

# Field Notes

P.O. Box 81065 Fairbanks, AK 99708 907-452-5162 creamers@ptialaska.net www.creamersfield.org

Friends of Creamer's Field presents the second annual...

## Design Alaska Wild Arts Walk!

Imagine a perfect spring day. Swallows dip down to snatch the few early mosquitoes out of the air, iris bloom in the swales, and music wafts out over a winding row of festive canopies.

On Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, from Noon-5 pm, we will hold the second annual **Design Alaska Wild Arts Walk**. This event is a fundraiser for Friends of Creamer's Field. Proceeds support this and

other family-oriented activities. Design Alaska has graciously agreed to be our event sponsor again this year.

Artists will be stationed in groups along a loop trail that begins and ends near the Creamer's Farmhouse at 1300 College Road.

There will be approximately 30 stations representing a wide array of arts. A stage will be set up for a schedule of musicians and writers. For those of you who enjoy making crafts, paint on rainy Saturdays, or just want to see a



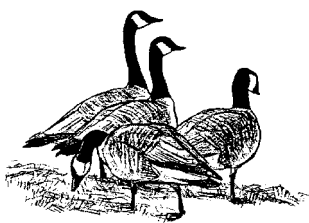
range of talents, this is a chance to meet artist guild members and see them at work. This event will take place rain or shine (hopefully sunshine!). In the event of rain there will be large tents set up near the Farmhouse for those artists who need shelter.

The general public will pay to attend this event as it is a fundraiser for Friends of Creamer's Field. In return for a contribution, the public will receive a cup of coffee, cocoa or tea, a locally-made pastry, and a very attractive gift mug from Design Alaska (one per family please). Friends of Creamer's Field members and Fairbanks Arts Association members receive \$5 off the admission price of \$10 per person or \$25 per family.

We are still looking for volunteers to help with this exciting event. For more information or to volunteer, contact Friends of Creamer's Field at 452-5162 or creamers@ptialaska.net. See you there!

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### Our Mission

Friends of Creamer's Field is a community based, non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational, historical, and interpretive programs throughout the year at Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.

## News from the Board of Directors

By Joy Morrison, Board President

We are increasing our membership considerably over past years and have been updating the software we use to track our membership. This upgrade will allow us to improve our e-mail communication with you and keep you apprised of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities with short e-mail notices. You should expect a call from one of our board members asking if you would like to receive e-mail communications from Friends of Creamer's Field and, if so, to get an email address from you.

We are making progress on opening our beautiful barns to the Fairbanks public. It is a slow process and needs careful coordination with the Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). Many of their divisions use the barns and creamery as storage and the grounds around the barns for equipment such as boats, ATVs, trailers, etc. We are working with them to find or build an alternative secure storage facility, and this will take time. To this end we had a meeting with Tom Lawson, Director of Administration, ADF&G in Juneau and have written a letter to Commissioner Denby Lloyd requesting his assistance. Stay tuned!

In January I was fortunate to spend five days on a walking safari at Gunn's Bush Camp in the Okavango Delta of Botswana, southern Africa. More impressive than the animals are the birds of the Delta, which really impressed me. It was an interest-

ing experience to be out in the wilds on foot on a very large island containing lions, leopard, hyenas, buffalo, elephant, giraffe and zebra among others, accompanied by William, an experienced Tswana man who knew every inch of the island (15x90 kilometers) and the sounds of over 400 different birds! ([www.gunnscamp.com](http://www.gunnscamp.com))

I recently visited the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge in northern California and made a connection with the president of their new non-profit board. We hope to come to an agreement so that we might work together collaboratively and have an exchange of visits by our respective members. It is a small but important refuge used by several important species of migratory birds. Their interpretive center is very informative, and they are lucky enough to have a park ranger staffing it ([www.stateparks.com/humboldt\\_bay.html](http://www.stateparks.com/humboldt_bay.html)).

It should be another very busy summer with lots of out-of-town visitors to the Refuge. We have many exciting events planned and hope to see you at the Farmhouse Visitor Center!



