

# VISIONS

NAI REGION 6 - SOUTH CENTRAL

FALL 2021 • VOLUME 35, ISSUE 3

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# VISIONS

## Newsletter for NAI REGION 6 - SOUTH CENTRAL

Fall 2021 • VOLUME 35, ISSUE 3

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*Some title photos from  
Dreamstime.com*

# Pine Bluff, Arkansas on Track to Becoming Captivating Destination for Heritage Tourism

by Sheri Storie

The collaborative efforts of three Pine Bluff organizations received universal support from the Pine Bluff City Council, voting unanimously to support the development of the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Cultural District to celebrate the cultural and historical attributes of Pine Bluff and Jefferson County, Arkansas. The development of the Cultural District will bring vibrant arts, museums, parks, memorials, rest areas, food pavilions, and performance venues.

After extensive research and discussion, the Pine Bluff/Jefferson County National Heritage Trails Task Force, Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance, and the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission identified several critical historical narratives related to national, regional, and state trails such as the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, Trail of Tears, Equal Justice Initiative, Americana Music Triangle, Cotton Kingdom Trail, Southern Literary Trail, and

the Arkansas Civil War Trail.

Phase One of the Cultural District will spotlight the city's rich history pertaining to music and Civil Rights. Some of the new infrastructure will include the Bobby Rush Roundabout regaling Third Street (Bobby Rush Way) with a statue dedicated to the two-time Grammy-winning artist who began his career in Pine Bluff. Also included will be the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Fitness & Blues Park, a dual-purpose site celebrating more Blues and Soul artists.

The Civil Rights component in Phase One develops a series of historical markers throughout the city chronicling the significant contributions of residents of Pine Bluff and Jefferson County. Subsequent phases involve the establishment of the Delta Civil Rights Museum, Delta Civil Rights Garden, and the Peace and Justice Memorial honoring the victims of lynching and racial terror.

# *If Only Ragweed Felt the Pain it Inflicts*

by Neil Garrison

I love nature, but nature doesn't love me. My downfall is my battle with hay fever. There is an abundant wild plant called ragweed, and its pollen is what gives my nose the sniffles and makes me endure itchy eyes. Giant ragweed is here, there, and everywhere. It is wind-pollinated, with is a very haphazard way to get the male and female parts of the plant to meet. In order to compensate for the hit-and-miss aspect of the seed fer-

tilization process, this plant throws a whale-size load of pollen into the air. My nose and eyes are ever so happy to catch their fair share of the flower "dust." Revenge is a dish best served cold. I purposely go on hikes afield with the express goal of finding the giant ragweed plant. Once I find this dastardly villain, I give its leaves a good yank and snicker as the plant whimpers in pain. ... well ... I jest. I can only wish that it was so. Instead, I

know full well the plant feels no discomfort. If you, like me, also suffer from the hay fever malady, you might want to do your own outdoor search for this plant. Giant ragweed also goes by another name: bloodweed. Take a close look at the plant juice that oozes from the severed leaf. You'll see how the plant got its name. Dab the red liquid on your exposed arm. Give yourself a temporary tattoo. Mine says this: "TAKE THAT, RAGWEED!"

## NAI Region Six Directors Report

### Fall 2021



NAI Region Six Director -  
Jay Schneider, Arkansas

Fall is here and cooler weather has arrived.

My thoughts are with our members on the gulf in the path of recent hurricanes, I hope you and yours are well and on the mend.

Please know that your family members of Region Six are here to assist in any way possible, please reach out.

Fall is a time for change for me. Colors are changing, day length is changing, temperatures are changing. I am looking forward to the

bright future of NAI with the changes coming from the current election and strategic plan. Please reach out with new ideas and newfound energies for our NAI family.

The national workshop in Palm Springs has extended the early bird registration for live and on-line, it looks to be a great workshop, please join us if you can.

Do Today Well

Jay

# What's your story?

## Storyteller's Forum

*We are all storytellers; it is inherent in the nature of interpreters to share stories. So often we share the stories of historic figures, or of animals, or of events that may be part of our sites. It's what we do. Most interpreters revel in such sharing.*

*Rarely, though, do we have the opportunity to share our own stories.*

*We invite members of Region 6 to share some of their own experiences here. Your story need not be long or complicated. We want you to give a first-person account of something that helped you realize you are in the right place, at the right time, with the right connections to make a difference in someone's life. If you're unsure of your writing*

*ability or style, we can work with you to produce something you're proud to share. (Hint: Imagine recounting the story to your best friend, and write it down just like that.) Aim for approximately 300 words, but we can work with longer (or shorter). Just make it from you, in your voice.*

*Please send your story to Ken Forman (ken.forman.nai@gmail.com).*

*Our first installment is from Amanda Markey, the Oklahoma Coordinator for Region 6. Amanda shares a tender story about things that go bump (or peep) in the night.*

*Amanda, take it away --*

## Amphibians Make Interpreters

by Amanda Markey

**A**lthough I can't place where and when I was when I first decided to make interpretation a career, but I do remember when I realized I was right where I needed to be.

Picture this... a cool spring midafternoon and I was presenting a program about the amphibians that called the wetland their home. I asked the children to join me sitting on the boardwalk, but to remain quiet to see if the amphibians had a story of their own to share. A split second or two after the children got settled, the wetland exploded into a chorus of amphibious song.

