



2024

*Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge Society
Annual Report*



“Our purpose is to promote and support the Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in its mission to conserve, protect, and enhance natural resources through projects, advocacy, outreach, education, fundraising, diverse membership and volunteerism for the betterment of the Refuge.”





Letter From The President

On behalf of the Board of Directors for Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge Society, I would like to convey our sincere appreciation to all the members, partners and donors who supported us this past year. Our accomplishments are a reflection of your steadfast dedication. This year's achievements are a testament to people like you, who time and time again, step up and help us achieve our goals.

From projects to community events the Society has been able to bring awareness, involvement and support for Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

This annual report celebrates what was made possible in 2024 and the following are a few of the highlights accomplished through the dedication and abundance of volunteer hours you provided.

- Outdoor classroom becoming ready for construction. Fundraising is ongoing with grants and donations to by end of 2024 resulting in over \$86,000.
- Awarded and implemented a "Wildlife Viewing Through A Community Framework" Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) grant.
- Maintained the pollinator gardens for local pollinators that "buzz" around the Refuge and monarch butterflies.
- Supported Osprey nest habitats and maintenance on the refuge's 18 Osprey platforms and supported the work for banding of fledgling chicks.

- Continued our educational outreach supporting Virginia Beach City Public Schools title I elementary schools, bringing six hundred 4th graders to the refuge for outdoor hands-on educational experiences
- Hosted spring and fall group refuge bike trail ride
- Participated in Virginia Beach Winter Wildlife Festival and the Refuge's first Back Bay Bash events that helped support and bring awareness to the Society and its endeavors.
- Increased revenue 60% through individual donors, business contributions, donor advised funds, grants & in kind donations.

We have a lot of work ahead this year and are confident it will be accomplished, both within the community and the Refuge, with your support and dedication.

Thank you for being part of this journey and inspiring us to continue in our works for the Refuge.

With heartfelt gratitude, Thank You!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Chris Freeman
President, Back Bay NWR Society



Projects

- Pollinator and monarch gardens maintained
- Osprey nesting platforms maintained
- Assisted refuge with trail maintenance
- Collaborative outdoor classroom project





Outdoor Classroom

- Design and engineering drawings completed
- Construction cost fundraising underway
- RBA Architect primary partner – Chris Elam project architect



- VPBS Environmental Studies Program interns assisted with the design



- Wetlands analysis completed
- Native American impact study completed





Wildlife Viewing Grant

- Implementing “Wildlife Viewing Through A Community Framework” Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) grant received for:



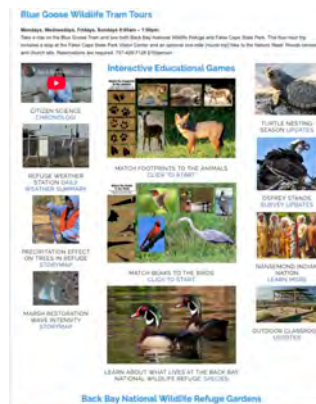
- Two spotting Scopes with Tripods
- Ten 10 x 42 Binoculars
- Ten Digital Frames with email for sharing wildlife images
- One All Beach Wheelchair for needs access to the beach
- Materials for ADA compliant outdoor classroom ramp





Programs

- Osprey nestlings monitored and tagged
- Society donated Olivia river otter taxidermy
- Members assisted with refuge environmental education and on-site school visits
 - Educational resource web page created



- Members assisted with refuge sea turtle conservation



Urban Wildlife Refuge Program

- Back Bay Ambassador program for high school seniors continues
- Educational outreach program with Virginia Beach City Public Schools title I elementary schools and the VBCPS Environmental Studies Program continues
- Over 400 fourth graders visited the refuge for outdoor hands-on educational experiences
- Back Bay high school Ambassadors and society volunteers partnered to teach environmental lessons





Event Participation

- Virginia Beach Winter Wildlife Festival 2024 Exhibition



- Bloomstock 2024 Earth Day fundraiser

- Back Bay Bash at the Refuge



Society Sponsored Events

- Spring and fall bicycle trail rides in the refuge
 - Free bicycle rentals provided by Surf and Adventure Company

