

VI VISIONS

NAI REGION 6 - SOUTH CENTRAL

SUMMER 2021 • VOLUME 35, ISSUE 2

You've Paid Your Membership Dues . . . Now What?

*By Neil Garrison
Deputy Director, Region VI, NAI*

A big aspect of our organization's health and continued well-being revolves around (1) member recruitment and (2) member retention. It is readily noticeable that our membership numbers are not exactly a 100% reflection of all those persons that are employed in our career field. Some choose to join our organization. Some don't. Part of the chore is for us to offer a whole suite of significant membership benefits that will serve as a suitable enticement to get people to pony up the cash and join us in our mutual endeavors. The other part of that equation is for those prospective members to have a desire to excel in their pro-

fession -- rather than just doing the bare minimum for a paycheck.

Once we are successful in getting new members, it is very important for us to do what we can to retain those members year after year. It appears that the "bitter pill to swallow" is the mere mention of the inescapable fact that our organization is unique in that "you get out of it exactly in proportion to what you put into it." It is not like sitting down at a restaurant and ordering a hamburger. Our organization is a volunteer-driven entity; it goes without saying that there is much more involved than just paying membership dues. Obviously, it

is not possible for us to put a fire in the belly of all of those persons that are directly engaged in our profession; a huge share of that motivation to do a job that transcends just-as-little-as-is-required is something that speaks to the deep-seated character of the individual in question. It would be foolish for us to expect all of the members of our profession to be active go-getters but, for those that are of that ilk, NAI is a home where they can foster professional growth and eventual career success.

Welcome home!



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VISIONS

Newsletter for NAI REGION 6 - SOUTH CENTRAL

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Sharing Postcards

A new challenge for you! Grab a postcard from your site and send it to another site in our region. Whatever the message is, make it positive and supportive. Maybe a new idea to share? Just a long-distance "you've got this!" Let us "bomb" each other with professional compassion and friendly messages!



NAI Region Six Director's Report



NAI Region Six Director -
Jay Schneider, Arkansas

Yes, it is hot here too, summer has arrived. I hope this summer finds you

busy, back at the summer and enjoying every second of it, as I am.

Like many of you I am looking forward to hugs and handshakes and seeing more people in person this summer and beyond.

The national board for NAI is meeting in person in August for our annual summer meeting. NAI has a great strategic plan found on the website here:

https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Resources/NAI_Administrative_Documents/Manuals_and_Policy/nai_resources/Admin_Docs/Manuals.aspx?hkey=bf3456ab-4fac-472e-9229-5da9aa222a7b

I am excited about the positive changes this plan will bring to NAI and the profession. If you see any area where you would like to get involved, please e-mail me at jayinterp@yahoo.com.

If you are interested in serving on the National Workshop Committee which is November 7-11, 2023 in Little Rock, Arkansas please e-mail me at jayinterp@yahoo.com, this is a two-year committee.

Do Today Well

Jay

Region 6 Election Information You Need

Hello NAI Region 6! I know that 2020 was a challenging year for all of us. As we slowly and cautiously climb the hill to safely serving guests and getting back to doing the important work of personal interpretation, it's a great time to think about how you can give back to Region 6.

If you are looking for a way to serve NAI Region 6 I have an opportunity for you! This fall, we'll elect the positions of Director and Treasurer, and I am actively seeking candidates to serve this great region. Here is more information for you to consider.

Director:

Our current director, Jay

Schneider, has served his two, 3-year terms and cannot run for another term in this position. That means I'm actively seeking candidates! If elected, you'll serve from 2022 - 2024.

Treasurer:

I'm also seeking candidates for the position of treasurer. This is also a 3-year term (2022 - 2024).

Requirements for both positions:

- Candidates may be any NAI member in good standing at the time of nomination.
- Candidates must maintain an active individual membership throughout the election process and their term of office, if elected.

- Candidates must state a willingness to sign the NAI Code of Ethics for Elected Officers.

Feel free to reach out with questions. If you are interested in running, please e-mail me by Friday, July 16. That will give me time to get the information I need from you and send it turned in to get you on the ballot for the fall.