The children's eyes grew wide with wonder and excitement.

You could see the amazed looks bounce between the silent children as they heard the song get louder and louder. The singing amphibians forgot the group of onlookers were sitting amongst them and broke into a full frog chorus.

Breaking the silence I asked if anyone had any questions. A young girl asked if this sound could possibly be the sounds she hears at night coming from her pool area. After discussing the possible sounds she could be hearing I gathered the group to head back to the classroom.

Before leaving the facility, one of the mothers caught up to me and expressed her thanks for such an amazing moment. The grateful mother further explained that every night her daughter, the one who had asked about the night sounds, would have trouble sleeping because of the "scary sounds outside of her bedroom window". The mother said her daughter had just told her that those night time sounds were probably just frogs and that she no longer feared "those silly sounds at night". I knew, right then, that I had found a home.

# Are We Premature in Announcing the Death Knell for this Bird?

by Neil Garrison



I am a birdwatcher. Thus, it came as a breath-robbing gut punch when I received the news in late-September of this year that the U.S. government had officially declared the ivory-billed woodpecker as being extinct.

In ancestral times, this magnificent woodpecker used to live in the area that is now Region VI of N.A.I. In my opinion, we are much the poorer if we cannot confidently include this avian species as a component of our region's biodiversity mixture.



Please permit me to now venture out on a limb. It is my opinion that the federal government was much too hasty in making this declaration of finality. (You may wish to cut this article out of today's issue of VISIONS and attach it with a refrigerator magnet to the door of that large kitchen appliance. Keep a red felt-tip marker handy. On some day hence, you can scribble: "I TOLD YOU SO!" on the margin of this article.)

In my opinion, there needs to be a new way of doing things. The federal government should embark on a new mission of fostering a better working relationship with our nation's "citizen scientists." The ivory-billed woodpecker is an inhabitant of our nation's wildlands. Not every American ventures deep into these wild acres, but some do.

Waterfowl hunters, canoeists and kayakers are those outdoors people that go back into those places that are most assuredly the last holdouts of critical habitat for the ivory-billed woodpecker. However, these individuals are little-inclined

to report on their sightings of this rare bird species. In fact, if they do such a thing, they are as likely as not to be "rewarded" with a forfeiture of access to areas where they once used to venture for recreation. There needs to be a much more common-sense approach to wildlife conservation. "Citizen scientists" should not be penalized for



taking an active role in wildlife censusing.

Just because we have always done things a certain way hardly justifies a continuation of a faulty and not-very-well-thought-out practice.

I beseech the federal government to embark on a new campaign of welcoming "citizen scientists" into the rank and file of conservators of our nation's precious (and finite!) wildlife resources.

*Top and bottom left photos: Illustration Dreamstime.com*

*Upper right photo: Smithsonian Magazine*

# Summer Tent Camping Trip was a Misadventure

by Neil Garrison

In the not-so-distant past, I used to enjoy watching a television show that always began with the disclaimer: “The names have been changed to protect the innocent.” In keeping with that idea, I will relate to you a story that touches on an experience I had during my summer vacation.

It happened in a national park, I won't tell you which one. This concerns an infraction of the rules I am most guilty of not heeding. I could have chosen to wait until the statute of limitations had run its course, but I will throw enough shade on my telling of this story so that the rules enforcement folks cannot come seeking me out.

I was tent camping in this national park. There were rules proclamations posted everywhere. One of the most prominent warnings for park visitors to not feed the wild animals.

As I was seated at my campsite picnic table, a desert dove came flying in and landed within inches of me. The bird stared directly into my eyes and gave off a silent plea for me to share some of my camping food with him.

I performed a 360-degree furtive look around my campsite in order to make sure that one of the camp host personnel was not there watching my actions. When I deemed the coast clear, I crumbled up a granola bar and allowed the hungry bird to eat to his heart's content.

On the last day of my camping adventure, my feathered friend arrived with cactus spines all stuck into his face. It was pretty apparent that he had chased a grasshopper meal back into the insect's place of refuge and safety. It pained me to no end to see my friend in pain and discomfort. I could have so easily

darted out my hand and captured that bird. It would have been possible for me to ever so gently remove those cactus spines. To do so, however, would have resulted in a loudly squawking dove that would have alerted my camp neighbors that I was “harassing” a specimen of the national park's wildlife menagerie.

I had to choose, instead, to assume a hand-off approach.

Things would have been a whole lot less complicated if I had just stayed home and not done the desert camping adventure. The way things now stand, I cannot erase from my memory the image of my little feathered buddy standing there mere inches away with all of those cactus spines impaled into his cheeks.

Such is my life.





# *Smell What?*

by April Dickey Anderson,  
Naturalist/Writer based in St. Louis, MO

I couldn't smell the odiferous spray of a neighborhood skunk. But this was just the start. It turned out I had COVID (in spite of social distancing, careful masking, and getting vaccinated). This experience, while not deadly, has still temporarily killed my sense of smell. (Not even kitty litter stinks!)

On the flip side, the scents of lavender, basil, apple crisp and sautéed onions are missing and food tastes "different," as color and texture usurp the role of smell. From an interpretive standpoint,

I marvel at the opportunity to engage with these other senses, which have become amplified to make up for their missing sibling.

