



Spring/Summer 2016

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Volume 30, Issue 2

The Beauty Called Wilderness

by Steve Jacobsen, Missouri

Wilderness is an indispensable part of American history. This land helped shape the growth of our nation and the character of its people. The United States was the first country in the world to define and designate wilderness areas through law. In 1964 our nation's leaders recognized the immediate and lasting benefits of wild places by signing the Wilderness Act into law.

Eight wilderness areas in Missouri offer opportunities to soak in the beauty that wilderness provides. The United States Congress designated Hercules Glade as a wilderness area in 1976. Its 12,423 acres are home to forested knobs, limestone outcroppings, narrow drainages, and one of two creeks Long

Creek. This creek is a highlight of the wilderness area with small waterfalls and crystal clear water.

Pat Whalen and I had the opportunity to lead a backpacking trip to Hercules Glade Wilderness Area as part of the 2016 Region 6 NAI Conference. Four brave explorers signed up for this journey: Kelly Koch, Amber Myers, Lindsay Goodman, and Richard Herman. Pat and I spent a couple of hours with the group interpreting the history of the wilderness area, reading the map, and distributing group gear.

Leaving the cars behind and carrying everything we needed on our backs the group took steps into the wilderness following the Coy Bald

Trail. This four mile section of trail took us through cedar forests, over rocky glades and onto exposed knobs. Interpretive challenges were offered along the way as well as a puzzling name game that everyone seemed to figure out except me.

We descended to

Long Creek around 4 p.m. Saturday afternoon. The sun was beginning to go behind some of the bluffs as we took our backpacks off for a welcome break. Following a good rain this portion of Long Creek offers stunning waterfalls.

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The theme of this issue is **Creativity.**



Are You Ready for Creativity?

By April Dickey Anderson, Missouri

Creativity is something I express every day -- and you do, too! It's a way of looking at a program, a group of guests, an exhibit, or a piece of outreach communication from a perspective that's engaging and memorable. I used to think that I needed certain

conditions to be creative like a quiet, sunny place late in the day, but then realized that I was putting limitations on something that could be tapped into at ANY time day or night (even outside of the shower!). Deadlines made me realize that I couldn't wait for some creative

muse to enter my thick skull, but that I would need to be open to ideas 24/7 -- whether I was sitting in a church pew or washing dishes, driving down the road or visiting with colleagues.

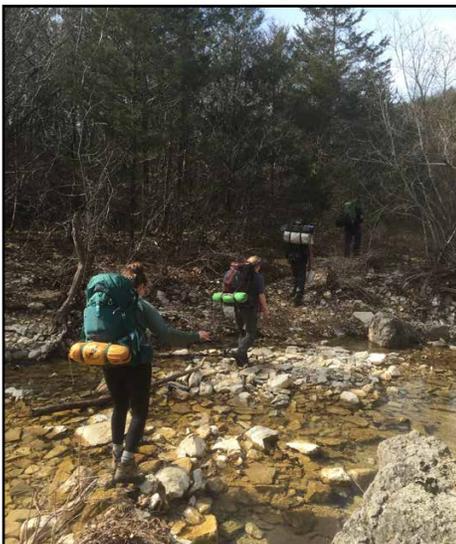
(See Ready for Creativity, page 4)

Wilderness, from Page 1

During the time that our group was there a trickle of water was all that was heard dripping into small pools of clear water. This sound provided peace and a sense of solitude much like I'm sure it did for early settlers.

As the trail flattened we could hear the sound of a small waterfall and looming near the trail was a massive bluff shelter. This large outcropping of rock was a welcome sight for our team of wilderness explorers.

With the sunlight fading and our camp set up it was time to provide nourishment for our bodies. A delicious dinner of wild rice and chicken along with chili-mac was enjoyed by all. Kitchen cleanup was pretty simple which allowed the group to share stories and laugh around the warm campfire. Little



did anyone know that Richard had been a mortician at one point in his life. If you have never heard stories from a mortician around a campfire you are missing out! One of the best moments was taking a night hike to a small gravel bar. The six of us lay down on the worn rocks and watched the clouds roll across the moon and stars. There was even an impromptu yoga lesson taught by Kelly and Lindsay.

