

INSIDE



**TREASURING A
TREASURE**



OPERATION SALMON



WHO ARE WE?

**COMMISSION
STAFF &
ADVISORS**

COMMISSIONERS

Scott Hughes • *Chairman*
Joe Melroy • *Treasurer*
Bruce Wiseman • *Secretary*

STAFF

Brent Grening • *CEO*
Nelson Holmberg • *VP of Innovation*
Laurie Olin • *VP of Operations*
Wonder Baldwin • *Admin Assistant*
Matt Rosenberger • *Accounting Mgr*
Kevin Oldham • *Maintenance*
Ethan Perry • *Brand Affinity Architect*

ADVISORS

Bill Eling • *Port Counsel*
Susan Trabucco • *Communications
& Marketing*

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THERE'S REFUGE IN THE REFUGE

BIRDS AND PEOPLE FIND RESPITE AND CERTAINTY HERE

Carty Lake, adjacent to port property and in the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, is home to large numbers of Tundra swans throughout the winter. Photo courtesy of T. Anderson

For seekers of solitude and lovers of nature, there is no season better than another to enjoy the calm, green environs offered by the expansive Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. With approximately 5,300 acres, much of which are accessible to the public, there's plenty of breathing room to be found on its plentiful trails, benches and viewing overlooks.

For serious birders or the newly-curious, however, early October through Thanksgiving offers visitors a birds-eye view (pun intended!) of the ancient, annual ritual migration of waterfowl that call the Ridgefield refuge home for a nearly six-week resting period. Then, visitors can enjoy the spectacle of the feeding, flight and water landings of thousands of swans, geese, ducks, sandhill cranes, and other birds. Attracted to this concentration of migratory

waterfowl, birds of prey including peregrine falcons and bald eagles make an appearance.

On the path of the Pacific Flyway, a major north-south flyway for migratory birds in America that extends from Alaska to Patagonia, the refuge is an important stopping-off place for a variety of waterfowl and other species that migrate each fall from Alaska or British Columbia to their winter homes to the south. These "snow birds" find Ridgefield's Carty Lake and surrounding fields, wetlands and marshes to be welcoming feeding grounds necessary for refueling as they make their way south along the flyway.

"I heard people describe how the refuge enhances Ridgefield's livability."

Chris Lapp, Project Leader,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
Ridgefield National Wildlife
Refuge Complex

Refuge part of Ridgefield identity

Chris Lapp, who manages the Ridgefield refuge, is a Project Leader with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the federal agency **REFUGE, PAGE 2**



Port of Ridgefield CEO Brent Grening was recently named as the recipient of the 2018 John S. McKibbin Leadership Legacy Award by the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce. Grening was honored for his leadership and business achievements benefiting Clark County at the chamber's annual dinner on September 25. Grening, center, was presented with the award by Kim Capeloto, left, executive vice president, chief banking officer of Riverview Bank and John McDonagh, CEO for the chamber. Photo by Kate Singh

GRENING EARNS REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD!

The Port of Ridgefield is proud to announce that Brent Grening, port CEO, was selected as the recipient of the 2018 John S. McKibbin Leadership Legacy Award, one of the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce's annual business and leadership awards. Grening was honored for his achievements at the annual dinner of the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce held September 25 at the Vancouver Hilton.

"Brent is one of the most intelligent, thoughtful and insightful leaders I've ever known and had the opportunity to work for and learn from," said Nelson Holmberg, vice president, innovation for the port. "His vision, direction and drive to achieve that vision are second-to-none, and are proven by his ability to complete major projects that no one would have thought a small port would normally have the ability to do."

Grening's contributions to the greater Southwest Washington community are extensive, and include leadership, long-term vision and planning for many regional projects including the Ridgefield Junction interchange replacement, (exit 14), SR-502 Interchange development, NE 139th Street interchange development, the Pioneer Street Overpass project, working toward the development of dark fiber optics infrastructure to bring high-speed broadband to the county, and purchasing and developing property to shovel-ready standards for job creation.