While luscious aromas or disgusting stench may only linger in my memories, a vivid world has welcomed me to discover its wealth of beauty in new ways.

Once I regain my sense of smell, it will be exciting to see what I discover from the reverse process.



## **State reports**

Arkansas - Chris Pistole

Louisiana - Rusty Scarborough

Kansas - Amber Myers

Missouri - Michelle Soenksen

Oklahoma - Amanda Markey

Texas - Erin Holley

The title 'ARKANSAS REPORT' is displayed in large, bold, yellow-outlined letters. 'ARKANSAS' is in a larger font size than 'REPORT'. The background is a photograph of a forest with trees in autumn colors (yellows, oranges, and browns) and a path leading through the woods.

# ARKANSAS REPORT

**Leslie Patrick, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission:** Our summer programming continued to be virtual, including Division of Arkansas Heritage workshops for teachers. We continue to publish weekly on ANHC's Facebook, [facebook.com/arnaturalheritage](https://www.facebook.com/arnaturalheritage), and Instagram, [instagram.com/ar\\_naturalheritage](https://www.instagram.com/ar_naturalheritage).

A repeating feature, the Friday Flower, was initiated in 2014 as a short-term series on native plants. The posts were well-received and have continued each week for over seven years! What began as a Saturday Snake series in 2016 has become the Saturday Spotlight. These posts feature native animal species, natural areas, and the work of our staff, often highlighting exciting finds made during field surveys. We also publish monthly blog articles on our website, <https://www.arkansasheritage.com/blog?keyword=ANHC>.

The interpretive challenge is to keep these post and articles not only informative but also thematic and relevant to our diverse audience. Our aim is to inspire others to care about the conservation of Arkansas's biodiversity and our natural heritage!

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### **Beckie Moore, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Rescue:**

- Worked with the Humane Society of the United States to rescue a cougar named Sasha from a New York City apartment. The owners surrendered her over. She is about a year old.
- Fundraising for in-ground swimming pools for all of the tiger habitats, so we will no longer be using stock tank pools. Over 40 in total to do, already have 9 funded.
- Working with Kansas City Vet for her Graduate Studies on a survey of how people perceive education at sanctuaries/zoos. She is looking at behavior change in visiting real accredited facilities vs pseudo facilities.
- We hired 2 new Education Interns.
- 20,796 people were educated by the Education Department alone from June 1st to August 31<sup>st</sup>.

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### **Lauren Marshall, Central AR Nature Center/Arkansas Game and Fish Commission:**

The **Central AR Nature Center** had a great summer with in-person, virtual and hybrid events. We are moving into fall programming and going back to more virtual or hybrid events as we navigate school

**AR Report continued  
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policies, state mask mandates, etc.

The Nature Center along with the **Greater Little Rock Cultural Attraction Consortium** is going to host another Boo!seum (our Halloween program) on Facebook as a virtual event. We had great attendance last year and are excited to have this program in conjunction with Bat Week. If you have questions about a hybrid event, what a partnership looks like or anything along those lines-please let me know! I might not have all the answers but I have access to some great people and resources.

The Consortium is also gearing up and excited about having the National NAI conference in Little Rock fall of 2023. There are plenty of opportunities to host walking tours, field trips or evening meet-ups.

Our site is also excited about hosting various hunting related programs, being part of a statewide Marksmanship Challenge and partnering with groups like Quail Forever to help tell AR's conservation story.

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### **Chris Pistole, Hobbs State Park – Conservation Area:**

**Steve Chyrchel**, volunteers, and I have had success this summer doing roving interpretation, mainly on the front porch of the visitor center. The hummingbird feeders have been very active since July and provide enjoyment for all and a great subject to interpret including a call to action from keeping feeders clean to planting native plants that provide nectar for them.

Our largest program in a long time was about 80 people in our outdoor pavilion who came to learn about red-shouldered hawks and see one released from a local rehabilitator. The bird cooperated well and flew off majestically into the forest at Hobbs. We look forward to partnering with the same group, Northsong Wild Bird Rehabilitation, to have several other releases, including a bald eagle that recovered from lead poisoning. Talk about a great opportunity for a call to action regarding steel vs. lead shot!

In August, Arkansas State Parks interpreters had a virtual workshop over 3 mornings. It was good to get together, even though it wasn't in-person.

We have decided not to have our traditional Living Forest event this October due to the Delta strain of COVID 19. It remains to be seen whether schools will book any field trips for the fall.

Meanwhile, I've been helping to do more resource management in the park including removal of invasive plants and the addition of pollinator-friendly plants in our front landscape of the Visitor Center. I'll continue working with Project Wingspan, part of the Pollinator Partnership, to collect native plant seed this fall.



# KANSAS REPORT

**Ernie Miller Nature Center**, part of the Johnson County Park & Recreation District, would like to address some well-deserved retirements and promotions!

In April 2021, **Molly Postlewait**, Senior Park Naturalist retired after nearly 24 years. As you can imagine, Molly is headed on to new adventures! She is looking forward to summiting Mount Kilimanjaro, to solo trips, visits to national parks with her husband, and family time.

In June, **Bill McGowan**, Outdoor Education Manager retired after 40 years serving JCPRD and EMNC. Bill is looking forward to spending more time with family and friends, traveling, and visiting parks of all kinds!