Our final day on the trail started with a great breakfast of pancakes, eggs, and yoga. Finishing the last cup of coffee we talked about the plan for the day. Leaving our packs behind, we began the scramble up the drainage. Small pools that were left behind from the last big rainfall provided opportunities to identify macroinvertebrates. It seemed each step we took provided another cool discovery. Pat pointed out trees that were cut many years ago. He asked the question why they were cut so far away from the stream and the trail. This sparked interpretive discussion as each person gave their insight. Wilderness can do that as you take time to notice the details it provides.

Our hike out of Hercules Glade was one that the group will likely never forget. Pat and I decided we would lead them down the creek on our hike out. This meant boots would get wet as we crisscrossed the creek several times and literally hiked in the stream bed at times.

Small fish and crayfish were darting in and out of submerged rocks just waiting for the next big rain that would push them to another isolated pool. Relying on the wilderness map the group used the topography to determine the best possible stream bank to hike on. The great part about hiking down the creek is that everyone got to experience the beauty of Hercules Glade from the stream perspective.



Wilderness is the rare wild places where one can retreat from civilization, reconnect and find meaning and significance. Sometimes these moments are intellectual such as Kelly Koch interpreting lichen to the group under the canopy of cedar trees. Other times that connection is personal and emotional and makes you pause and reflect on the amazing beauty that surrounds you. The connection and beauty cannot come by looking at photos or by reading an explorers account of the journey. It comes by stepping away from day to day life and stepping into the beauty we call wilderness.



Director's Corner

By Jay Schneider, Arkansas

workshop; old friends, new friends and many great presentations. I was very pleased to meet all of the students; I look forward to the future endeavors of these great professionals.

Hubert, Newsletter Co-Editor.

Welcome to our new members for taking on new responsibilities: Donna Horton, Oklahoma Coordinator and Jerrel Geisler, Newsletter Co-Editor.

Jay Schneider

Many thanks to the wonderful team who hosted the Region workshop in Missouri; I have heard nothing but praise for the event. It was my pleasure to see many of you at the

Changes on your Board

Many thanks to outgoing board members for their tireless service to the region: Heather Runyan, Scholarship; Karena Minor, Oklahoma Coordinator; Jamie

We also have an opening for the recently restructured Chair of the Scholarship and Professional Development. If you are interested please e-mail me.

Upcoming Certification in Region Six

Certified Interpretive Guide Courses

June 27-30, 2016, Nacogdoches, TX
Stephen F. Austin State University
October 17-20, 2016, Tulsa, OK
Oxley Nature Center

Certified Interpretive Host Courses

August 30-31, 2016, Tulsa, OK
Oxley Nature Center

2017 Region Six Workshop
Mark your calendars now! The 2017 Region 6 Workshop is scheduled for February 26 - March 1, 2017 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Rogers, Arkansas, located right off the interstate near the

Pinnacle Promenade and close to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

Our working theme is "Building Bridges Connecting Art, Nature, and History." Contact Lori at

bflyspencer8@gmail.com for more details and discussion.

That's all I got (ask me about this story)

Jay

Book Review: Do You Want to be Inspired?

By Neil Garrison, Oklahoma

The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature, by David George Haskell.

Companions in Wonder: Children and Adults Exploring Nature Together, edited by Julie Dunlap and Stephen Kellert.

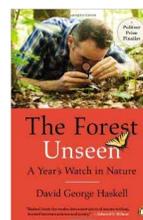
You're in luck. Because you're much too busy to read both of these books, my alternate suggestion is that you just read a tiny portion of each.

I can recommend the afterword that is at the tail end of *Companions in Wonder*. It offers a concise explanation on how you might go

about involving children in nature study activities. I like the "try these simple tips and tricks" portion of the Afterword.