Grening has also been active in the North County Leadership Group, and has had a leadership role in the Three Ports Coalition (Ports of Ridgefield, Vancouver and

GRENING AWARD, PAGE 4



OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT: A TREASURE TO BE TREASURED

BY BRUCE WISEMAN, COMMISSIONER

As the sun sets on the most recent Birdfest, Ridgefield's annual celebration of the fall return of migratory birds to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, it's a good time to reflect on what the refuge means to our community.

It's no secret that we are people who enjoy our natural assets that in addition to the refuge include the Ridgefield waterfront and the river that touches it.

As you likely know from our past and current work, the port takes its commitment to environmental stewardship seriously so local families, their friends, and other visitors can come here to fish, boat, birdwatch and kayak in this clean and peaceful paradise.

The City of Ridgefield is currently working on the Main Avenue Access Improvements project to provide safer passage between downtown Ridgefield and the wildlife refuge along Main. And with our port trail, visitors have seasonal access to the refuge directly from the port's waterfront property.

Anyone can walk or use a wheelchair to look upon the birds, flora and fauna and just plain eye-catching beauty of Carty Lake. And all of this can be done without a negative impact on the environment, thanks to the city and port's productive partnerships with the national wildlife refuge. By working together we help our community enjoy a healthier, sustainable and soul-filling experience with nature.

So bring someone you care about to our waterfront and the refuge. Enjoy the breeze on your skin, feel the sun on your face, listen to the returning birds calling to each other. Our natural treasure is a big deal, so please don't miss out by taking it for granted. Happy fall!

REFUGE, CONT. FROM PAGE 1

responsible for oversight and conservation of national wildlife refuges, of which there is one in every state and territory. Lapp finds the emotional connection between Ridgefield's refuge and the community is a strong one. He participated in the City of Ridgefield's recent visioning process, and gained first-hand insight into how citizens view this pristine community asset.

"I heard people describe how the refuge enhances Ridgefield's livability," Lapp said. "They consider it to be a unique resource at their doorstep."

Lapp also pointed out that as Ridgefield grows and development is omnipresent, citizens see the refuge as a place off-limits to new residential or commercial construction.

"That certainty of knowing the refuge's habitat and the wildlife dependent on it will be conserved for current and future generations gives people a feeling of serenity, protection and a strong sense of place," he said. "This community understands it's a hidden jewel."

The "hidden" aspect of the refuge, however, is lessening. Lapp pointed out that an expanding Portland Metro area population means more and more people are finding out about the refuge and looking for solitude there.

"Our commitment, considering the increase in users, is to ensure everyone has a high-quality experience when they visit," Lapp noted the auto tour is of immediate concern as traffic has grown over the years, and he and his staff are looking for ways to mitigate the crowds during the popular fall bird viewing season.

A little history

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge was established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the 1950's in an effort to conserve and protect river bottom lands from the rapidly expanding efforts of development to industry and intensive farming, due to the human population growth in the Portland-Vancouver area. Over a period of about 20 years the refuge grew to its current 5,300 acres through many different property acquisitions. It's approved boundary spans 6,300 acres, but Lapp doesn't see any immediate need to acquire the additional 1,000 acres.

"The Morgan family is one of the remaining private property owners, and they are great land stewards, working on developing a wetlands mitigation bank," Lapp said. "Another property owner is a duck-hunting club with limited impact on the land, so there's no urgency to purchase any of this land because it isn't at risk for development."

A marriage of consumption and conservation

A key motivation for the establishment of the refuge was concern about declining numbers of one bird species, the Dusky Canada goose. The bird's nesting grounds in Alaska were compromised by a significant earthquake, so it was singled out for protection.

While all national refuges manage habitat not animals, few know that habitat protection and conservation services the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service perform, such as providing habitat for the Dusky Canada goose, are mandated by a component of the agency's wildlife refuge mission, which is "working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people."

One of those benefits includes wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting.

"Hunting may seem counter to our mission, but it is a legitimate and appropriate public use if it's determined to be compatible with the refuge's purpose," Lapp said. "To 'provide waterfowl hunting opportunities' is actually one

of the purposes for establishing the refuge."