If you feel called to serve, reach out and take action! I can't wait to hear from you!

Robin Gabe, Region 6 Elections Chair

Robin.gabe@arkansas.gov

Work phone: (501) 682-2187



State reports

Arkansas - Chris Pistole

Louisiana - Rusty Scarborough

Kansas - Amber Myers

Missouri - Michelle Soenksen

Oklahoma - Donna Horton

Texas - Erin Holley



Mystina Swaim, Lake Ft. Smith State Park: I am now the full-time Park Interpreter II and Marina Manager at Lake Fort Smith State Park. (Mystina was a park interpreter at Devil's Den State Park)

Jay Miller, owner of Interpretive Communications and NAI President: I have been leading exhibit planning for the North Little Rock Heritage Commission. They have just entered into a contract with Taylor Studios for fabrication. Installation is expected in a year. I've just completed wayside exhibit projects in Jacksonville, Fayetteville and at Osage Park in Bentonville.

Kayla Gomance, DeGray Lake Resort State Park: We are opening a new escape room called The Ranger Riddler. Participants have 60 minutes to uncover clues, hunt for hidden items, and solve the puzzles to escape the room. The room is based off actual interpretive programs offered at the park, so participants will be challenged to learn, collaborate, and explore within a state park atmosphere. While the room itself holds interpretive value, we hope it will also encourage a new audience to attend one of our interpretive programs. It has gotten off to a great start so far!

Beckie Moore at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge: The refuge recently rescued/re-homed 2 African Servals from TX and a Spotted Hyena from AR. They also worked with the Department of Justice to rescue 13 cats from the Tiger King Park Zoo in OK where the animals were seized in a court order. The species range from Tigers, Lions, Liger, Li-liger, and a Jaguar. The education department alone educated 9,467 people on site since March 1 and educated 374 students virtually from 9 different states and Canada.

Ken Forman, Fred Berry Conservation Education Center: The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission hired two new Education Center Facility Managers.

We welcome **Wil Hafner** as head of the **Potlatch Conservation Education Center** at Cook's Lake. He has large shoes to fill. Retiring Facility Manager Tana Beasley served the state as a certified hummingbird bander (take a moment to think that through) and educator for decades at Potlatch.

Wil's environmental education career started when he was quite young, leading conservation activities with his father (owner of Fin, Fur, and Feathers Taxidermy). Wil spent time as an intern at the Central Arkansas Nature Center where he learned methods of interpretation from none other than Region 6's own Neil Curry.

We also welcome **Heather Pitman** as Facility Manager at the Fred Berry Conservation Education Center on Crooked Creek. Heather brings with her decades of educating Arkansas students on the importance.

Heather also has large shoes to fill. Retiring Facility Manager Marilyn Doran, CIM connected (literally) tens of thousands of area residents with the wonders of nature, and shared a conservation message that will live with them a lifetime

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ARKANSAS REPORT

CONTINUED

The **Fred Berry Conservation Education Center**, and the **Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation** will honor Marilyn Doran's career and service to conservation education by dedicating their group pavilion as the Marilyn Doran Pavilion. Visitors for many years to come will know her name and learn that one person can make a real difference. Thank you Marilyn for all you've done.

Chris Pistole, Hobbs State Park – Conservation Area: It's been great having some in-person group programs again at the park, while observing CDC and State Park guidelines. These have been outdoors on the trails mainly and in our new outdoor pavilion with rest rooms, just opened this spring, which was very timely! The Friends of Hobbs paid for half of this new facility. We were recently approved to return to doing indoor programs, which is nice during hot weather.

I was asked to do some virtual programs for a school on outdoor safety, and then modified this to be an in-person trail hike, so a reverse modification compared to what we had to do earlier in the pandemic. By the way, we learned the hard way to be sure and stand WELL upwind when emptying an old can of bear spray to use for a prop! I can see how it would stop a bear in its tracks now!

Our extra-help desk clerk on the weekends, Courtney King, passed her online CIG course with flying colors and got great reviews for her virtual program called The Untraceables, using cartoon characters she created to represent the Leave No Trace principles. She modified it to be an in-person scavenger hike and has successfully presented it several times. She would like to eventually become a park interpreter and she's off to a great start!