Joy Morrison

### Friends of Creamer's Field Board Members

Jim Chumbley, Vice President  
Bob Craig  
Roxanne Creamer  
Pat DeRuyter, Secretary  
Ray Hadley  
Kris Hundertmark  
Donna Krier  
Sherry Lewis  
Gail Mayo, Treasurer  
Herb Melchior  
Joy Morrison, President  
Jon Runstadler  
E. Tom Robinson

### Non-Voting Members

Alexis Runstadler,  
Development Director  
Melissa Sikes,  
Program Director  
Cathie Harms (ADF&G)  
Mark Ross (ADF&G)

This issue of *Field Notes* was produced by Mary Zalar

## Come Work in Anna Creamer's Vegetable Garden!

The garden volunteer group is gearing up to plant this year's Farmhouse vegetable garden. More volunteers are needed for planting, weeding, watering, and just enjoying the warm earth in the front yard of the Farmhouse. The garden is a child-friendly space, and parents with kids of any age are encouraged to volunteer. Garden duties are a combination of scheduled work days and just stopping by to do some weeding and watering! All produce harvested from the Farmhouse garden is donated to the Stone Soup Café, which helps to feed some of the homeless in Fairbanks. The first scheduled garden work day is for planting on Monday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. For more information, call Carrie Dershin at 488-6753 or e-mail her at [carrie@dershin.com](mailto:carrie@dershin.com).



Isaac and Keats in Anna Creamer's garden!

# 2007 Saturday Mornings with an Artist

Creamer's Field Farmhouse Visitor Center

June–August on Saturdays

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM



**S**aturday Mornings with an Artist: Share the beauties of wildlife and nature by local artists' paintings, portraits, carvings and sketching media! The Creamer's Field Farmhouse Visitor Center will host these artists' displays of their works, items for sale, and in some cases demonstrations of the artist's techniques from 10:00 am through 2:00 pm each Saturday.

- June 9<sup>th</sup> Terra Shideler – Quilts and tote bags with nature themes.
- June 16<sup>th</sup> Herb and Hilda Melchior – Photographs of migratory birds, wildflowers, and nature at Creamer's Field.
- June 23<sup>rd</sup> Betsy Bear – Watercolor, giclée prints and notecards of Alaskan scenery and wildlife.
- June 30<sup>th</sup> Vladimir Zhikhartzev – Oil, acrylics, and watercolors of Alaskan scenery.
- July 7<sup>th</sup> Barbara Burleigh – Acrylics of Alaskan wildlife and scenery.
- July 14<sup>th</sup> Amy Noon – Pencil sketches of wildflowers of Alaska and Creamer's Field.
- July 21<sup>st</sup> Tom Nixon – Watercolor paintings of Creamer's scenery.
- July 28<sup>th</sup> Dan Kennedy – Watercolor paintings of migratory birds.
- August 4<sup>th</sup> Barbara Burleigh – Acrylics of Alaskan wildlife and scenery.
- August 11<sup>th</sup> Deb Horner – Watercolor paintings of Alaskan scenery.
- August 18<sup>th</sup> Betsy Chronic – Carved wooden boxes of chickadees, caribou and other wildlife.
- September 1<sup>st</sup> Mark Ross – Field sketches of Creamer's wildlife.

Come join us! Information at 452-5162

## More Events at Creamer's Field

June 2

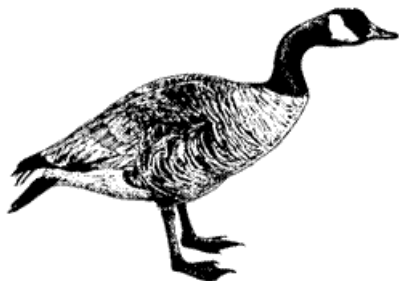
Design Alaska Wild Arts Walk: Join Friends of Creamer's Field and Design Alaska for a stroll among the artists, crafts people, and musicians of interior Alaska! Details on page 1.

June 21

See us at the Friends of Creamer's booth at the Midnight Sun Festival, downtown Fairbanks.

June 23

Friends of Creamer's Field invites you to a Summer Solstice Walk on the Refuge trails, Noon–2 pm.



## Guided Nature Walks June 1–September 1, Weekdays

**J**oin Friends of Creamer's Field naturalists on a guided walk to learn more about the wonders of interior Alaska. Walks begin at the Creamer's Field Farmhouse Visitor Center, 1300 College Road, back by the big barns. These walks are free to the public.