Lapp noted that revenue from the sale of the annual Federal duck stamp, required for hunting, actually helps support wildlife and habitat conservation work on refuges.

"Ninety-eight percent of the fee goes to conservation work including land acquisition for habitat for national wildlife refuges," he said.

Lapp is quick to point out that 790 acres on the Ridgefield refuge set aside for hunting are separated from wildlife observation areas. The refuge also allows fishing in areas open on the Carty Unit per state regulations, but the opportunities are limited due to lack of a native fishery.

Connecting the dots between people, healthy habitat and environment

The National Wildlife Refuge System has a larger land base than the National Park Service, but for many years the public was largely unaware of the extent of refuge lands.

"In the past, national wildlife refuges did not do a very good job of welcoming people to understand the refuge system; we focused more on the 'wildlife first' mentality then making connections with the public," said Lapp.

"That's changing as the System strives to be more relevant to the American people."

Lapp, a 25-year U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service veteran who has been at the Ridgefield refuge since 2011, has been working with the community, including City and Port of Ridgefield officials, to create more access in and out of the refuge with through trails and safer routes. One of the goals is to help visitors to the refuge make the connection between an environmentally-healthy habitat and the greater environmental ecosystem.

"In the past we catered to our traditional supporters," Lapp said. "Now we are reaching out into the communities to make a broader effort to make urban citizens feel more welcome here."

Lapp cited the importance of the Port of Ridgefield as a partner in this effort, as its productive relationship and proximity to the refuge gives Lapp and his team access to non-traditional visitors.

"We get to connect with and help educate property developers, for example. Helping them to understand the importance of maintaining these areas, and how it adds to the overall livability of the place is a great opportunity for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

The future looks bright for the refuge

In the works for years, the long-held vision to improve facilities at the Ridgefield refuge is on the boards, with the first phase – which calls for the replacement of the trailer that serves as the refuge office to be replaced with a brick and mortar building – to start construction in fall of 2022. The fall of 2024 will be ground-breaking time for a Community and Nature Center, and the improvement of the parking lot. All projects are dependent on federal funds already approved for the projects holding firm.

"This has been a long-time coming. The refuge has been missing a main focus area for its programs, trails and other facilities," said Lapp. "It has a whole bunch of tentacles; it's a bit like an octopus with no head."

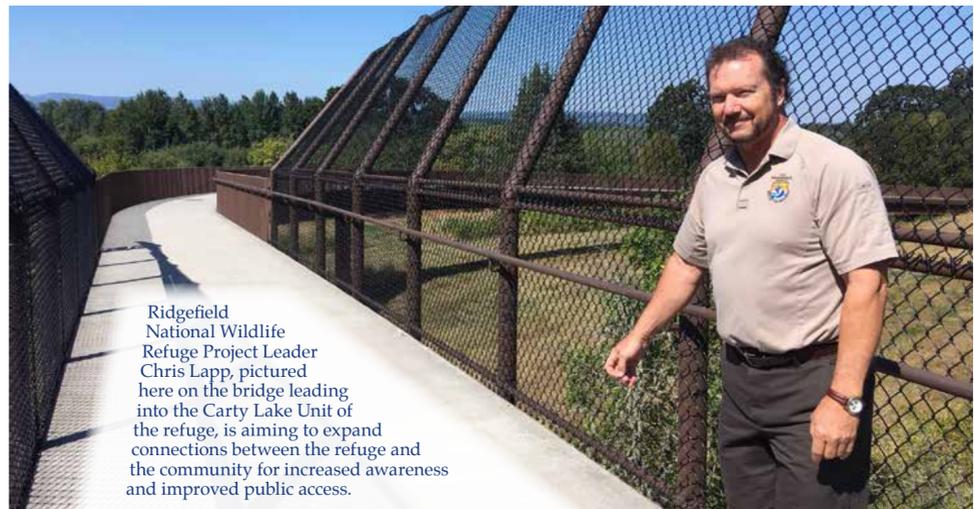
Lapp is excited for the Community and Nature Center, which he sees as a critical facility for connecting the public, including the Ridgefield School District, to new environmental education offerings.