We recently planted nearly 100 native wildflowers around the Visitor Center to create better pollinator habitat which also offers more educational opportunities for the public. The Friends of Hobbs paid for the plants as well as the landscaping and native plant pollinator garden at the new pavilion. Interpretive signage will be added soon. I'll be presenting a mini-workshop here called Pollinator Power in late June for Pollinator Week.



No Report this month.



Greetings from the Louisiana Office of State Parks! We have updated our Logo.

Well hello from the land of rain and flooding... (here at **Walter Jacobs Memorial Nature Park** we have had 10.79" of rain in May and 32.64 year-to-date). But we are beaming as we get to finally re-open our visitor center building. On June 2 we are finally welcoming the public back through our doors. Yes, with current COVID-19 precautions. WE have started to schedule a good number of outreaches and some on site programs including our Wild Child Outdoor Skills Camp (we will do this camp two times) and our Wild Child Nature Art Camp (which will also be done two times). We also have a Family Adventure Day planned. It feels so good to be doing in person programming once again. We have filled our vacant part-time Naturalist position! Joe Drane, one of our long-time volunteers for Night Hikes and special programs has joined our team and we are excited to have him. Joe has worked for the Shreveport Aquarium for the past 3 years. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences with emphasis in Field and Organismal Biology from LSU and is a Certified Interpretive Guide credential holder.



We are continuing having meetings with planners and architects for the new building but as in these projects seem to move very slow in the beginning, we are trying to remain patient.

(Hulya at Water Resources Festival booth photo & Dillon Soderstrom at a booth at Caddo Common for Uncommon Weekend)



Marty Young from **LSUS Pioneer Heritage Center** reports:

In 2002, the LSUS Pioneer Heritage Center was donated the Riverfront Mission of First Baptist Church Shreveport, Louisiana. The Mission was to serve as one of 7 points of interpretation at the Center. The chapel was originally built by First Baptist Church Shreveport in an area referred to the Batture, just outside of downtown Shreveport on the banks of the Red River. The Batture was a strip of land where up to 150 plus people who had been displaced by The Depression, had decided to live. In 1935, through donations and volunteer labor the construction of the Mission was completed. It was called "Riverfront Mission" by those who attended.



The Chapel needed much restoration work after it was moved to the LSUS campus. First Baptist Church offered up a small amount of



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LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued

funds to kick start the restoration and the building was stabilized and it was used for a time as part of the tours offered at the Pioneer Heritage Center. As the years progressed more and more problems arose with the structure. Roof and soffit damage and rot became apparent and the most tragic discovery was a massive subterranean termite infestation. The building was deemed not safe for public use. Treatment for the termites was done over several years and the building is now primed for a restoration and refurbishment. Once the work is completed, the Riverfront Mission will serve as the welcome center and interpretation starting point for all tours conducted at the LSU Pioneer Heritage Center. This project has been made possible by the administration at Louisiana State University Shreveport.



Mark Brink from Poverty Point World Heritage Site reports:

In this time of transition, interpretation at Poverty Point World Heritage Site is making a return to more regular, in-person programming. We are not yet holding any hands-on demos for visitors to try things out for themselves, but our interpretive rangers are keeping busy. This is especially true as field trips are returning to the site; as of this week, we are seeing a big increase in the number of small school groups and other entities wanting to have a special experience at Poverty Point.



Pictured here is Interpretive Ranger Eric Walker demonstrating the use of an atlatl and dart (throwing spear) for hunting larger game.



The Roaming Ranger

At the beginning of 2020 our office hired a traveling interpretive ranger to assist in state wide outreach and educational programming for state parks. In one year she, Isis Longo, has proven to be an incredible addition to the state parks interpretive family. At the beginning of the pandemic our new ranger began working on special projects such as installing pollinator gardens, initiating the native grass and wildflower planting at our sites, updating the Grand Isle S.P. Interpretive exhibits, and consulting with several parks on installing kid's nature trails. In addition to her planning work Isis began providing specialty hikes (birding hikes, foraging hikes, kayak hikes, native plant ID hikes, First Day Hikes) for the public when our nature centers and museums were closed.