10–11:00 am Monday–Friday

7–8:00 pm Wednesday



*Joy Morrison, Ken Donajkowski, Melissa Sikes, and Alexis Runstadler enjoy the view from atop the new Boreal Forest Trail observation platform.*  
Photo by Rick Solie

## ConocoPhillips Tours the Boreal Forest Trail

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, Friends of Creamer's Field had the pleasure of welcoming two representatives of ConocoPhillips to the refuge: Ken Donajkowski, Vice President of Health, Safety & Environment, and Rick Solie, Director of the Fairbanks Regional Office. Ken and Rick's visit was timed to coincide with the snow melt flooding of the seasonal wetlands and the swales under the boardwalks of the Boreal Forest Trail. Even though this year's water levels were lower than average, chorusing wood frogs could be heard in the seasonal wetlands. It was a glorious sunny afternoon, and everyone enjoyed the breathtaking view from the Boreal Forest Trail observation platform.

A generous 2006 grant from ConocoPhillips' Earth Energy Partners to Friends of Creamer's Field has funded the replacement of the aging boardwalk and the rebuilding of the observation platform among other upgrades. Look for upcoming enhancements to the Boreal Forest Trail including new handrails, a boardwalk extension to the new observation platform, new interpretive signs, and an updated trail guide.

## Thanks to Our Volunteers & Supporters

- Our continuing thanks to ConocoPhillips for their support of Friends of Creamer's Field and the exciting upgrades to our Boreal Forest Trail.
- A big thank you to Ruth Knapman and the Fairbanks Garden Club for agreeing to plant and tend the flower beds around the farmhouse again this summer.
- Many thanks to Carrie Dershin for coordinating this year's gardening volunteer group.
- Thanks to Bob and Linda Craig, Gail Mayo, Jeannie Creamer, and Ethan Runstadler for helping out with this year's gift shop inventory.
- Thanks to the staff and volunteers of the Alaska Bird Observatory, Camp Habitat, and the Alaska Public Lands Information Center for helping to make this year's Spring Migration Celebration a huge success!
- A big thank you to Doug Fremd and Beaver Sports for providing binoculars at the Spring Migration Celebration.
- Another big thank you to Galen Perry and Sportsman's Warehouse for providing spotting scopes at the Spring Migration Celebration.
- Thank you to Elena Sparrow for providing a door sized poster for display at the Spring Migration Celebration about the Climate Change projects happening at the University of Alaska.
- Thanks to Calypso Farm & Ecology Center and the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District for having information booths at the Spring Migration Celebration.
- A huge thank you to Fairbanks Boy Scout Troop 1 for cutting and putting together the bird box kits that we had available during the Spring Migration Celebration.
- Thanks to E. Tom Robinson for assembling bird nesting boxes at the Spring Migration Celebration and for the gift shop.
- Thanks to the following for help at the Farmhouse and special events:

### Farmhouse Visitor Center

Bob Craig  
Jeannie Creamer  
Roxy Creamer  
Betty Carlson  
Pat Degen  
Pat DeRuyter  
Gail Mayo  
Brenda Sadler  
Mary Zalar  
Marilyn Whitehead

Dan Kennedy  
Gail Mayo  
Micah Miller  
Courtney Pylant  
E. Tom Robinson  
Mark Ross  
Derek Sikes  
Ken Philip  
Kaley Sikes  
Laenne Thompson  
Nikki Guldager  
Mary Zalar  
Ray Hadley  
Laurel Devaney  
Nicole Gustine

### Spring Migration Celebration

Justin Bailey  
Jim Chumbley  
Jeannie Creamer  
Darcy Davies  
Jenny Day  
Carrie Dershin  
Sheila Dufford

### Frog Walk

Don Larson  
Derek Sikes  
Gail Mayo



## Summer Hours at Farmhouse Volunteers Needed!

Beginning on Saturday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, the Creamer's Field Farmhouse Visitor Center and Gift Shop will be open every day from 10 am to 5 pm! The Visitor Center and Gift Shop is staffed solely by volunteers and to make our operation successful, we need more volunteers to join our ranks! Shifts are three-and-one-half hours long from 10 am–1:30 pm or 1:30 pm–5 pm, Tuesdays through Fridays. Training is provided and you don't need a background in biology or history—just a desire to volunteer some of your time, learn something new, and meet and talk with visitors about Creamer's Field and Fairbanks!

*More migratory visitors...*

### Creamer's Refuge Hosts Have Arrived!

We are thrilled to welcome our June refuge hosts—Steve and Judy Sharpe from Marana, Arizona. Steve and Judy enjoy hiking, traveling and house building, and they are rapidly absorbing information about Fairbanks and Creamer's Field. They will be volunteering in the Farmhouse Visitor Center and Gift Shop on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays as well as caretaking the grounds around the Visitor Center.

