

Bitter Lake News

August 2025

Please be aware that the flooding around Roswell has caused some of the main roads to the refuge to be closed for repairs. Check NM Roads or Chaves County Road conditions to see which roads and bridges are currently out of use.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT BITTER LAKE

Friday, September 5: Karen Gaines will give a presentation on Dragonflies at 6:30 in the Visitor Center Auditorium.

Saturday, September 6: Dragonfly Festival --- 9:00 – 3:00 pm.

*** For tours, call 575-244-6256 for reservations ***

11:00: Presentation on Snakes in the auditorium

2:00: Presentation on Birds of Prey in the auditorium

Cranes and Cocoa: November 15 --- 3:00, presentation at 4:00

Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

4200 E. Pine Lodge Rd., Roswell, NM 88201 Contact phone: 575-244-6256

e-mail: bitterlakefriends@gmail.com, <https://www.friendsofbitterlakenwr.org/>



Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Dragonfly Art Contest

Almost 400 students from all over the area entered their art in the annual Dragonfly Art Contest. Judging all these exceptional entries is always a daunting task. But finally, a winner was chosen. Third grader, Diego Sepulveda, from Monterrey Elementary was the winning artist. As the winner, he was honored in the school's award assembly and received a gift card worth \$125. His artwork is being used for the promotional posters for this year's Dragonfly Festival.



Diego Sepulveda accepts his grand prize award at the Valley View awards assembly.



Dragonfly art judges display Diego's winning entry

Grade Level Winners for 2025

Kindergarten:

1st: Isabel Montoya, Nancy Lopez

2nd: Luisa Trejo Silva, Sunset

3rd: Esmeralda Gonzalez, Pecos

First Grade:

1st: Caleb Lueras, Valley View

2nd: Bithia Rivera, Pecos

3rd: Avram Garcia, Pecos

Second Grade:

1st: Elizabeth Motes Baserto,
Sunset

2nd: Tanner Belding, Gateway

3rd: Jordan Chavez, Pecos

Third Grade:

1st: Diego Sepulveda, Monterrey

2nd: Ximena Sosa. All Saints
Catholic

3rd: Harper Pack, Gateway

Fourth Grade:

1st: Sofia Guterrez, El Capitan

2nd: Cayden Garnand, Gateway

3rd: Jadyann Kostirik, All Saints
Catholic

Fifth Grade:

1st: Itzel Gomez, Berrendo

2nd: Demri Vandenbout, Dexter

3rd: Eduardo Moreno, Dexter

Fun Dragonfly Facts and Myths!

- 1) A dragonfly is a strong flyer and can fly up to 36 miles per hour. (FACT)
- 2) There are about 5,000 different species of dragonflies all over the world. (FACT)
- 3) Dragonflies would seek out bad kids and sew their mouths together with their claspers while they slept. (MYTH)
- 4) A dragonfly's scientific name is Odonata, which comes from the words "tooth-jawed." (FACT)
- 5) Dragonflies are known as snake doctors because they can bring dead snakes back to life. (MYTH)
- 6) A dragonfly can eat hundreds of mosquitos in a single day. (FACT)
- 7) Dragonflies have been around for 300 million years. Prehistoric dragonflies were much larger and could have a wingspan of 2 ½ feet! (FACT)
- 8) The flight of the dragonfly is so special that it has inspired engineers who dream of making robots that fly like dragonflies. (FACT)
- 9) Dragonflies have huge stingers and some people are allergic to their stings and can die. (MYTH)
- 10) Almost the entire dragonfly's head is its eyes, so they have incredible vision that encompasses almost every angle except right behind them. (FACT)

President's Corner

By Merideth Hildreth

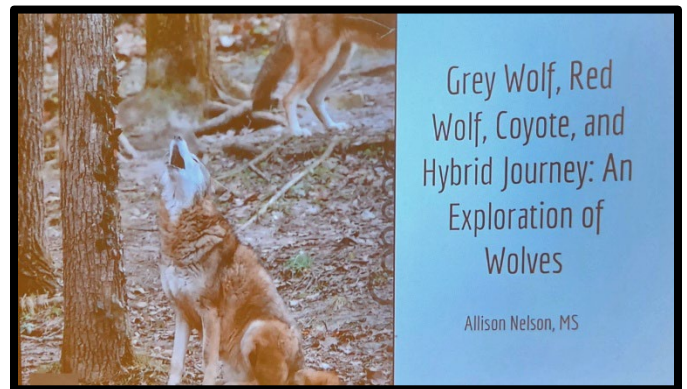
Dragonflies & Damselflies + Volunteers + Refuge Staff + Community = the 2025 Dragonfly Festival at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge!