(Traveling Ranger Isis Longo at Lake Bistineau State Park waves as she begins her nature hike with a park visitors.)

Isis is currently planning two Native American Heritage Day programs, coordinating with the Louisiana Master Gardeners on planting historically accurate orchards for historic sites, working with several 4-H and scouting groups across the state and planning honey bee education programs to name a few projects. The Office of State Parks is planning to advertise for a second traveling ranger position this year. We will keep you all posted.

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Port Hudson Native Grasses and Wildflowers

As part of our prescribed burn plan the Louisiana Office of State Parks is now seeding Port Hudson State Historic Site and other sites with native grasses and wildflowers for the beautification and habitat enhancement of our parks.

(In the picture provided above is our Deputy Assistant Secretary Cliff Melius (left) with our Natural Resources Manager Britt Evans (right).)

“Native grasses and wildflowers play multiple roles in the landscape at Port Hudson State Historic Site. They provide cover and forge for animals, birds and insects which allows them to flourish. This allows the Office of State Parks more opportunities to teach and provide interpretive programs to the public which in turn provides our guest with better experience. They also provide an aesthetic to the park which adds to the historic landscape that would have existing in the time of the Civil War helping once again to increase the visitor experience. Lastly they provide a fuel source for our yearly controlled burns at the site which have played a major role in being able to plant the native grasses and wildflowers at the park.”

-Clifford Melius
Deputy Assistant Secretary

Get Out and Fish! at Louisiana State Parks

The **Louisiana Office of State Parks** has partnered with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to bring the Get Out and Fish! program to **Bogue Chitto State Park** located in Franklinton, LA and **Forts Randolph and Buhlow State Historic Site** in Pineville. LDWF’s Get Out and Fish! provides easy and inexpensive access to quality fishing at locations close to cities and towns. The idea behind this program is to introduce new anglers to the sport of fishing. The program uses volunteers from the Aquatic Volunteer Instructors Program to assist in educating new anglers as well as seasoned anglers on Louisiana fish conservation and fishing opportunities.

Bogue Chitto S.P. and Forts Randolph-Buhlow SHS have been stocked with rainbow trout and channel catfish.

Rebecca Larkins reports the **Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges Complex**, surrounding areas of New Orleans, LA, have been connecting with our public through virtual programs every Friday at 10 a.m. CST on the Refuges Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/SoutheastLouisiana/> These Junior Ranger at Home activities are geared to keep families and visitors connected to nature throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The Refuges trails have seen an increase to visitation throughout the pandemic and are America’s #nearbynature. We ask that all of our visitors continue to recreate responsibly and to view our Refuges websites before visiting. At this time the Bayou LaCombe Visitor Center remains closed and we are hopeful to reopen by the end of the summer 2021. Refuge Rangers are available for programming and environmental education programs, for more information contact Visitor Services Manager Becky Larkins at 985/882-2025 or e-mail rebecca_larkins@fws.gov.

LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued

Junior Rangers at Home activities: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Big_Branch_Marsh/Cosa_JuniorRangerActivities.html

Marvin Steinback, Port Hudson State Historic Site reports:

This morning, as with many mornings, I weigh my options and plunge forward into the light rain from the dryness of my car's front seat. Clint Eastwood is credited with, "If you think it's going to rain, it will," So with that quote in mind, I work my way through the damp and dripping tree line in an attempt to photograph and record the gorgeously colored singing yellow and black male Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*). As I duck and dodge the branches of the trees and shrubs, I get a face full of stringy and sticky spider web; at the same time, my left leg gets hung up on the sharp-pointed spiny needles of a wild rose lurking in the grassy thicket. I struggle with the thought of not being able to get the photo of the bird that keeps flying back and forth enticing me (at least in my mind) to find it in the grass. This spring and during the month of May, Cliff Melius, Britt Evans, Isis Longo, Marvin Steinback, and Daniel Goyer spent time working on habitat improvement projects at Port Hudson State Historic Site. Cliff and Britt reseeded an area of controlled burn with a mixture of native



Daniel installing bird house

plant and grass seed. Isis, Daniel, and Marvin worked on a pollinator garden at the visitor center using native plants. One day we spent the day installing nesting boxes in hope of helping the declining populations of Carolina Chickadees (*Parus carolinensis*) and Prothonotary Warblers (*Protonotaria citrea*) in the southeast.



