



Claire Goad named the 2018 National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer of the Year

March 21, 2018

Washington, D.C. Claire Goad, a volunteer at the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in New York, has been announced as the 2018 Volunteer of the Year recipient. This award is presented annually by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and recognizes outstanding accomplishments of volunteers in support of the operation and management of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

“The Refuge Association could not be more proud to recognize Ms. Claire Goad as our 2018 Volunteer of the Year,” said Geoffrey Haskett, President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. “Ms. Goad exemplifies what it means to give back to community and country and the Wertheim Refuge and indeed the entire National Wildlife Refuge System is lucky to have such an advocate in their corner.”

Over her 17 years as President of Friends of Wertheim NWR, a non profit organization that supports the refuge, Claire has accomplished many great things through her innovative thinking and dedication; from securing funding for a new visitor center to creating the Friends Groups annual fundraiser “Wine & Cheese” in 2011. Before creating the Friends of Wertheim NWR as one of the founding board members, Claire had been an advocate for the refuge since 1968. As fellow volunteer and Friends board member Gail Quigg observed, “Claire has had a love affair with the [Wertheim] property from the time she moved into her home.”

In addition to her love for the refuge, Claire has a love for her community and encourages many people to get involved with the refuge, educating anyone and everyone she can. Before the refuge was open to the public, Claire was taking her 5th grade class to see its beauty. She was persistent in getting them greater access and even asking the refuge staff to carefully clear a trail they could explore on. After securing funding for the new visitor center and nature store through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) she enlisted a significant amount of new volunteers to help out with this large project. She even engaged a local carpentry class to come out and help build the refuge’s Welcome Cabin.

Claire also helps plan unique events at the refuge and one of her greatest achievements was creating the Wine & Cheese fundraiser the Friends Group puts on annually. Over the years the event has raised over \$15,000 to fund education and outreach on the refuge.



Although she will be stepping down from her position as Friend's president at year's end, her legacy will continue through all the people she has touched over the years. Not only is Claire involved with her local community, she also has been very active in the Friends Group community on a national level attending multiple Friends conferences over the years and sharing her innovative skills to others.

Fellow volunteer and Friends member Diana Davies reflected, "Her kindly face belied her will of steel in defense of this incredible piece of Long Island real estate. Long may they both remain so!"

"No one could have said it better. Claire's love of the Wertheim refuge, and her dedication to the Refuge System nationwide, is apparent to all those who have had the privilege of knowing her. Her contributions to the Refuge System over the last 50 years have left a legacy worthy of the conservation heroes who came before her, and a challenge to those generations yet to follow." We are proud to present this award to the very deserving, Claire Goad.

Ms. Goad's award will be presented on May 24, 2018, at the National Wildlife Refuge Association's Annual Gala Awards Dinner in Washington, D.C.

####

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to conserve America's wildlife heritage for future generations through strategic programs that protect, enhance, and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System and the landscapes beyond its boundaries that secure its ecological integrity. For more information, visit www.refugeassociation.org or contact [Geoffrey L. Haskett](#), President, National Wildlife Refuge Association, 505-401-5298.