Former Outdoor Education Specialist, **Andrea Joslin**, was promoted to Outdoor Education Manager. Andrea has served at EMNC for JCPRD since 2003. She is looking forward to expanding and meeting the program and service demands by utilizing more of the JCPRD parks and departments, as well as training more part-time staff and volunteers. Andrea says, "I am very fortunate to have a 'dream job' sharing the outdoors, nature and history with the public."

**Regina Wasson** was promoted into Senior Park Naturalist, and **Diana Bliss** was promoted into the role of Park Naturalist II.

In June, former Park Police Officer II, **Amber Lamble** joined the EMNC staff as a Park Naturalist II. Amber is no stranger to the District or NAI, she is a certified interpretive guide, and has spent the last 10 years doing interpretive programs and in developing astronomy, bat, and conservation success programs (as a Park Police Officer).

Outside of retirements and promotions, it is business as usual around here! The EMNC staff have completed their 10-week **Outdoor Discovery Camp** for children 6-12 years old, and we secured a \$60,000 "Childcare Sustainability" grant! Staff are looking forward to a relatively "normal" fall fieldtrip and special event season. Our park has been improved with a new outdoor amphitheater and firepit with ADA accessibility; an outdoor classroom – a dock over the pond for nature programming; and a new accessible parking area and loop drive that will have an easier slope and a shortened distance to the nature center.

These improvements will complete the 1st phase of the Ernie Miller Master plan and should be completed this fall!

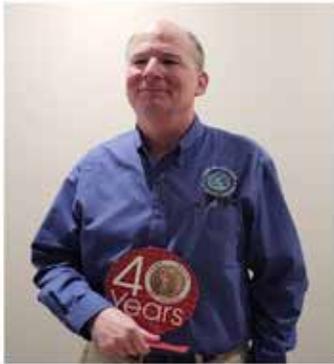
The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism is back to being officially "**Kansas Wildlife and Parks**". There are several wonderful job openings in the agency.

That's all I have for now. I wish you all well, and if there is anything you need from me please reach out.

**LA Report continued  
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# KANSAS REPORT

Continued



Staff Photos: (Line 1) Bill McGowan, Molly Postlewait, Andrea Joslin (Line 2) Regina Wasson, Diana Bliss, Amber Lamble.

Pictured Below: EMNC New Amphitheater (Heritage History Lab Character Tomas)





Very exciting news for the **Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park**! Last week the first budget request of \$6 Million was approved by the Caddo Parish Commission for starting the design and construction of our new facility. Another \$3 Million will be approved in December. The Architect contract has been signed and the site engineering survey has begun. So, our dream has indeed begun to be a reality!

With the resurgence of Covid 19 Delta variant we have reinstated mask mandate in all Caddo Parish buildings. We are getting a good number of requests for programming. We have been asked by our management to cancel our “normal” Bugs, Bats & Bones event that was slated to take place on October 30. So now we have planned a full slate of programming for every Saturday in October which will consist of Night Hikes, outdoor Movie Nights and several other spooky programs. Check out our new website at [www.caddoparks.org](http://www.caddoparks.org) for more information and details.

The **Red River National Wildlife Refuge Celebration** is a go for October 16. This outdoor event is always a lot of fun with a wide variety of activity and educational booths.

**Mark Brink** at **Poverty Point World Heritage Site** says “Hopefully we’ll be shaking up things at Poverty Point within the next year or so with a lot of updates in advance of Viking Cruise Line excursions to the site. These cruise visitors are slated to begin regular trips to Poverty Point from September 2022 onward. I’m currently working on some fresh perspective for all our interpretive signage inside the museum and along our trail to get these updates started. We’ll be hosting in-person interpretive programs each weekend during October for Archaeology Month. There will also be some sizable excavations that should be visible to the public at the end of September and beginning of October.”

Southeastern Louisiana has been severely damaged from Hurricane Ida.

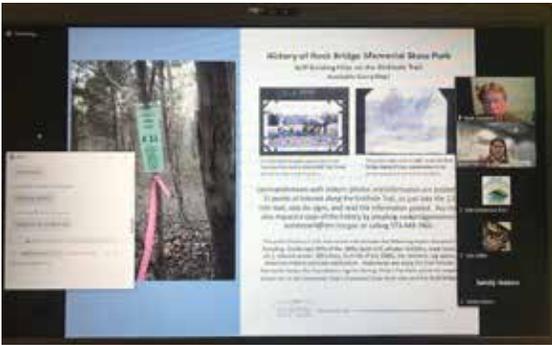
# MISSOURI REPORT

**Leah Eden** reports that they had a busy summer at **Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery** in Branson. From June-August, they had 55,318 visitors and provided 182 tours for 3,500 people! The Conservation Center replacement is on track to begin in the fall of 2022. During construction the Hatchery will be closed to public visitation and interpretive staff will be doing offsite outreach and school programs.

**Kendra Swee** reports that **Meramec Spring Park** in St. James, MO has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Missouri Humanities Council. The Missouri Humanities Council was able to award the grant through funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. Part of the funding is earmarked for improvements to outdoor interpretive kiosks highlighting the history of Meramec Iron Works, the first iron works in Missouri. The remainder of the funding is slated for development of an interpretive plan focused on the presence of Native American tribes prior to settlement. Meramec Spring Park is an 1,800 acre park privately operated by The James Foundation.