In a similar vein, the *Forest Unseen* book has a very enlightening Epilogue at the end. That book's author does not engage in a lot of hand-wringing about the dire consequences of today's youth engaging in cyber forms of entertainment. Instead, his views are that we are much better off nowadays and that we ought to quit with all of the angst.

...so...my question to you is this: Do you want to be inspired? If



Cover images from Amazon.com your answer is in the affirmative, you would do well to peruse both of these tiny book chapters. It might just be the much-needed tonic that you were seeking for the purpose of re-charging your enthusiasm batteries.

Get up. Go out. Get yourself down to your local public library and cab-bage on to these two books. I feel confident that you will find them uplifting.

Nature Interpretation and the Liberal Arts

By Elizabeth Bittner, Texas

As a nature interpreter who lacks a degree in the hard sciences, I often take a creative ap-



Campers rest at a CCC picnic table

proach in designing my programs, especially for my current site which emphasizes research-based habitat restoration and preservation. During college I simply picked something that I enjoyed, cultural anthropology and Asian studies, and made that my major. In graduate school I studied book and paper conservation where I learned how to repair paper materials for archives and libraries. I like to joke that I moved from one misleading job title to another when I went from being a conservator (but not of the environment), to an interpreter (but not of languages). Using my liberal arts background

to interpret the natural world has opened up a whole new line of communication with our guests and has become something I see as a benefit rather than a limitation. When I presented the mammals section for Texas Master Naturalist training I was nervous because I knew these were folks who liked to talk science. Most of my program focused on human relationships with mammals in regards to the fur trade, the

politics of bison extermination, and the social and economic impacts of zoonotic diseases. I was relieved

when several participants wanted to talk more about their own observations of historical or social trends after the program.

Last summer I introduced a history based program for our 1st and 2nd grade summer campers and I was pleasantly surprised when both sessions filled. A similar program being offered this year was also one of the first to receive registrations. The children were

so excited to look for edible plants Native Americans and settlers may have used, and they eagerly sampled prickly pear, green briar, mustang grapes, and sumac lemonade. We explored the ruins of a Civilian Conservation Corps park (now an excellent place to look for wildflowers) and learned that how we use natural areas can change over time. We also looked for old fences from livestock ranches that had occupied Nature Center property and we tried our hand at churning butter to get a taste of ranch life. The more I experiment the more I find that history, anthropology, biology, economics, and other disciplines can be combined in programs for

Enjoying the views from the ruins of the CCC overlook.



all types of audiences to tell a complete story of the environment and guide how we move forward to protect these resources.

Ready for Creativity?

(from page 2)

Ideas are not something we personally make up because they've been

around forever and will continue to be here for us to discover and share. It's just a matter of being open to tapping into our inner Miss Frizzle (of Magic School bus fame) whose mantra is "take chances, make mistakes, get messy."

April Dickey Anderson,
St. Louis-based Naturalist/Writer,
MS Ed, CIG, 847.289.9760
(in spite of the non-local number..)

P.S.: If you would like to learn more about my approach to creativity (or hire me to work with your team), please let me know.



FIND YOUR PARK

Find Your Park Saturdays with Martin Nature Park

The National Park Service invites you to find your park! In celebration of the 100th birthday of the National Park Service in 2016, we are launching a movement to spread the word about the amazing places we manage, the inspirational stories they tell, as well as our country's natural resources, and diverse cultural heritage. Find Your Park is about more than just national parks! It's about the National Park Service (NPS) working in your community through education programs, community assistance projects, and more. It's about state parks, local parks, trails, museums, historic sites, and

the many ways that the American public can connect with history and culture, enjoy nature, and make new discoveries. The NPS rangers affiliated with the Oklahoma City National Memorial and park staff from Martin Park Nature Center are working in partnership to educate park visitors about the importance of our natural and cultural resources and finding new places to explore in Oklahoma and beyond. This summer Martin Park Nature Center will host rangers from the National Park Service on 8 different "Find Your Park" Saturdays: May 21st, June 4th, June 18th, July

2nd, July 16th, July 30th, August 13th, and August 27th 2016. During these Saturdays NPS Rangers will be on site at the Nature Center from 11 am - 4 p.m. to answer all types of questions and help visitors discover ways to enjoy their parks for the next 100 years. At 11 a.m. each "Find Your Park" Saturday an NPS ranger will give a program on Finding Your Park. They will share how they have found inspiration through a park, making it their own special place and challenge you to do the same. Join us in the celebration at Martin Park Nature Center!