LDWF large beech tree

As part of the park's ongoing habitat improvement projects, Wildlife and Fisheries botanist Brian Early and an intern visited the park and spent the morning with Britt, Isis, and Marvin walking through the forest identifying invasive species, recommending treatments, collecting specimens, and assessing the surrounding forest. A huge American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) caught Brian's attention and he measured the diameter of this huge but fragile tree. I learned that the eco-region is known as the East Gulf Coastal Plain Southern Loess Bluff Forest which is a unique forest ecosystem, wow! So much to learn for the upcoming nature hikes.

In other news, as the Governor's COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed and vaccine use is up, we at **Port Hudson SHS** have seen a growing number of Mississippi riverboat cruise tours stopping at the park and learning about some of Louisiana's and Port Hudson's Civil War history. Currently, we are providing at least



Installing Fencing on Pollinator Garden (top), Planting Pollinator Plants (bottom)

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LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued

three to four artillery or musket demonstrations each week, other state historic sites in the Felicianas are also seeing an increase of bus tours and visitation.

Since it is still raining this morning I am going to close with some wise words from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "The best thing one can do when it is raining, is to let it rain." By the way, I did get a photo of the elusive Common Yellowthroat, but I blew the highlights and overexposed the shot, shucks. Maybe next time.



Please join me in welcoming two new Conservation Educators to the Central Region beginning their duties May 1st.

Sam Stewart, new Conservation Educator Central Region (North District).

Sam comes to the Conservation Educator position from his current role as a Naturalist at the Runge Nature Center. He holds a B.S. in Natural Resources from Missouri State University and has experience in teaching both outdoor skills and interpretive programs. A Gasconade County native Sam enjoys time on the water and in the woods. Paddling, fly fishing, and adventuring with his wife Morgan, are some of his favorite ways to connect with nature. Sam is a trainer for the Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) program through the National Association of Interpretation and will also represent Education Branch as a member of the instructor corps for Essentials of Canoeing and Kayaking, an activity that he knows well. North district includes Saline, Cooper, Howard, Audrain, Callaway and Montgomery Counties.



Sam Stewart

Jenna Stiek, new Conservation Educator Central Region (Boone Co. District).

Jenna comes to the Conservation Educator position from her current role as Stream Team Biologist. She holds a M.S. in Teaching Biological Sciences from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where her capstone project was: How will Fishing Programs Introduced in School Setting Positively Impact a Student's Interest in Fishing?. Jenna holds a B.S. in Comprehensive Biology and Secondary Education from

MO Report continued
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Jenna Stiek

Concordia University Nebraska. Her duties have included presenting efficient and effective nature-based educational programs to diverse audiences, coordinating water quality monitoring courses to staff and volunteers, and collaborating with Education Branch staff on many initiatives. Jenna has a strong desire to educate people of all ages on the importance of our natural resources and the beneficial and proactive involvement they can take in their communities. She looks forward to working with educators, students, and citizens to help them discover all Missouri as to offer. In Her free time, She enjoys being outside in nature, participating in water activities, exercising, and spending time with family and friends. Boone County District will include responsibilities with the new Boone County Nature School.

Leah Eden reports that there are two new Conservation Educators to the SW Education Team for the Missouri Department of Conservation; **Morgan Rodery** and **Lyle Whittaker**.

My name is Morgan Rodery and I am very eager to join the MDC team as a Conservation Educator. I have previously worked for MDC as an Angler Education Assistant and loved every minute of it. I am finishing up my master's degree in Biology at Missouri State University where I study animal communities in prairies throughout Missouri as well as science communication. I also received my bachelor's degree from Missouri State University in Wildlife Conservation and Management.



