



# Volunteer Newsletter

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## Volunteers Recognized for Service



Rick Abend received the Volunteer of the Year award at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner held this past May.

Volunteers at Blackwater do it all! Everything from staffing the Visitor Center, maintaining the butterfly garden, and leading bird walks and educational programs, to monitoring bluebirds, surveying waterfowl, and serving as mentors for new hunters. Refuge staff celebrated and recognized all they do at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner held outdoors at the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park pavilion on May 4. During 2022, 109 volunteers contributed 8,454 hours of their time to the refuge, equivalent to four full-time employees!

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This year, Rick Abend of Madison, MD, received the 2022 Volunteer of the Year Award for his dedicated service to the refuge. Rick has been a steady force at Blackwater for 17 years and has served as President of the Friends of Blackwater for nearly 10 years. He is an unwavering supporter and advocate, and makes a tangible difference on the refuge, having done everything from installing bike racks and electrical lines to building wooden bridges and boardwalks, among many other things. Visitors to the refuge benefit every day from the talents and dedication that Rick brings to the refuge.

Special recognition was also given to volunteers reaching key milestones in their years of service to Blackwater NWR. These volunteers include Linda Chandlee, Harry Heckathorn, Ellie Ludvigsen, Karl McGovern, Christina Rocca, and Peter Smithson for five years of service; Sue Fischer and Leslie Baker for 10 years of service; and Lisa Mayo for 20 years of service.

Award pins and certificates were also presented to volunteers reaching milestones in the number of volunteer hours they have contributed to the refuge since they began volunteering. Those recognized are listed below. Blackwater is lucky to have such a dedicated corps of volunteers working to make the refuge a better place for all. We can't thank them enough for all they do. A big thanks goes out to the Friends of Blackwater for sponsoring the dinner catered by Emily's Produce.

### **50 Hours**

Lauren Atwood  
Bobby Boarman  
Jane Bowers  
Phyllis Como  
Wes Cummins  
Sloane Franklin  
Jim Green  
Steve Huettner  
Mark Jenkins  
Collin Johnson  
Maribeth Kulnczyk  
Trevor Michaels  
Jake Peregrim  
Davie Pina  
Kirk Tull Sr.  
Robin Weaver

### **100 Hours**

Lisa Alfaro  
Marcos Alfaro  
Wade Bradford  
Brian Cavey  
Chris Davidson  
Rachel Dawson  
Rhonda Franz-Floyd  
TJ Jenkins  
Russ Leith  
Bob Long  
Brian Mann  
Sherry Morgan  
Marnie Pepper  
Zack Trusty  
Laura Yowell

### **250 Hours**

Doug Irvin  
Charles Maguire  
John Morgan  
Bob Quinn  
Christina Rocca  
Peter Smithson  
Jim Van Ness



Volunteers Sherry Morgan, Rhonda Franz-Floyd, and Brian Mann receive recognition from Refuge Manager Marcia Pradines Long for reaching the 100-hour milestone.

**500 Hours**

Linda Chandlee

**750 Hours**

Steve Funderburk  
Merrill Schuetz  
Elaine Wilson



**1000 Hours**

Rick Abend  
Sue Fischer  
Ellie Ludvigsen  
Betsy McCaul  
Jane Sebring  
Carol Walker  
Ed Walker



**1500 Hours**

Karl McGovern  
Vicki Zobel

**2000 Hours**

Ron Ketter

**2500 Hours**

Harry Heckathorn

**8500 Hours**

Charlotte Hehn



Top: Volunteers reaching the 250 hour milestone include Jim Van Ness, Peter Smithson, Charles Maguire and John Morgan. Middle: Volunteers Ed Walker, Carol Walker, Ellie Ludvigsen, Sue Fischer and Rick Abend hold their certificates for surpassing 1000 hours of volunteer service. Bottom left: Volunteer Ron Ketter receives recognition for contributing over 2000 hours of volunteer service. Bottom right: Volunteer Harry Heckathorn is recognized by Refuge Manager Marcia Pradines Long for contributing over 2500 hours of volunteer service to the refuge.