



Friends of the  
National Wildlife  
Refuges of Rhode Island

## 2005 Annual Report

**Mission:** *Friends of the National Wildlife Refuges of Rhode Island is a nonprofit association devoted to the conservation and development of needed healthy habitat for flora and fauna at the National Wildlife Refuges of Rhode Island and the provision of a safe accessible ecological experience for visitors. The association promotes the benefits of the refuges and the National Wildlife Refuge System to the local community through public education and interpretation, and supports the refuge staff through projects designed to accomplish the goals of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for all the refuges in Rhode Island.*

Our organization is stable and continues to grow stronger. We continued our support of piping plover recovery; our fifth annual photo contest was again a great success, as was our second beer and wine tasting annual fundraiser; our sales operations at Sachuest Point and at the new store at Kettle Pond are robust and growing; we have moved into the new headquarters at Kettle Pond; our newsletter provides interesting and useful information; and, our website continues to develop as an informative channel of information. Internally, our operations as an organization have continued to evolve toward a more committee-based style of operation. We added a new member to the board and all board members contribute generously in helping to coordinate the various endeavors of the Friends. Thanks in great measure to everyone's efforts, the Friends is a healthy, thriving organization.

We continue to support our five refuges within the confines of our mission and our means. Lobbying efforts by the Friends have resulted in increased fiscal appropriations for land acquisition, despite the tight reins on the appropriations process. This has facilitated the continued implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Rhode Island Complex. Locally, we were successful in our efforts to curb a revised harbor management plan for the Town of Narragansett that would not have restricted boating speeds on the Narrow River near the Chafee refuge in Pettaquamscutt Cove. The Town Council sent the suggested plan back to the Harbor Commission for revisions in keeping with our suggestions.

### Recently Completed and Current Projects

#### Web Site

Laura Landen, the web master, consistently updates and adds to the Friends web site.

#### Database

Laura is also redesigning our database for membership information. This will be completed in time for our annual membership drive. Once we have updated data, we will begin to use the internet and email for many of our communications.

## **On-going Projects**

### **Off Refuge Piping Plover Restoration and Education Project**

This project has two dimensions: the biological aspects of resource protection of the piping plover, and the broader educational needs of resource protection. Since 1998 the Friends have raised over \$160,000 in private donations, grants and goods and services for the program. Here are the highlights of our support:

#### **Biological**

- Provided various supplies as they were requested.
- Supported a seasonal biotech on the beaches.
- Supported an intern at Sachuest Point.
- Funded a student intern through the Student Conservation Association.

#### **Educational**

- Future plans include increased efforts in solicitation of funds to support the plover recovery program.

## **Special Projects and Events**

### **Artist-in-Residence**

The Friends sponsor a program entitled “Punctuating Place” in conjunction with local artist Ana Flores. Ana will be working at Kettle Pond, designing sculptures that will enhance the trails there, and running workshops and lecture series at the visitor’s center. This project is jointly funded by the Rhode Island Foundation, via a “New Works” grant, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **Summer Lecture Series**

Due to the delay in opening the Kettle Pond Visitor Center, our newly initiated summer lecture series was held at Audubon’s Kimble Wildlife Refuge on the four Wednesdays of August. We will again have the weekly series this summer, beginning July 12.

### **Photo Contest**

Marcia West and Lynda Boghdan spearheaded efforts of the photo contest committee again this year. Entries came from people who frequent one or another of the refuges, but also from others who had not known of the existence of the refuges until they saw notice of the contest. The prizes were even more generous, thanks to several sponsoring businesses. The Board has already authorized the sixth annual photo contest for this coming fall.

### **Wine Tasting Fundraiser**

Our second annual wine tasting fundraiser was again a success. Thanks to the efforts of co-chairs Beverly Lavalley and Sally Hanson, we netted about \$1,200 from the event. The third annual wine tasting is already approved, with preparations well underway. Mark your calendar for the Thursday, May 11, 2006. Join us at the Westerly Yacht Club and sample the featured microbrews.

### **Junior Duck Stamp Competition**

In 2005, Rhode Island had the second highest number of entries, surpassed only by California! Over 600 entries in the Junior Duck Stamp Competition made the judges' work challenging, but rewarding. Janna Greenhalgh from the staff, and Sally Hanson from the board serve on the committee.

### **Organizational Growth**

#### **Newsletter**

Under the able direction of Dave Monk, the newsletter continues to focus on the various refuges. So far, Ninigret, Sachuest Point and Trustom Pond have been spotlighted; the most recent issue is a commemoration of the dedication ceremony of the new Kettle Pond Visitor Center. Thanks to all those who have so generously contributed to the newsletters.

#### **Membership**

Our membership is stable. The board-approved membership drive last year yielded several new members. We will conduct the drive again this year and solicit updated information from our members. We also will continue our offer to new volunteers of a one-year complimentary membership in the Friends.

#### **Sales Operation**

Now that our sales operation is in full swing at Sachuest Point, efforts are underway to further develop the store at the Kettle Pond facility. Revenue from sales has been going toward merchandise acquisition; soon, however, we expect sales to be a regular source of funding for the Friends, and hence for the refuges.

More than ever this year, our organization's success is a result of the teamwork of our board of directors, members of the Friends who help on various projects, and the refuge staff with whom we partner. Everyone's hard work shows in what we have been able to accomplish. Also, we appreciate just as much those of you whose support of the organization is primarily financial, for we would not be able to accomplish what we do without the money to do it. In just a few short years we have begun to make a difference at the RI National Wildlife Refuges for the habitat, the wildlife and those who visit our refuges. We remain hopeful that we can continue to build on our momentum through 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



Laura Landen  
Chair, Board of Directors  
March 2006