Morgan Rodery

I have been a lifelong conservationist and it has carried over into both my education and career goals. As a kid, I was always bringing different animals into the house to show them off to my parents and siblings. They were not always as enthused as I was to wake up to a lizard being excitedly shoved in their face at 6 AM. I am grateful to have wonderful parents who allowed me to drag all sorts of "creepy crawlies" into our house over the years and have always fostered my love for nature. I have not changed much since then, but now I am lucky enough to have the opportunity to turn my love for sharing nature with others into a career.

I have volunteered in the education department at Dickerson Park Zoo since I was 13 years old where I participated in education programs and worked to promote conservation awareness to zoo guests using animal artifacts and animal ambassadors. I am currently a lab instructor for General Biology at Missouri State University, where I get to teach students about the hands-on side of biology. These experiences have helped to solidify my love for conservation education.

My fiancée, Connor, and I are also extremely active in the outdoors. Some of our favorite outdoor hobbies are rock climbing, hiking, camping, and kayaking. My dog, Buck (pictured), is my best hiking buddy. He is always up for an adventure and we have been all over the country together. I am very excited to start this new adventure with MDC. Conservation education has always been something I have been passionate about and I hope that I can truly make a difference for the folks of Missouri through this position.

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MISSOURI REPORT

CONTINUED

Lyle Whittaker

I am so glad to be part of the MDC team as a Conservation Educator! I have wanted to work for MDC for as long as I can remember growing up on a diversified livestock farm in Fair Grove, Missouri. On that farm, my love of the outdoors, hunting, and fishing were fostered and grew into the passion I now have for Missouri's natural resources. My involvement in the National Future Farmers of America National Forestry contest as a senior in high school helped me recognize my passion for learning and sharing that knowledge with others. These experiences led me to pursue and receive a degree in Agriculture Education in May 1990 from Missouri State University. I have been a high school agriculture educator in Missouri for the last 31 years and have served as a per course instructor for Missouri State University. My life calling is being an educator and I am more than excited to use my knowledge, skills, and talents to work with the MDC team in educating teachers, students, and citizens about outdoor activities, conservation science, and resource management.



Lyle Whittaker

I have been married to my wife, Jania, of 30 years and we have two grown children. Our daughter, Samantha, graduated from the University of Missouri with a degree in Economics and is employed by the Alzheimer's Association in Springfield, Missouri. Our son, Ty, graduated from Ozark Technical Community College and is employed by the City of Joplin as a fireman. Faith is an important part of our lives and we are very active at First Baptist Church of Miller, where we serve in various leadership roles. I cannot mention family without introducing my best four-legged friend and water fowling companion, my lab dog, I have trained since a pup, "Rio." As a family, we enjoy boating and fishing at Stockton Lake, working outside, and standing around the piano at home singing. We live in Miller, Missouri where we raise a small herd of registered Angus cattle that we have exhibited at many local, state, and national cattle shows.

My personality is easy going and I would like to think I can be a little humorous at times. I am a team player, always willing to learn, and grow professionally. I look forward to developing relationships with the MDC team members to accomplish the most important task of educating others through the Discover Nature curriculums, Hunter Education, MONASP, and other public programs to help encourage all ages of people to get involved in enjoying our vast Missouri outdoors.

Gov. Mike Parson, Lt. Gov. Mike Kehoe, and the Office of Administration presented the 2020 Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity (GAQP) to a team from The award acknowledges accomplishments that serve as an example of continuous improvement, quality, efficiency and productivity in Missouri state government. All winning nominations were required to meet criteria related to effectiveness, responsiveness and efficiency that would serve as a model of excellence for other work teams in state government. The Missouri State Parks Virtual Interpretation Project was selected as a winner in the "Customer Service" category, and team members were honored during a special ceremony in the Missouri Capitol's First Floor Rotunda on May 13.

The department responded to COVID-19 and the necessity to engage in social distancing by finding ways to allow park users to continue to explore the Missouri state park system virtually. DNR team members found

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ways to maintain engagement with park users through non-traditional means with the goal of inspiring future in-person visits.

The primary goals of the project were to provide entertaining and educational videos to be used in lesson plans, to replace in-person programs and events with dynamic virtual ones that were just as inspiring and enjoyable, and to do so in a timely and responsive manner that allowed us to maintain relevancy with our customers.