National Park Service Community Outreach Begins in Oklahoma City

2016 has quickly become a year of growth and excitement at the Oklahoma City National Memorial National Park Service office (OKCI). In February, a position of Community Outreach Coordinator was established, bringing back a familiar face to fill the position. Matt Whitney, a seven-year veteran of the National Park Service (NPS), returns to Oklahoma City after spending nearly five years as a Park Guide at Lincoln Home National Historic Site. Previously, Ranger Whitney worked as a Student Park Guide at the OKCI from 2009-2011. He has been tasked with increasing the awareness of the National Park Service in the State of Oklahoma, engaging the community to participate in out-

door recreation, promoting the NPS Centennial, and seeking out new and exciting partnerships. Building on our 100th birthday, the National Park Service is collaborating with the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City to increase awareness, support, and participation in outdoor programs as part of the Department of the Interior's 50 Cities Initiative. In addition, Rangers are partnering with Martin Nature Park to present "Find Your Park Saturdays" during the summer of 2016, culminating with a 100th birthday party for the National Park Service. If you would like to talk with Matt Whitney about outreach possibilities please e-mail or call: Matthew_Whitney@nps.gov or 405-609-8860.



Matthew Whitney, NPS



FIND YOUR PARK

Interpretive Walks Creativity on the Trail

By Kyle O'Haver, Texas

Have you ever led an interpretive walk? Have you taken a group of adults and children with diverse backgrounds and life experiences on one path at the same time? How can you connect so many different points of view with so many attention triggers to focus on one theme? Well to do that, you must be creative.

I am a birder, for those of you who don't know me. For many years and many more to come, I will guide folks on Bird Walks. To me there is no more exciting way to enjoy nature with others than to lead a hike. However, most of my favorite bird walks are highlighted by things other than birds: an amazing flower in bloom, the curiously odd odor of a skunk, or the peacefulness of a flowing stream with a deer taking a drink.

No good interpreter or guide (and I feel I have met some of the best) will ever take you on focused hike and ignore the "off-topic" attention grabbers. A truly gifted and creative guide will never point out the Northern Mockingbird sitting atop a tree, if the group's attention is on a mother bobcat and her babies hiding in the tall grasses below it. I have never met a good butterfly guide that didn't stop and smell flowers when it obvious that the group's senses are wonder over the blooming Mountain Laurel.

A great guide is a nature lover in the entirety of the experience and uses their years of training and

knowledge, and their experiences that have shaped them to connect the patrons of the hike to what is around them. Nothing is more creative in interpretation because it is truly unscripted.

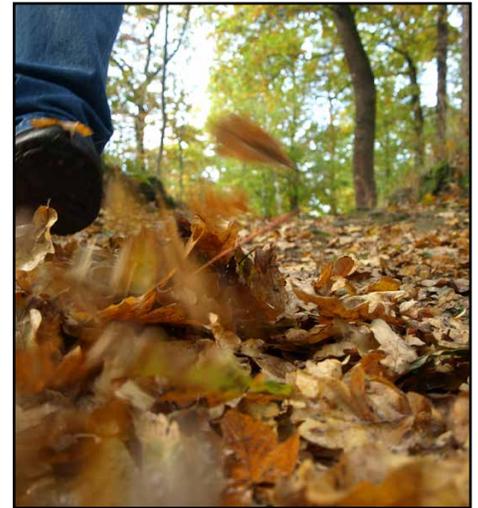
Imagine hearing the shriek of a visitor who found rat snake on a

*"Come take a walk
with me"*

bird walk. Do you move them on past the snake to find the next bird? Absolutely not! Calm them down and explain the life and purpose in nature for this creature and connect them back to the focus of the trip with how birds and snakes interact. That is creativity and thinking on your feet. It is taking what is set before you and using your knowledge and skills to interpret nature.