The **Association of Missouri Interpreters Conference** went virtual this year for the first time ever! Although much more enjoyable in person, **Becky Matney** reports that the conference was still a success with 101 participants. This two day conference was held using the Whova platform and included a mixture of natural and cultural history interpretive sessions from professional speakers, inspirational keynote presentations, and a fun, interactive community board. Next year’s conference will be held September 19-23, 2022 in St. Joseph, Missouri.

1st photo- Session- Adapting in the time of Covid-19 Roundtable- hosted by Chris Edmondson and Paige Witek



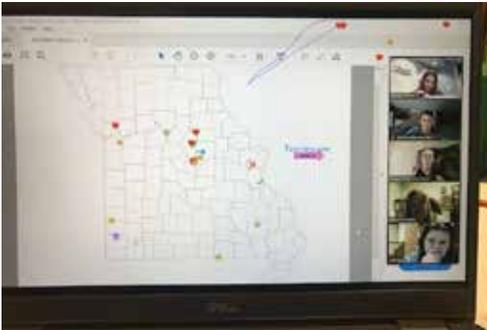
2nd photo-Roxie Campbells’ program

**MO Report continued  
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# MISSOURI REPORT

CONTINUED

3rd photo-Virtual Happy Hour break out session- Virtual Pictionary Group 3



4th photo- Virtual Happy Hour- getting to know where our participants are from



5th photo- It's exhausting being a co-chair! (Amber Edwards)

Missouri would like to welcome you to the **2022 R6 Conference in Columbia, "MO Show-Me Interpretation in the Heart of Missouri"** held February 21-23. Currently planning for in person. Be thinking of presentations you would like to give.



We will be looking for presenters soon. Direct questions or concerns to **Amber Edwards**, 2022 Chair [edwardsamb@missouri.edu](mailto:edwardsamb@missouri.edu).

**Save the Date:**

**"Show-Me Interpretation in the heart of Missouri"**

February 21-23rd, 2022

Columbia, MO

*Keep an eye out on social media and the newsletter for updates.*

# OKLAHOMA REPORT

## Oklahoma gets new State Coordinator

### Meet Amanda Markey

Amanda Markey is a born and raised OKie, hailing from Northeastern Oklahoma where she describes her childhood as “growing up wild in a sea of boys”. After living a carefree childhood of chasing said boys around with toads and other native fauna, she graduated college with a BS in Environmental Conservation. Amanda has tenured with the state while serving as an Environmental Education Assistant with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission at Rogers County Conservation District and served the last 13 years as a Park Naturalist at Grand Lake State Park - Bernice Area & Nature Center.

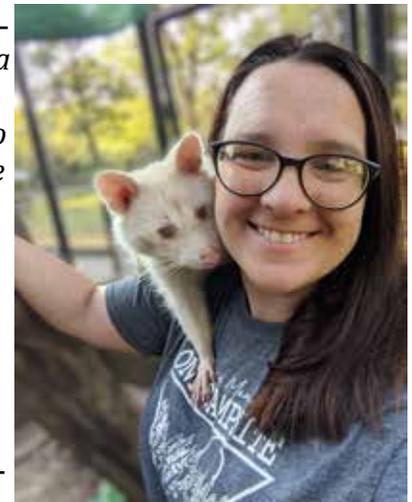
In 2012 Amanda joined NAI and experienced her first Region 6 Regional Conference in Austin, TX. Certification (CIG) came in 2018. Since those pivotal moments you have probably seen her at various NAI conferences both regionally and even at the 2019 national conference. Amanda describes herself as “a mother, a wife, a daughter, a proud auntie, and a friend to her nature enthusiast tribe of self-proclaimed weirdos”. She currently serves on a few different boards including recently being elected as her municipality’s mayor. She sits as a member at large for the Boy Scouts of America Cherokee Area Council, and also helps out with the Bernice Area

Friends of the Park group. Serving Region 6 as the Oklahoma coordinator excites Amanda as she is happy to help grow the interpretive world within the very ecologically diverse state of Oklahoma.

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*Photo is of Amanda and one of her newest residents to the Bernice Nature Center's animal ambassador program. “Little dude” is a leucistic raccoon estimated to be roughly 5 months old.*

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*\*Editor's Note: We've enjoyed all of Donna Horton's contributions to this newsletter. We're sure the Oklahoma NAI members appreciate her work and dedication promoting interpretation as an art, and career in that state. We sincerely hope she accepts our invitation to submit articles for consideration in future editions of Visions. Thank you, Donna for all you have done.*

Many parks have seen unprecedented visitation during the months of the pandemic. One small nature preserve in northeast Oklahoma has experienced a perfect storm of popularity. It began before the pandemic with an unexpectedly successful marketing campaign to bring more attention to **Redbud Valley Nature Preserve**. Add rave reviews, not on the social media sites of Oxley Nature Center (whose staff have operated the facility since 1990,) or the Tulsa Parks Department, or even The Nature Conservancy (it was the first

