time to regroup and move onto a new activity. I did my call and the kids came running. When we were all together again in our little camper pack we heard our call echoing back from somewhere deep in the woods. Another pack of "human river coyotes," most likely swimming at the Woodside fishing access, was returning our call. Our yips, howls, and barks volleyed back and forth through the woods as we looked around at one another for a good 5 minutes laughing and yowling into the summer sun. Often the best times outside are unplanned and playful, just a group of people enjoying each other in a beautiful place on a beautiful day.



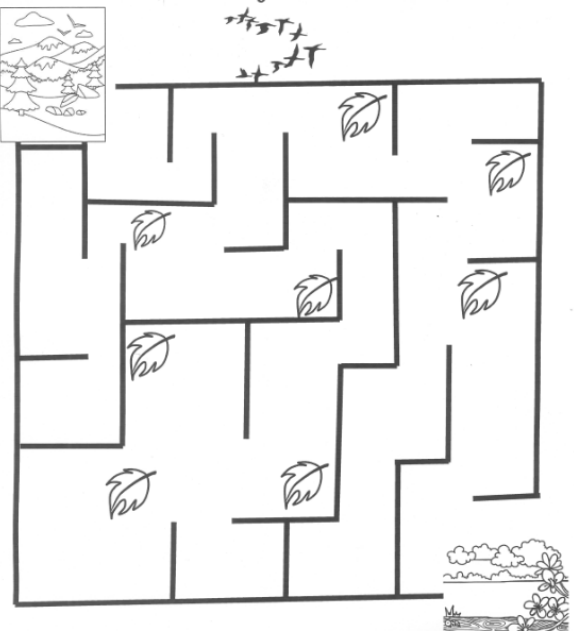
Kid zone

Did you know the Monarch butterfly can travel up to 2,000 miles during migration?! Want to learn more about migratory animals? Check out Jennifer DiRubbio's book, "Going Home - The Mystery of Animal Migration!"



Kids! We want to hear from you! Submit your original artwork, poetry, stories or photos featuring nature to Teller Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 548, Corvallis, MT 59828 or email it to Heather@tellerwildlife.org. We will share photos on our website, Facebook, and the Teller Newsletter.

Follow the maze to lead the geese to their warm winter home.



YOUTH EXPO | *six years of success*

The camp season is over and the 6th year of the Youth Conservation & Education Expo closed with a growth in attendance of over 50% from 2017. Summer camps throughout the beautiful state of Montana plus the Whittecar Shooting Event and Smoke Elser Pack Clinic provided 160 youth, ages 7-18, a chance to spend time learning about the great outdoors.



“THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR SPONSORING ME AT THE JACK CREEK YOUTH CAMP. WHILE I WAS THERE I LEARNED HOW TO FLY FISH, READ MAPS AND USE A COMPASS. I HAD A GREAT TIME AND HOPE TO GO THERE AGAIN SOMETIME.”

- Natalie, Youth Expo Camp Scholarship Recipient





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below: volunteers Gavin Herbert and Bob Davis trim cattails to manage wetlands



want to learn more?

E-mail Heather at heather@tellerwildlife.com to sign up for Teller's E-newsletters, volunteer opportunities and upcoming Teller happenings!