The next time you are on a nature hike, bird hike, plant walk, butterfly walk, alligator walk or any other guided adventure where you are not leading, watch your guide when something unexpected or not on topic captures your attention. See how truly creative they are and bringing focus to that stunning male Painted Bunting nearby, and then with that same skill they again focus on explaining the natural and cultural history of the area.

Not every guide has the knowledge or skill set to identify every plant and animal – you don't have to be at that level. A creative guide will



luckyhumek (stockvault)

find a way to ensure that flower that caught everyone's attention gets its share of them time before moving on and you still won't miss a step on the journey you set out on.

So when someone asks me, "What the most creative thing you do as an interpreter"? I say, "Come take a walk with me."

*"You can't
use up
creativity.
The more
you use, the
more you
have."*

— Maya Angelou

Another Texan onboard

New co-editor for *Visions*

Jerrel Geisler has joined the NAI Region 6 team as co-Editor of the *Visions* newsletter.

He currently works at the WaterWorks Education Center in Houston, Texas. The WaterWorks, managed by the City of Houston, is tasked with educating the public about water in the Houston region.

Geisler has been with the City since 1999, first at the Houston Zoo and now in the Department of Public Works & Engineering.

Holding a degree in Journalism and Photography from Sam Houston State University, Geisler has been a Certified Interpretive Guide since 2012.

He is past president of the Informal Science Education Association of Texas (ISEA), currently chairs the STEM Programs Committee for the Sam Houston Area Council – Boy Scouts of America, and is a Certified Texas Master Naturalist.

Geisler previously worked on a

newsletter for his Master Naturalist chapter,

and is currently working on several graphic projects at the WaterWorks including new outdoor interpretive signs, brochures and other program materials.

He looks forward to working with the Region 6 and *Visions* teams.



Nature Protection
Cultural Connection



NAI National Conference

Corpus Christi, Texas, November 8–12, 2016
www.interpnet.com/conference

Corpus Christi offers the best in Texas coastal experiences, the perfect place for NAI to gather, share, learn, and explore our past, present, and future.



The NAI Tribe gathers in Corpus Christi

From the NAI website

Throughout The Texas Coastal Bend dynamic forces are at play creating an environment that is unsurpassed. In the midst of commerce and industry, conservation efforts abound, preserving the area's beauty and natural wonder. The history of the Coastal Bend has cultivated a rich heritage that is reflected in a diversity of cultures celebrated by the people of Corpus.

Corpus Christi offers the best in Texas coastal experiences, the perfect place for NAI to gather, share, learn, and explore our past, present and future.

You are invited, so mark your calendars, make your plans. Be part of the conversation!

Early registration through August 15, registration ends October 17.



Arkansas state report

Compiled by Don Simons

Arkansas State Parks now has an official license plate for private vehicles. The plates are to be purchased for \$35 annually. Of that \$25 is a donation to fund college scholarships in the state parks profession and park education programs. They are available at Arkansas Revenue Offices statewide. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has had a similar program for a number of years now with a new design each year. For more information, visit www.ArkansasStateParks.com.



Kelly Farrell, Chief of Interpretation and Program Services for Arkansas State Parks, reports:

- 24 seasonal interpreters were hired through a unique round-robin group interview process.
- 39 people just completed Interpretive Skills/CIG (included returners, first-year full-timers, and other who wanted to learn interpretative skills such as our new Public Information Coordinator).
- We have two new trainers, both are pursuing their Certified Interpretive Trainer credential and should receive it this year: **Susan Adkins (Lake Ouachita)** and **Heather Runyan (Village Creek)**



In February, National Park Service Director **Jonathan Jarvis** received a personal tour of Little Rock's Central High School by Park Ranger **Jodi Morris**, as part of a series of visits to select national park units commemorating Black History Month.