"We have this amazing natural asset in Ridgefield's back yard from which to learn. For students who attend school here, it's a great thing."

For more information about the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, visit www.fws.gov/refuge/Ridgefield.

"Our commitment, considering the increase in users, is to ensure everyone has a high-quality experience when they visit."

Chris Lapp, Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex



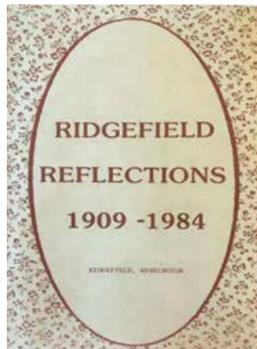
Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Project Leader Chris Lapp, pictured here on the bridge leading into the Carty Lake Unit of the refuge, is aiming to expand connections between the refuge and the community for increased awareness and improved public access.



VETERANS HOOK BIG ONES!

On September 9 this year, former and current U.S. military personnel enjoyed a day on the river in Ridgefield via the "Operation Salmon" program. This year marked the sixth year for the event that provides a free day of Columbia River fishing, a picnic and celebration for over 100 military veterans and their families. One of the event organizers is Ridgefield resident Dion Hess. Each year Hess and others secure donations from about 40 sponsors, including Walmart, to help fund the day's activities. The Port of Ridgefield waives facilities use fees for the popular annual event. 2016 file photo courtesy of Ralph Walker.

For more about the event and its inspiration, visit the port's newsletter page on our website, and choose the Summer 2016 issue for the full story.



REFLECTING ON RIDGEFIELD

At a recent port commission meeting, longtime Ridgefield resident and octogenarian Allene Wodaeger presented commissioners with several copies of Ridgefield Reflections, a history booklet compiled and produced in 1984 for Ridgefield's 75th anniversary. The piece below, which is the first of two stanzas to a poem in the book, is among some of the gems and tidbits found on its pages.

Note that for accuracy, misspellings were corrected from the 1984 print version.

Ridgefield

There's a sweet home town that I like best,

The prettiest spot in the whole northwest;

Where the Fruit Valley road winds round and round,

Where there's fruit on the trees and garden ground;

Where Lake River goes meandering by,

Where there's fish in the river and clouds in the sky;

Where there's mills by the river and cows on the grass,

Where there's beautiful homes and the railroads pass.

Edward G. Barger



WHO PLAYS HERE?

There's lots of activity at the port's boat launch each year. Here's the breakdown for 2018 thus far:

Resident Annual Permits: 215
Non-Resident Annual Permits: 425
Daily Permits: 5,000

To keep up with boat launch, restroom and parking facilities maintenance costs, the port commission recently voted to approve a \$5 increase for annual permits, and a \$2 increase for daily permits. For 2019 the fees will be \$45 for an annual resident permit; \$55 for a non-resident annual permit, and \$10 for a daily permit.

For more information about the port's boat launch facilities, visit portridgefield.org/boating.

MISSING SOMETHING? WE MAY HAVE IT!

Missing something? The Port of Ridgefield's Lost & Found department has in its possession a couple of items recently found on the port's waterfront property.

If you are missing a pair of binoculars or a bicycle, please contact the port offices to identify the items so we can return them to their rightful owners.

GREAT GIFT!

BOATERS ♥ FISHERMEN ♥ KAYAKERS

2019 **PORT OF RIDGEFIELD ANNUAL USE PERMIT** AVAILABLE NOW!

2019 passes are available now at the Port of Ridgefield Offices. Only \$45 to 98642 residents, and \$55 for non-residents. Visit our Web site for hours of operation.

111 W. Division St, Ridgefield WA • 360.887.3873 • portridgefield.org



ON THE LEVEL

Revel in What Makes Ridgefield.... Ridgefield

BY BRENT GRENING, CEO

As a busy summer turns into a busy fall, don't forget to take some time to re-experience Ridgefield. The birds are back. The salmon are back. The leaves starting to turn. This is a great time of year in Ridgefield – savor it.

Come for a walk along the port's waterfront to feel more connected to nature. With its paved surface, a stroll on our walking trail is an activity all ages

“...while some things change, some of the most important things in Ridgefield are here for the long-run.”