From the time social distancing measures were implemented, Missouri State Parks posted 49 videos on its three main social media platforms. These videos have received nearly 200,000 views, and the state parks' social media accounts have gained more than 17,000 new followers.



Team members who received an award are Michael Busekrus, Cecelia Brueggemann, Jill Bryant, Mary Crowell, Alison Dubbert, Chris Edmondson, Miranda Fredrick, Dawn Fredrickson, Carrie Hammond, Dustin Hillis, Katy Holmer, Debbie Newby, Tiffany Patterson, John Peterson, Andrew Richmond, Melanie Robinson-Smith, Melissa Simmons, Kevin Smith, Lucas Schwartz, Alicia Wieberg and Rebecca Young.

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.



How about these lottery prizes? A day as a bear biologist. Up close with American alligators. A guided birding trip at **Red Slough Wildlife Management Area**. A snorkel trip with an ODWC biologist. These are just 4 of the Outdoor Oklahoma Adventures up for grabs for 14 lucky winners. Tickets for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation fundraiser, which benefits wildlife conservation and public hunting and fishing in Oklahoma, may be purchased until August 6.

<https://www.wildlifedepartment.com/outdoorok/adventures>

The Fall BioBlitz! Oklahoma event returns on Oct. 1-3, at **Roman Nose State Park** in north central Oklahoma. Details will be posted later this summer on <https://biosurvey.ou.edu/bioblitzok/>

That same weekend, the very small town of Honobia, pronounced ON'-uh-bee', will hold its annual **Big-foot Festival and Conference**. A local lawmaker has recently done his best to publicize the event by sponsoring state legislation to establish a bigfoot hunting season in Oklahoma. It seems the nationwide attention failed to mention that it promotes hunting with cameras, not weapons.

Quartz Mountain State Park and Resort Lodge is scheduled for a grand re-opening this summer, pushing the annual Summer Arts Institute back to July or August. Since 2002, the state park and lodge has been owned and operated by the Oklahoma Board of Regents, as the Quartz Mountain Nature Park, and the Resort Arts and Conference Center. Citing budget insufficiencies, the board returned the park and lodge to the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department's State Parks division in October 2020. Renovations are nearly complete, and the new park and lodge are hiring for many positions.

"Big Hike for Bigfoot" was the title of the April 3rd guided nature hike at Oklahoma City's **Martin Park Nature Center**. "Find and photograph" was the program description that accompanied that teaser of a title.

Martin Park Nature Center is located on the northern edge of Oklahoma City, close to the neighboring city of Edmond. Many Edmond residents live closer to Martin Park than residents of much of Oklahoma City. Apparently that is not enough nature in the increasingly urbanized center of the state.

Edmond is already known for its 200+ pieces of public art. There are currently six art tours mapped out for self-guided exploration by foot, bicycle, or car, and a guided tour available. (<https://visitedmondok.com/art.php>) Apparently that is not enough art, either.

Committee work is proceeding on a proposal to establish a nature park in Edmond, OK. Citizen input was gathered this spring for a city park that is not designed around playgrounds or sports fields. A new residential/

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commercial development is called “Art in Nature” -- look for nature-themed sculptures placed at spots alongside a wooded nature trail.

“Courage and Conundrums” was the attention-catching title of the Edmond Historical Society’s public school Spring Break activities in mid-March. The museum programs featured an authentic 1889 covered wagon that served as the focal point of a fun-filled exploration of how early-day pioneers dressed, slept and ate as they traveled to Oklahoma Territory.

Here come the bulldozers! Tulsa’s **Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art**, AKA “The Gilcrease,” will close for three years at the end of the day on July 5th. A new museum building will be erected in its place, one with enough gallery space to display a larger percentage of its world class collection of art and artifacts. A combination of public and private funding will also build trails and outdoor meeting space. Until the museum reopens in 2024, The Gilcrease will continue its mission through virtual and outreach community programming.