In the new visitor center at **Davidsonville Historic State Park**, our exhibits team just wrapped up an interior gallery. This multimedia experience showcases artifacts excavated in recent digs by the Arkansas Archeological Survey and tells the stories of what makes **Davidsonville** significant. Visitors can explore a scale replica of a flatboat and imagine life on the Black River through time; see buttons, coins, china, metalwork, and other artifacts; read

well-designed panels and look at accompanying illustrations; listen to audio clips of historic journal excerpts; and engage with an interactive digital kiosk about the townsite, created by the **University of Arkansas Center for Spatial Technologies**. Special thanks to Exhibits Coordinator **Dorothy Meeks**, Exhibits Specialist **Keith Martin**, Graphic Artist **Jennifer Hoorstra**, Graphic Artist **Dave Thompson** for their work on this project, as well as Park Supt. **Kendra Harris**, former Park Interpreter **Anna Pfeifler**, and various members of the Planning & Development staff for their teamwork on this multi-year project. Also thanks to boat builder **John Cooper** of Tennessee for his craftsmanship and living history demonstration during the grand opening.

Logoly State Park anticipates opening their new visitor center in July, with dedication scheduled for July 21 during a meeting of the State Parks, Recreation, and Travel Commission. **Taylor Studios of Illinois**, a longtime NAI member, holds the design/build contract for interior gallery exhibits and exterior waysides.



Inspired by a session during the workshop in Springfield,

Don Simons started searching for Ozark chinquapin trees on **Mount Magazine**. Yet to find any live trees in the state park, but stump suckers and a few dead logs have been located. An employee for the USDA Forest Service led him to a living tree, which is seven and a half inches in diameter and about forty feet tall, just north of the park. Now the forester tells of an area nearby with around three dozen chinquapins including some that appear to be blight resistant.

From the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission we have the following news:

- Land in Springdale, AR has officially been approved for an Education Center. This would be the first AGFC center of its kind in northwestern Arkansas.
- Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has been found in deer and elk herds from the **Buffalo National River** area. Educators are focusing on interpreting this event and answering questions from the public.
- **Lauren Marshall** was recognized as a delegate of NAI before the AGFC Commissioners and recognized for the award “Outstanding New Interpreter of 2015.”
- The **Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center** has a new film “Find Your Outside” they are excited to share with the public by the beginning of April.
- Upcoming Spring events at the Nature Center include: Fishing Day Camp, Ecology Day Camp, and National Pollinator Week.

Save the dates February 26 - March 1, 2017 and for the Region 6 workshop. It will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Rogers, Arkansas, located right off Interstate 49 near the **Pinnacle Promenade** and close to **Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art**. Our theme is “Interpreting Bridges Connecting Art, Nature, and History.” Keep watching the newsletter, website, and Facebook for more information from workshop chair **Lori Spencer**.



Kansas state report

Compiled by Pat Silovsky



Sorry -
No Kansas report this
issue. The Bison got
out again!
See you next issue.





Louisiana state report

Compiled by
Rusty Scarborough

Hello from the water logged state of Louisiana. Yet another year of record rainfall seems to be the course for us. All is still above water here at **Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park** but we have spent several days with trails flooded. No damage to the facility or exhibits and trails are now cleared.....at least for right this moment.

Walter Jacobs Nature Park's Owl Night Open House was nominated for the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourism Bureau's P.R.I.D.E Awards 2016 for Outstanding Event of the Year. We were edged out by Christmas in Roseland, but were very excited to have made it into the finals for the award on our first time being nominated!

I have just recently heard that all of the 18 participants of the CIG course that **Jay Miller** and I taught in Natchitoches earlier this spring have passed and received their credentials. Way to go y'all! So we have about 6 new members from Louisiana.

That's all I have to report, if you have information please send it in so I can include it: rscarborough@caddo.org



Texas state report

Compiled by
Tara Humphreys

Elizabeth Bittner shares that **Rob Denkhau**s has been named manager of the **Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge**, replacing **Suzanne Tuttle**, who will retire at the end of June following 11 years as manager and over 20 years as an employee of the Nature Center. Denkhau joined the Nature Center staff in 1997 as a program naturalist, later becoming natural resources manager. Some of his accomplishments include introducing the popular Canoe Fest and bison-feeding hayride programs, and implementing the Nature Center's internationally-recognized model for feral hog control. They also have a major construction project ongoing to replace their aging marsh boardwalk with a more durable design. The first phase is slated to be completed by the end of the summer and will allow visitors to walk out from the shoreline to a covered platform where they can easily view waterfowl, dragonflies, alligators, and other marsh residents.