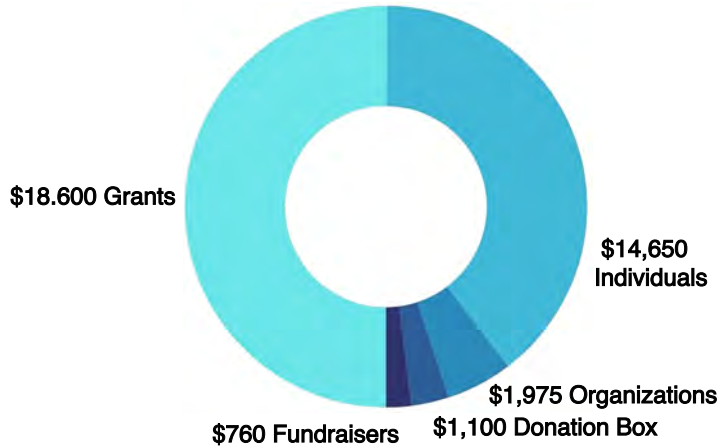


- Society table at New Realm Brewing Co. Vegan Festival



- Member social at Waterman's Surfside Grille





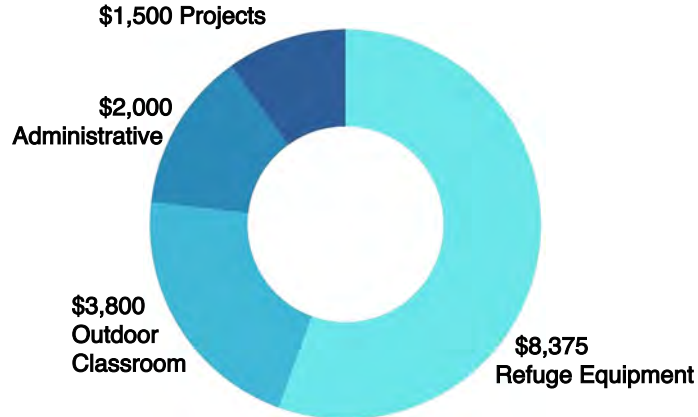
\$36,071 TOTAL INCOME

- 50.1% Grants
- 39.5% Individual Donations
- 5.3% Organizations
- 3.0% Donation Box
- 2.0% Fundraisers

2024 Financials

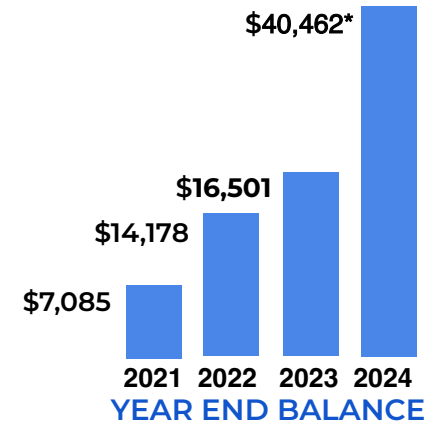
CAPITAL BUILDING CAMPAIGN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

\$220,000 Campaign goal
 \$ 36,000 Raised - grants and donations
 \$184,000 To reach fundraising goal



\$15,075 TOTAL EXPENSES

- 74.5% Refuge Equipment
- 25.5% Outdoor Classroom
- 13.3% Administrative
- 10.0% Projects



*Includes carryover balance from 2023



2024 Donors

A special thank you to the following
individuals and organizations

Major Donors

J Robin Mays
Shannon Titus

Donors

Alexander Barbieria
Kyle Berst
Chris Brochu
Charlie & Chris Ellin
Barry Erdeljon
Nicholas Fadero
Blake Fletcher
Jordan Gray
Carol Gerhig
William Hooker
Justin Johnson
Leo Jones
William Jones
Caren & Scott Klosterman
Dr. Barry Kurzer
Chantel Kushner
Andrew Lacher

Reese F Luke jr.
Ellis Malabad
Richard E Margerum
Cael Matta
Christopher McGrath
Eddi McKay
Michael Montgomery
Charles Patten
Cheryl Petticrew
Monica Ramanathan
Kristine Reyes
Joshua Storm
James Urban
Savannah Vebery
Brandon Wightman
Mrs Beth Oast Williams
Mr & Mrs Stephen Witkowski

In Honor of Bill & Molly Brown
Lizzie Petticrew

In Memory of Mary Patrice Raum

Shirley Smith
Raquel DApice
Joyc Wiegand
Lisa Roberts
Kim Nelson
Laura Anderson
Lynne Worrell
Carrie Kelly
Matthew Raum

In Memory of Christopher Jessup Heidi Campbell

Donor organizations

General Federation of
Women's Clubs
Langley Credit Union
New Realm Brewing Co.
Waterman's Surfside
Grille



2024 Board Members

- Chris Elam
 - Charlie Ellin
 - Barry Erdeljon
 - Chris Freeman
 - Mark Gorny
 - Barry Kurzer
 - Reese Lukei
 - Dianna McDowell
 - Michael T. Moore
-
- Bane Barton – *Youth Advisory Committee Chair*

Officers 2024 Term

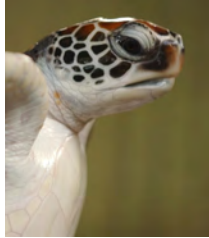
- Chris Freeman – *President*
- Barry Erdeljon – *Vice President*
- Barry Kurzer – *Treasurer, partial year*
- Mark Gorny – *Treasurer, partial year*
- Chris Elam – *Secretary*

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors please email us at backbaynwrsocty@gmail.com



Community Partnerships





The refuge provides habitat for a wide assortment of wildlife, including threatened and endangered species such as loggerhead sea turtles, piping plovers, peregrine falcons, and bald eagles.



Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) [lists](#) a total of 90 animal species as endangered, or facing extinction, in Virginia.



International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [Red List](#) lists over 166,000 species, worldwide with more than 46,300 threatened with extinction. Of those, 9,760 are critically endangered



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) [lists](#) over 1,300 endangered or threatened species in the United States.



“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they
have the heart.” – *Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew*