<https://www.kjrh.com/news/local-news/gilcrease-museum-unveils-concept-design-for-new-building>

The **National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum** in Oklahoma City hosted a living history program on April 29th. The re-enactor portrayed the life of York, the enslaved black man that was a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Congratulations to **Angelina Stancampiano**. She was recently elected the President-elect of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society, for a 2-year term of office. Angelina is currently the naturalist at **Sequoiah State Park** in eastern Oklahoma, and one of the coordinators of BioBlitz! Oklahoma.

“No moss grows on a rolling stone.” Retired naturalist **Neil Garrison** (OKC) has continued to lead a very active life. In late April, he conducted a flintknapping demo for the Ida Freeman Elementary School in Edmond, OK. In late May, he led a birding hike for the park patrons at Roman Nose State Park (Watonga, OK). On the second Saturday of each and every month, Neil has been volunteering at OKC’s Martin Park Nature Center -- i.e., he leads a birding hike. The holiday weekend at the end of the month of May saw Neil doing a flintknapping demo at The National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum (OKC) as part of the museum’s “Chuckwagon Festival.”

It is with regret that we announce the recent death of **Steve Wylie**, the former director of the OKC Zoo from 1985 to 2000, after battling COVID-19 for two and a half months. From his obituary: “Few zoo directors have been as well liked by the American zoo community as Steve Wylie.”

We close with this short video from **Amy Morris** at **Oxley Nature Center**, documenting a quintessential moment of summer:

<https://www.facebook.com/1242348481/posts/10219173675913052/>



Richard G. Powe, a master's candidate of Applied Geography at Texas State University submitted his thesis a *Comparison of Professional Positions and Duties Between State Park Peace Officers and Game Wardens for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department* in May of this year. A literature review, survey and interviews were conducted to explore the differences between the job descriptions of game wardens and park police, compensation differences, how each handles the protection of our natural resources, as well as interactions with the policing authorities of the State of Texas and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). Interviews conducted helped reveal how conservation officers deal with culture and today's society—learning the behavioral characteristics that distinguish between a state park police officer and game warden for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). Powe invites all interested to read the thesis (link provided above) and contact him for further information at richardgpowe@gmail.com.

Kimberly Ogden, Education Coordinator of the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary Program at the Nueces Delta Preserve has hosted some successful in-person field trips for specialty high school classes. In addition, Ogden reports, "Our Nature Story Time is beginning to pick up! The theme to our May story time was "Mud Between the Toes" and more families attended! Over the summer we will host two nature story time programs each month and we hope to continue to build the program. On World Migratory Bird Day (May 8th) the Coastal Bend



Audubon Society conducted a bird count while visiting the Delta.

The Delta Education volunteers and staff hosted Foster Family Day at the Delta. These sweet families, counselors, and respite providers explored some wonders of the Delta, plus the parents



shared a time of support surrounded by nature. Delta staff co-facilitated the City Nature Challenge with City of Corpus Christi Oso Preserve staff. Education staff have completed First Aid/ CPR recertification. Although we are now down to two staff members instead of a team of three, we are working extra hard to re-

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build our programs, particularly with schools. We are finishing some Outdoor Classroom grant projects at two schools, and it is exciting to see those educational communities make their ideas come to life. We continue to strive to connect to our followers on social media. We are looking forward to upcoming summer workshops and conference presentations, as well as summer outreach for our regular programming and requested presentations. We are thankful to be scheduling 2021-2022 school year field trips already for several districts, some virtual and some in-person.” You can reach Kimberly at kogden@cbbep.org and may check out the Preserve’s website at <https://www.nuecesdeltapreserve.org>.

Lari Jo Edwards, Director of Inner Naturalist writes that she has left the estuary program with the Nueces Delta Preserve to start her own business teaching nature journaling. Fridays this fall, Lari Jo will host a 15-minute nature journaling “how to” lesson for students and teachers. She says, “I am here for all your training and nature journaling needs”. You can reach her at yourinnernaturalist@gmail.com and her website <https://www.inner-naturalist.com>. I know we all wish her the very best with her new business endeavor!



*Sunrise - Port Aransas Beach, Texas
by Jerrel Geisler*

Enjoy your Summer!

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. The national office for NAI is located in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Their website is www.interpnet.com.

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DEADLINES FOR *VISIONS* ARE:

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