Tara Humphreys has been promoted to Field Interpretation Coordinator for Texas State Parks, and now offices in Austin. Her former position of State Parks Region 3 Interpretive Specialist will be open soon. Her contact e-mail is still tara.humphreys@tpwd.texas.gov and phone is 512-718-4336. Congratulations, Tara!

The 2018 NAI Region 6 Workshop will be in Dallas-Fort Worth, and we're looking for help! Contact **Elizabeth Bittner** at **Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge** (elizabeth.bittner@fortworthtexas.gov) or **Lisa Cole** at **Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area** (lcole@cityoflewisville.com).



Missouri state report

Compiled by
Michelle Soenksen



Several Region Sixers made the trek to New Zealand for the NAI International Conference! From left to right they are: **Kathy Miller** (MO), **Ted Cable** (KS), **Mystina Swaim** (AR), **John Miller** (MO), and **Jeremy Shellhorn** (KS).

Missouri State Parks held the 77th Spring Interpretive Training School May 22nd – 25th, 2016 at **Cuivre River State Park** near Troy, MO. Over 100 full-time, seasonal, and volunteer staff attended the 4 day training to learn more about the field of interpretation and how to develop and present quality interpretive programs. Attendees participated in a variety of sessions, watch numerous sample programs from both natural and cultural resource topics, and participated in fun events like town ball and campfire storytelling.

Full-time and seasonal staff who have attended the training for numerous years also took part in intermediate sessions based in natural resource content, cultural resource content, and recreational skills. Eighteen attendees participated in the training school as students seeking their Certified Interpretive Guide certification.



Oklahoma state report

Compiled by Donna Horton

The wind really came sweeping down the plains this spring. A tornado actually formed right in front of the storm chaser's camera on March 30th as the Channel 6 helicopter crew pursued the storm's leading edge across north Tulsa.

Several of us watching the television coverage that evening recognized the area in the developing tornado's path as **Oxley Nature Center's North Woods**. The EF2 left a path of destruction 100' wide all the way across the northern boundary of the nature center.

Giant cottonwood and hackberry trees that took three adults or nine kindergartners to encircle are gone. The bald eagle nest in the area appears to be intact, but the eaglets may have been lost.



Natural resources coordinator **Vinnie Robinson** reports that it has taken him and his single volunteer helper, **Dennis Hiebert**, a solid 6 weeks to clear more than two miles of trails affected by the storm. What used to be dense shade will be open sky this summer.

A Monarch Watch Patrol interpretive program will be held in July at Oxley. Attendees will learn about monarch habitat, life cycle, and learn how to identify a monarch. Participants will also have the opportunity to become citizen scientists and help monitor areas of Oxley for Monarch activity. Data collected will be submitted to the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project through the University of Minnesota. The goal of the project is to help scientists better understand Monarch populations, use of habitat, and to identify factors that affect Monarch populations. On July 30th, all stops will be out for a grand Monarch Festival.



The **Oxley Nature Center** Association will host a Certified Interpretive Host workshop August 30 -31, 2016. There is also space in their CIG workshop scheduled for Oct. 17 - 20, 2016.

The **Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Department** was the recipient of a \$95,000.00 grant from the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. In addition to that, the Parks Department also received a \$25,800.00 grant from the Oklahoma Forestry Services department. The funds are to be used to inventory the trees that are growing in OKC's parks. These statistics will aid horticulturists in managing the components of this "urban forest."

How is this for a catchy title for an educational program? "Living the Night Life Snooze" was a program that was hosted at the **Oklahoma City Zoo** on the evening of April 9th. The emphasis of the educational activities was an examination of the life adaptations of nocturnal animals.