**OK Report continued  
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property bought by TNC in Oklahoma,) but on the social media sites of the **Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area**. Turkey Mountain has long been a crowded place, with mountain bikers and hikers and horseback riders creating a network of impromptu trails. The entrance trail going up from Turkey Mountain's parking area has been gouged several feet into the sandstone by feet, hooves, and gear sprockets. Inspired by glowing reports and stunning photos of the quiet beauty of Redbud Valley, the Turkey Mountain fan base descended upon a small park dedicated primarily to preservation, rather than recreation. Add the pandemic. Redbud Valley's two miles of rugged trails circling a fragile landscape, and its 15-car parking lot, were getting 400-500 people per day. Plus a number of dogs, which are not permitted, on- or off-leash, and a dismaying percentage of vandals and thieves.\*

The overuse and abuse took its toll, on the landscape and on its overwhelmed staff. The City of Tulsa closed Redbud Valley Nature Preserve to the public on August 30th, to give it a chance to recover, to allow some much-needed assessment, repair, and maintenance. Many hope it will also make a break between the recent wild-west situation and a new system of reservations for timed entries, limiting visitation to a more manageable amount. Officials estimate re-opening in May of 2022.

*\* Interpretive sites are designed to be welcoming. At the same time, many sites like zoos, nature centers, and museums do not permit pets because of the role of these sites as stewards and protectors of their resources. Exceptions are made for service animals. If you have not reviewed ADA guidelines lately, regarding what is and isn't a service animal and what can be asked about them, be advised that the federal guidelines were updated in February 2020: [https://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm).*

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Woo hoo! Better news! For many years now, we've been watching with interest and reporting here, as an ambitious new facility takes shape in Oklahoma City. A review of the timeline:

- 1990s The American Indian Cultural Center and Museum is first put on the drawing board, designed to interpret the unique stories that are inherent in the 39 federally-recognized Native American tribes that are in the state of Oklahoma, and to house and display the Smithsonian-quality collections representing their heritage and history.
- 2006 Construction begins along the southern edge of Oklahoma City near the junction of I-40 and I-35.
- 2012 Construction halts, as funding by the Oklahoma legislature runs out.
- 2015 Management transfers from the state of Oklahoma to the city of Oklahoma City and the American Indian Cultural Center Foundation.
- 2016 Construction renews with a new set of funding initiatives from many sources, including a substantial grant from the Chickasaw nation.
- 2019 James Pepper Henry (Kaw/Muscogee) is named Executive Director.
- 2019 The museum is renamed: First Americans Museum (FAM).
- 2021 Grand Opening on September 18th-19th!

**Neil Garrison** is in training to be one of the docents, so we have hopes he will extend an invitation to the staff to NAI. Tickets are available online at [www.FAMok.org](http://www.FAMok.org).

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How do you survive a crocodile attack? **Greg Miller**, the director of the

**OK Report continued  
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education department at **Science Museum Oklahoma** in Oklahoma City, explained that museum visitors were given just such a challenge at a recent SMO exhibit: *"The Worst-Case Scenario Survival Experience."* It was an event that was loosely based on a recently-published book of approximately the same title.

The most prominent place in the newspaper is "front page, above-the-fold." An August issue of THE OKLAHOMAN newspaper granted this premium place to a full-length article about the fall armyworm. The piece cautioned readers not to go overboard with broad-spectrum insecticides. It focused attention on "non-target" organisms such as monarch butterflies, ladybugs and praying mantises. It was a well-written article.

"Mystery History." A novel concept, Mystery History Boxes are available for sale in the Museum Store at The **National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum** in Oklahoma City. The museum staff filled the boxes with crafts, games and "a special surprise." The goal is to make learning about the West more fun.

The Metropolitan Library System in Oklahoma City made available to their younger patrons some take-home kits that originated from the **Museum of Osteology** in Moore, OK. These were paired up with live ZOOM events that allowed the children to explore topics such as forensics and animal bones.

**Amy Stephens** conducted a fascinating public education event at the **Edmond Historical Society Museum** in early August. The program title was somewhat intriguing: "The Blue Hippo Festival." Clear as mud? The "Mother Road" (AKA old Hwy 66) goes through Edmond, OK. Alongside this road is a fiberglass rendition of a blue hippo. Neil Garrison conducted a teaching station at this event.

Cue the music. *"BAD BOYS! BAD BOYS! WHATCHA GONNA DO? WHATCHA GONNA DO WHEN THEY COME FOR YOU?"* A criminal in Washington State was hauled into federal court on July 9th and a jury convicted him of trafficking in unlawfully harvested timber. It was the first time that tree DNA was used in a legal proceeding to show the guilt of a crime.

The story continues. On July 17 an organization called the Adventure Scientists Timber Project Adventure Scientists Timber Project ([timber@adventurescientists.org](mailto:timber@adventurescientists.org)) approached the **Oklahoma Native Plant Society**, asking for volunteer help in collecting DNA to build a genetic database and map of the distribution of valuable black walnut trees, to aid in prosecuting timber thieves. The question is, how do you vet an organization's true aims? Is it a reputable effort by an honest organization? Or is it actual timber thieves recruiting well-meaning enthusiasts to identify and locate the most valuable prey? In looking into the organization, there is very little to find, mostly that it was founded by a partnership of three venture capitalists. The ONPS declined to participate because even if it is above-board, how can an online database of valuable information be protected from a data breach?