Bill and Joanne Stowe from Elgin, Texas will be our July refuge hosts. Their hobbies include woodworking, photography, gardening, hiking, and camping. They also served on disaster relief teams for hurricanes Rita and Katrina. Our refuge hosts' only neighbors are the woodchucks and birds, so stop by the Farmhouse for a neighborly visit and help us welcome them to Fairbanks.



Photo by Ken Whitten

### Spring Awakenings at Creamer's Field

The first birds on the field this spring were Mallards that showed up during the week of April 9<sup>th</sup>. The first Canada Geese arrived officially on the evening of April 13<sup>th</sup>. The following Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, they were joined by the first Trumpeter Swans. At one point we had more than ten swans sharing the field at one time. On April 16<sup>th</sup>, Melissa Sikes noticed the newly awakened woodchuck sitting peacefully by the ramp into the Farmhouse. Pintails returned to the fields on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The first Sandhill Crane was spotted on the back field on April 26<sup>th</sup>. That week also heralded the first sounds of the wood frog chorus in the flooded seasonal pond.

During the first few weeks of May, many different species made their annual journeys through Creamer's Field. As I write this article, cranes fill the fields, shorebird migration is in full swing, the Tree Swallows are settling into the bird boxes in the field, and the Cliff Swallows are busy working on the mud nests attached to the creamery. Spring sure is an exciting time here at Creamers!



Queen size quilt donated by Karen Kiss.

### Preview of Annual Quilt Raffle

The 2007 Friends of Creamer's Field quilt raffle will kick off June 21<sup>st</sup> at the Midnight Sun Festival. This year's raffle will include a chance to win one of three different quilts. Friends would like to extend a big thank you to Karen Kiss for her donation of a gorgeous queen size quilt for this year's raffle. Karen designed and pieced the quilt, and it was quilted by Teri Helmers of Black Spruce Quilting.

We also thank Terra Shideler for her donation of "Resting Pintail with a Twist," based on a quilt design by Ree Nancarrow. Ree gave Terra permission to donate it to us. The third quilt will remain a mystery until revealed at the Midnight Sun Festival.

Quilt raffle tickets will be available at the Midnight Sun Festival, the Tanana Valley State Fair, and at the Farmhouse Visitor Center after June 21<sup>st</sup>. Tickets are one for \$5 or five for \$20. The quilts will be on display at the events and at the Farmhouse.

The winning tickets will be chosen August 26<sup>th</sup> at the Tex-Mex feast held on the last day of the Sandhill Crane Festival, August 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>. Winners need not be present.



"Resting Pintail with a Twist" is a 26" x 18" quilt donated by Terra Shideler.

## Those Among Us: Kyle Campbell Reflects on Vietnam Experience

*Kyle Campbell, a biology major at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, has worked with Mark Ross at Creamer's Field for the past two years. Recently, Kyle returned from eight months in Vietnam.*

By Kyle Campbell

After spending over eight months this past winter in the tropics of southeast Asia, it feels good to be home just in time for green-up and spring migration!

I spent last fall semester participating in a study abroad program called "Mekong Delta: Natural and Cultural Ecology" through the School for International Training based at the University of Can Tho, in southern Vietnam. Can Tho is about one hundred miles south of Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), right in the heart of the Mekong Delta.

During the semester not only did I learn all about the many different ecosystems in the Mekong Delta, but we traveled as a group to many places as well. With my group we spent three weeks traveling through Cambodia and also in the north of Vietnam. Of course the highlight for me was when we visited various bird sanctuaries and

refuges where I was dazzled with dozens of incredible and exotic birds, such as Oriental Darters, Purple Herons, Grey-headed Fish Eagles, Painted Storks, Malkohas, Coucals, Drongos, Sunbirds, White-eyes, Purple Swamp Hens and Bee-eaters!

But things really got interesting for me when I started my Independent Study Project, where I designed a research proposal for collecting viral samples from wild birds in the Mekong Delta. No one in the country is currently directing much focus towards wild birds regarding Avian Influenza, nor is the government allowing foreigners to test wild birds for bird flu. However, I had the good fortune to become connected with the director of scientific research for one province in the Mekong Delta where I proposed sampling sites. He was an advisor for my project and assured me that he will do everything he can to support the research.

It is still uncertain, but if he can grant authorization permits both for collection and exportation of samples, I may have a chance to return to Vietnam next spring to continue the research I started with the help of Dr. Kevin Winker from UAF and his research team.