Science Museum Oklahoma (Oklahoma City) has a new addition to their Smart Space gallery. It is titled: "Magnificence: The Microcosmic Perspective." It features macro photography of colorful insects. Also included is some electron microscope photography.

Neil Garrison did some volunteering at the OK Historical Society's **Chisholm Trail Museum** in Kingfisher, OK on May 13th and 14th. He was involved in an educational event that was called "Living History Days." Neil did flintknapping demonstrations at this public program.

Jackie Dill, host of the OklahomaWildcrafting.com and website moderator of the Oklahoma Wildcrafting* Facebook page, is the author of two books: Oklahoma Wildcrafting: The Beginner's Guide and Oklahoma Wildcrafting: Eat Your Weeds Cookbook. Jackie leads wildcrafting walks near her hometown of Coyle, Oklahoma and hosted a wildcrafting dinner on April 16th at Oklahoma City's **Myriad Botanical Gardens**.

Pete Dunne, the founder of the World Series of Birding, was the keynote speaker at the Lesser Prairie Chicken Festival that was held in Woodward, OK on April 13-20.

Oklahoma State Parks is excited to welcome two new members to the agency's interpretive services/recreation program team. **Amy Nickel** is the new recreation coordinator for **Sequoyah State Park**; **Jon Sockey** is the recreation coordinator for **Robbers Cave State Park**. Both Amy and Jon are doing a great job in managing their park's nature center programs. As well, they are leading a full range of outdoor recreation activities at their parks.

Oklahoma State Park's three year partnership with the Oklahoma Public Television Authority (OETA) continued this spring as **Roman Nose, Sequoyah, Robbers Cave and Lake Murray State Parks** hosted Explore the Outdoors events. This program consists of hands-on, STEM focused, activities for young children.

During this past spring break **Greenleaf and Sequoyah State Parks** held science camps. With an emphasis on fun, each camp's activities helped students strengthen their observation and journaling skills. Park staff led these camps with assistance from educators, volunteers and students from Northeastern State University. Similar science camps are being planned this summer at **Osage Hills and Bernice State Parks**.

With a grant from the Fred Jones Family Foundation, **Lake Thunderbird State Park** is establishing butterfly gardens and monarch butterfly habitat throughout the park. On Saturday, May 14th, Daisies from Girl Scout Troop 600 in Moore helped park staff in planting 60 milkweeds near the park office. Additional milkweed plants will be established in other areas at the park. The milkweeds (common, showy, whorled and butterfly weed) were purchased from Prairie Wind Nursery of Norman, Okla. This nursery is propagating a significant number of native milkweeds and a wide variety of other native plants in their greenhouse operation.

At **Chickasaw National Recreation Area's Travertine Nature Center**, interpreter **Jennifer Bryant** reports that they are planning a full roster of summer programming. Besides the unstructured fun of swimming in Travertine Creek or fishing and boating at Lake of the Arbuckles during the day, you may want to drop by the nature center for a night sky program on Thursday evenings or a night hike on Friday nights. There will be programs to help celebrate the National Park Service's centennial, too.



At **Chickasaw Cultural Center (ChCC)**, interpreters **Steve Nail and Payte Summers** say the word this summer is Ikbi, pronounced igg'-bee. In Chickasaw it means "build." You will be amazed at the size and scope of recent developments at the ChCC. And they are still building. From the sky bridge you can see the cranes and construction crew building a 195' suspension pedestrian bridge.



It will span Rock Creek and provide visitors easy access between Cat's Eye Road near Veteran's Lake in the CNRA and the Traditional Village at the ChCC. Along with the "White Dog" exhibit, the Exhibit Center is hosting "Ikbi, Build with Toy Bricks" an interactive art and play installation, until September 11, 2016.

*Have an idea for a theme for a future issue?
We'd love to hear it!
Send your ideas to
nai6.visions@gmail.com*

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

SUBMISSION DEADLINES FOR *VISIONS*:

Spring: March 20 • Summer: June 20 • Fall: September 1 • Winter: December 1

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