Tickets are selling fast for a speaking engagement by astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson. The popular scientist makes a return to Tulsa on October 4th, this time at Tulsa's Cox Business Center. His topic: *"The Search for Life in the Universe."*

The jewfish is no more. Two decades ago, a committee of fish scientists officially changed that organism's common name to one that is less offensive: goliath grouper. In a similar vein around the same time, botanists

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# OKLAHOMA REPORT

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began emphasizing the preferred common name of ragwort for the spring wildflower formerly known as squawroot. This summer the gypsy moth and gypsy ant had their common names removed by the Entomological Society of America. Gypsy is considered a derogative term by the Romani people, who suffered marginalization and prejudice for centuries. The moth and the ant will go by their respective Latin names, *Lymantria dispar* and *Aphaenogaster araneoides*, until new common names are chosen. Even the Audubon Society has not ruled out changing its name. National and local chapters are currently debating the idea, based on the history of John James Audubon, who went beyond public anti-abolitionist views to active enslavement of others.



**Tara Humphreys**, Field Interpretation Coordinator with Texas State Parks reports, "Texas State Parks held their first Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) training in a year and a half at **Bastrop State Park** in August. Thirteen new interpreters from all over Texas eagerly engaged in the content and activities that the trainers were so excited to deliver in person! Congratulations to Beth Parra, Sydney Blackwell, Josie Gunter, Sarah Landuyt, Jordan Kieffer, Raul Garza, Elizabeth Booth, Madeline Martin, Lauren Sweat, TC Riddle, Allen Dees, Stewart Lefevre, and Connor Ricard for a job well done!"

**Chandler Wahrmond**, Educator with the Texas Historical Commission at Fanthorp Inn State Historical Site reports on a variety of public activities and events:

- Date: October (whole month)
- Title: *Memento Mori: Fanthorp Funeral Practices*
- Description: Throughout the month of October we will be commemorating the 154th anniversary of Henry and Rachel Fanthorp's passing. Come explore the unique and peculiar ways Victorian families mourned the loss of a loved one.
  
- Date: 11/27
- Title: *Twilight Firelight*
- Description: Come enjoy this Historic Inn in all its candlelit glory. You will be picked up by a mule drawn wagon in front of the Grimes County Court House and delivered to the Inn. Once your footsteps off the wagon you will be transported to 1850's Texas where you will tour the spectacular candle lit Fanthorp Inn. Costumed re-enactors, music and dancing will be taking place all night. No reservations

are required. While we do not have an admission fee we do ask for donation to support this event and our other special programs. The 1st floor of the Inn and Barn are wheel chair accessible

- Dates: 12/11-12
- Title: *Tying the knot: Weddings at the Fanthorp Inn*
- Description: Stop by the inn this weekend as we commemorate the 160th wedding anniversary of John Fanthorp and Sallie Moore which occurred on Christmas Eve 1861.
  
- Dates: 1/8-9
- Title: *"Strong enough to bear up an iron wedge": Coffee at the Inn*
- Description: Stop by the Fanthorp Inn and discover the secret to brewing a cup of coffee that's "strong enough to bear up an iron wedge".
  
- Dates: 2/12-13
- Title: *The Inn After Fanthorp*
- Description: Stop by the inn this weekend for an architectural tour of the inn detailing the many changes Fanthorp descendants made to the structure over generations.

**Kimberly Ogden**, Education Coordinator of the **Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary Program at the Nueces Delta Preserve** reports,

"Our calendar is filling up for the coming school year. We have created some necessary changes to continue our mission that connects Coastal Bend Communities with the opportunities and resources that plant the seeds of conservation for protecting our bays and estuaries. We have put protocols together for safe social monthly public outreach events by following the CDC health guidelines, along with local health guidelines.

We have created virtual and outreach field trips to help reach students at ISDs who are limiting the in-person field trips this year. We are in the process of filming some of our habitats and field trip stations to bring audio/video multimedia to the students for our virtual and outreach field trips. During the outreach field trips, we will also be bringing biofacts, along with water and soil to the campuses to allow them to partake in hands-on discovery-based learning.

We have opened our website registration for in-person field trips and have already had some book. We are excited to have students back at the Delta, but we do understand that health and safety is a big concern. We will be offering teacher workshops this year. We found during the past year that we can conduct these with most of the activities occurring outside where following health guidelines is the easiest. Our homeschool days will be open to K-8th grade and for co-op field trip requests for secondary. Registration for the first date already has been filled a month in advance.

We will continue Nature Story Time once a month on the 2nd Tuesday to enjoy time outdoors at the Nueces Delta Preserve. We have had a few

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teachers share that they've watched our YouTube story time and activity videos in their classrooms. We have outreach programs scheduled and we are excited to conduct these community-building experiences again. We are excited to be scheduling our volunteers more regularly now and all our practices are created with their safety in mind.

Additionally, the education staff will be presenting at TCiN Summit and the CAST conference."

**Kevin Malcolm**, Lead Interpreter with Texas Historical Commission at **Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site** gives us the news on their fall and winter community events:

September 18, 2021: *"To prevent much evil and do good": The Archive War of 1842*

Did you know that Texans fought a war over the official archives of the Republic of Texas against... themselves? Join us at Texas Independence Hall for a discussion of the infamous Archive War of 1842. Learn about how the Mexican invasions of Texas led to a conflict which would involve Texas Rangers, drunken Austinites, and a VERY upset lady in 1842.