Once the semester ended however, I continued to visit the two wetland sites where I have proposed research, once to meet other researchers from the Food & Agriculture Organization and from the Wildlife Conservation Society's GAINS program (global avian influenza network for surveillance) and also just to visit, bringing my parents when they were visiting, as well as my girlfriend when she had a break from her classes. My last visit however was rather special, as I was able to participate in the annual crane count for the International Crane Foundation, counting the very rare and endangered Eastern Sarus Cranes (*Grus antigone sharpii*).

Standing at over five feet tall, they are one of the largest crane species in the world, and incredibly impressive to see. I personally saw 65 of them, and the total count for the day was 125, which



*Kyle Campbell holding a water snake in Mekong Delta, Vietnam.*

represents the majority of the population, congregating during the dry season within the Tram Chim National Park in the Mekong Delta.

When I wasn't studying or working on developing my research project I was either enjoying life in the tropical sun with my girlfriend, who was in a two semester exchange program from her university in Paris, or traveling around the country by 150cc motorbikes with her. The last three months I spent in Vietnam were pushing 110 degrees everyday and 100% humidity! Now that I'm home, I'm afraid I've lost my thick Alaskan blood. I hope the weather stays nice for me!



*Eastern Sarus Cranes in Tram Chim National Park during the International Crane Foundation's annual crane count.*



## Spring Events at Creamer's Field

The Farmhouse Visitor Center and the fields were hopping with activity this spring. The first event was the Spring Equinox Walk on March 24<sup>th</sup>. We had around 25 folks come for a brisk nature walk. The weather was just starting to break from the icy grip of winter's chill, and the signs of spring were still a few weeks from really getting started, but we did see lots of late winter activity.

The next big event was the annual 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Bird Watch that took place April 23<sup>rd</sup>–27<sup>th</sup>. Hundreds of fifth graders participated in the 41<sup>st</sup> annual program. The fields were full of geese and ducks and the first crane arrived on the front fields on the last day of the program.

Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> was the annual Spring Migration Celebration. Over 280 folks stopped by Creamer's Field, the Alaska Bird Observatory and the Alaska Public Lands Information Center to participate in lots of activities such as bird watching, puppet shows, games, crafts and more. A big thank you goes to all our incredible volunteers—we couldn't have done it without you. Also, thanks to Derek Sikes, Ken Philip, and Mark Ross for leading the nature hikes. It was a gorgeous day even after the wind picked up in the late afternoon.



*Face painting at the Spring Migration Celebration.*

Children watching geese,  
a favorite fifth grade class,  
Loved by teachers too.

-Ray Hadley

## Membership Response Form

**Become a member of Friends of Creamer's Field, make a donation, or renew your membership.**

*(Please check the renewal date in the corner of your mailing label.)*

New Member

Renewal

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 Students & Seniors

\$20 Individual

\$40 Family

\$75 Supporter

\$100 Contributor

\$250 Steward

\$500 Patron\*

\$1000 Lifetime\*

*Patron and Lifetime: please check here if you would like to receive a historic Randall Compton print of Creamer's Dairy signed by the Creamer family with your membership (valued at \$150).*

Payment:  Cash  Check  Credit card Visa or MasterCard (circle one)

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ VCode\*: \_\_\_\_\_

\*3 digit code on card back

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift membership for the above name from \_\_\_\_\_

I have a new mailing address, phone, or email.

I would like to receive my newsletter via email.

I would like to volunteer. Please contact me with information about upcoming volunteer orientation sessions.

*Friends of Creamer's Field is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donation is fully tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.*

Friends of Creamer's Field

PO Box 81065

Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

907-452-5162 (office)

907-459-7309 (Visitor's Center)

email: creamers@ptialaska.net

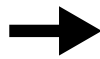
website: www.creamersfield.org



## Cows Return to Creamer's Field

**B**arbie Jackson's fourth grade class at Pearl Creek Elementary School has created a new "herd of cows" for Creamer's Field. These unique wooden cut-out cows are brightly painted masterpieces, each with its own design theme. Some are based on historical events that took place at Creamer's, such as the bake sales and penny drives that raised money to contribute to the option to buy the fields. Some of the themes are free form artistry. The five cows had their debut at the recent Spring Migration Celebration on April 28<sup>th</sup>. We will be letting the "herd" out of the barn for the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Design Alaska Wild Arts Walk. Come and see the cows out on the grass again. We graciously thank Barbie Jackson's class for their donation of the cows, and we look forward to letting them out at future Friends of Creamer's Field events.

Is it time to renew  
your membership?



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P.O. Box 81065  
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