Brent Grening,
CEO, Port of Ridgefield

can enjoy. Or explore Ridgefield's crown jewel - the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. It's a spectacular treat this time of year.

Local fare is on full display at the Saturday farmers market. And speaking of local, don't forget to sample Ridgefield's newest brewery: Hookūm. What's better than sharing a local brew with your friends on a sunny autumn afternoon?

Ridgefield continues to evolve as a community, and yes, it is growing. But while some things change, some of the most important things in Ridgefield are here for the long-run.

If you're new to Ridgefield, don't hesitate to get involved. Ridgefield is all about families, natural environment and working together as a community – that's our tradition. That's what makes us Ridgefield.

GRENING AWARD, CONT. FROM PAGE 1

Camas-Washougal). He is also credited with crafting the name “Discovery Corridor” as a branding tool for the Clark County area along I-5 from NE 134th Street to NE 319th.

Grening's most notable accomplishment, however, is his leadership that resulted in the completion of a 20-year, \$90 million environmental cleanup of 42 acres of port-owned waterfront property. This cleanup resulted in the return of public access to Lake River for the first time in nearly a century.

“Aside from the environmental, economic development and transportation infrastructure improvements Brent has spearheaded,” said Port Commission Chair Scott Hughes,

“his positive attitude, participation and visibility in the community, his thought leadership and active leadership have all positively impacted business in Clark County.”

The chamber's John S McKibbin Leadership Legacy Award is named after a Clark County man who served as the CEO of the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce for three years, starting in 2003. Additionally McKibbin was a teacher for many years, served in the Washington House of Representatives from the 49th district in 1974, and in 1978 was elected a Clark County Commissioner with 71 percent of the vote.

WHO ARE WE? A close-up view of our port district



POPULATION 98642 • 2016

17,519



MEDIAN AGE

Male

Female



41.8 years



43.3 years



AGE BREAKDOWN (from 2016)

19 & Under
26.3%

20-29
8.7%

30-39
11.4%

40-49
13.3%

50-69
29.5%

70+
10.8%

With the exception of the Age Breakdown category, the information provided is for 2016. Sources are the American Community Survey, the United States Census Bureau and World Population Review.

For more information visit Census.gov or WorldPopulationReview.com.

EXPANDED LIFESTYLE CHOICES COME WITH HIGH-SPEED INTERNET

By Nelson Holmberg,
Vice President, Innovation



If you're new to Ridgefield or other reaches of North Clark County, you've likely figured out it's a pretty special place to live. If your family has been here for generations, those special qualities are probably the reason you and yours have stayed so long. The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Lake River, the Columbia River and other natural public amenities give residents a place to recreate and have some space.

In this fast-paced and often hectic world, living in this tranquil area is a respite from a professional job in the big city that currently requires a twice-per-day nightmare of a commute.

But...what if:

- You could work from home most days because technology made it possible?
- You could download big files in seconds not minutes...or longer?
- You could ditch your big city job to start a business here that depends on high-speed internet capacity?
- You could use “connected” appliances, or live in a “smart house”?
- Your smartphone worked, as advertised, anywhere in Clark County?

Today, trying to do any of these things would be challenging. Why? Because much of North Clark County isn't served by adequate internet speeds – speeds necessary to make the “what ifs” listed become reality.

You've probably read that the Port of Ridgefield is working to develop an internet dark fiber backbone, the infrastructure necessary to entice private internet providers to offer high-speed internet service to businesses and residents here. (And contrary to what you may have heard from some, the port will not provide internet service. We're just working to build the pipeline that will make it possible.)

It may sound like a bunch of mumbo-jumbo to the average person, but what it really means is that when we make it happen, and we have every reason to believe we will do so, you will then have options currently not available to you.

Granted, not every Portland Metro area business is going to allow their employees to work from home, and not everyone who commutes is going to start a business here. But with high-speed internet in North Clark County comes potential. The potential for our citizens to turn their dreams of living and working in this uniquely beautiful and peaceful place into reality.

For that reason the port will keep plugging. Stay tuned!