October 16, 2021: *The Ruins of Washington: Archaeology Day at Washington-on-the-Brazos*

The history of Washington lies just below the surface. Join us and the Houston Archeological Society in the center of the historic Town of Washington as we discuss the archaeological record of the former Capitol of the Texas Republic. Get hands-on with a mock archaeology dig and learn about the finer points of artifact discovery and research. See one-of-a-kind artifacts found around the former town on display in the Visitor Center and maybe even locate some yourself in our dig!

November 20, 2021: *The Old Three-Hundred at 200—Andrew Robinson and Austin's Colony*

Celebrate the 200th Anniversary of Andrew Robinson's settlement on the banks of the Brazos River in Stephen F. Austin's new Mexican colony. Events will include a rededication of a historic marker memorializing Washington's first settler, guest speakers, and living history. See where Andrew would have established the first river crossing of the Brazos River along the famous La Bahia Road.

December 18, 2021: *Dickens-on-the-Brazos— Yuletide Celebrations in the Republic of Texas*

Ring in the holidays at the Birthplace of Texas! Join festive citizens from the Town of Washington as they celebrate the season with popular readings and songs from the 19th Century. Learn about common Christmas traditions that would have taken place in towns like Washington and listen to stories of Christmases gone by in the Brazos Valley. Enjoy a taste of the season by sampling some homemade wassail to warm you up!

## NAI REGION 6 VISIONS

# PUBLICATION INFORMATION



**Visions** Newsletter is the newsletter for Region 6 of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). Region 6 includes states of Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. For Region 6 information go to [www.nairegion6.wordpress.com](http://www.nairegion6.wordpress.com). The national office for NAI is located in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Their website is [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com).

### Director

Jay T. Schneider  
Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area, Rogers, AR  
479 899-4573  
[jayinterp@yahoo.com](mailto:jayinterp@yahoo.com)

### Publication Editors

Ken Forman, CIG  
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Yellville, AR  
870-449-3484  
[kforman@att.net](mailto:kforman@att.net)

Jerrel Geisler, CIG  
Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve - HCP4, Houston, TX  
281-467-2259  
[jerrelgeisler@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jerrelgeisler@sbcglobal.net)

### Officers

**Deputy Director**  
Neil Garrison (Retired)  
405-590-0483  
[atlatlgarrison@hotmail.com](mailto:atlatlgarrison@hotmail.com)

**Secretary**  
Mystina Swaim, CIG, CHI  
Arkansas State Parks, West Fork AR  
479-761-3325  
[mystina.swaim@arkansas.gov](mailto:mystina.swaim@arkansas.gov)

**Treasurer**  
Kayla Gomance  
DeGray Lake Resort State Park, Bismark, AR  
501-865-5814  
[kayla.gomance@arkansas.gov](mailto:kayla.gomance@arkansas.gov)

**Digital Communications**  
Erin Holley  
LCRA Parks, Austin, TX  
512-730-8013  
[erin.holley@lcra.org](mailto:erin.holley@lcra.org)

### Committee Chairs

**Scholarship & Professional Development**  
Larry Jo Edwards  
Nueces Delta Preserve, Corpus Christi, TX  
361-336-0314  
[ljedwards@cbbep.org](mailto:ljedwards@cbbep.org)

**Awards**  
Lauren Marshall  
Will Stephens Jr. Central AR Nature Center, Little Rock, AR  
501-907-0636 x104  
[lauren.marshall@agfc.ar.gov](mailto:lauren.marshall@agfc.ar.gov)

**Membership - Co-Chairs**  
Jeanne Spencer  
[historyiscool645@gmail.com](mailto:historyiscool645@gmail.com)

**Elections**  
Robin Gabe  
Arkansas State Parks, Little Rock, AR  
501-682-2187  
[robin.gabe@arkansas.gov](mailto:robin.gabe@arkansas.gov)

Leann Floyd  
Sherwood, AR  
501-231-3353  
[leefloyd@swbell.net](mailto:leefloyd@swbell.net)

**NAI National Office**  
P.O. Box 2246  
Fort Collins, CO 80522  
970-484-8283  
888-900-8283

### State Coordinators

**ARKANSAS:** Chris Pistole, Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area, Rogers, AR, 479-789-5007, [chris.pistole@arkansas.gov](mailto:chris.pistole@arkansas.gov)

**KANSAS:** Amber Myers, Milford Nature Center, Junction City, KS, 620-960-2862, [myersa78@gmail.com](mailto:myersa78@gmail.com)

**LOUISIANA:** Rusty Scarborough, Walter Jacobs Memorial Nature Park, Shreveport, LA, 318-929-2806, [rscarborough@caddo.org](mailto:rscarborough@caddo.org)

**MISSOURI:** Michelle Soenksen, CIT, CIG, Sam A. Baker State Park, Patterson, MO, 573-856-4514, [michelle.soenksen@dnr.mo.gov](mailto:michelle.soenksen@dnr.mo.gov)

**OKLAHOMA:** Amanda Markey, CIG, Grand Lake State Park - Bernice Area & Nature Center, Afton, OK, 918-257-8330, [amanda.markey@travelok.com](mailto:amanda.markey@travelok.com)

**TEXAS:** Erin Holley, LCRA Parks, Austin, TX, 512-730-8013, [erin.holley@lcra.org](mailto:erin.holley@lcra.org)

### DEADLINES FOR *VISIONS* ARE:

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