Join us for the September 5 Friday night talk about Dragonflies followed by Stargazing with the Roswell Astronomy Club at the Visitor Center. On September 6, Saturday's main events include tours, conservation education by agencies and organizations, vendors, art for kids, Monarch Butterfly Release, a talk about Birds of Prey, and a talk about Snake Safety. Thank you to the Refuge Staff, Friends of Bitter Lake Board Members, and Sponsors for making this event possible. Thank you to the Elementary School Principals and Teachers who encouraged students to enter the art contest. Congratulations to the winning Artist, Diego Sepulveda, a Monterrey Elementary School 3rd grader who won the 2025 Poster Contest!!! Your beautiful dragonfly is helping us promote the Festival this year. When visiting the Refuge, shop in the Nature Store (thank you Jana for your dedication stocking unique t-shirts, books, jewelry, and other items). Renew your membership and buy a membership for friends who have everything except a Friends Membership! With deepest appreciation, we remember Bill Briney, conservationist extraordinaire, whose hundreds of volunteer hours hatched the Friends group, advocated for the Visitor Center, and launched the first Dragonfly Festival. Bill's legacy continues to inspire Friends in our education and outreach efforts and to provide financial support to the Refuge's mission and purpose <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/bitter-lake/about-us>. See you at the Dragonfly Festival in September and Cranes & Cocoa in November!

Merideth Hildreth, President
Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Summer General Meeting

We had a good crowd for the General Meeting on June 21st. Everyone enjoyed a lunch of Domino's Pizza before Allison Green's presentation on "Grey Wolf, Red Wolf, Coyote and Hybrid Journey." Allison has done her graduate work on wolves and is extremely knowledgeable. She shared the extensive research she has compiled and gave a very interesting talk. Allison works for the BLM and monitors environmental clean ups on our public lands. If you would be interested in joining one of our general meetings and participating in these great presentations, remember that all meetings are open to everyone. We would love to have you join us!



Bill Briney, a Founding Father of Friends of Bitter Lake



Bill Briney, who was instrumental in working to create the Friends group at Bitter Lake, passed away this summer. Services were held on June 21, 2025 at 10:00 a.m., at Westminster Presbyterian in Roswell. Bill was very active in working with the founding members of the Friends. His interest in environmental issues led him to spend numerous hours working with the biologists at the refuge. He served as president and worked on organizing the interior of the Visitor's Center as it was being constructed. He is also the founding father of the Nature Store and was

able to help establish that as an important part of the refuge. There will be a donation box at the Friends' table during the Dragonfly Festival to raise money for a memorial to permanently remember all the contributions that Bill made to Bitter Lake.

Refuge Miscellany

- Due to short staffing the Youth Hunt will not be held this fall on the refuge. Hunters will be able to hunt on the north tract, off the refuge, but not on the south tract. Hunting of waterfowl will be allowed in the hunt area of the middle tract.
- The refuge has received welcome rain this year. Due to flooding, there was some damage on the South Track where the Rio Hondo enters the refuge. A cultural resources archaeologist is in the office looking at research on the levies to be repaired before the actual flood damage can be completed.
- Biologists at the Refuge are conducting a ribbon snake survey, barking frog survey, and fish biologists are going to visit to do genetics and studies on Pecos gambusia in the sinkholes.
- The refuge is going to be welcoming interns who will be studying and working with invasive species
- Road closures from recent flooding have hurt daily visitation
- The Oxbow Trail repairs will hopefully be completed within 2 more months