

# VISIONS

NAI REGION 6 - SOUTH CENTRAL

WINTER 2021/2022 • VOLUME 35, ISSUE 4

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# VISIONS

**Newsletter for  
NAI REGION 6 - SOUTH CENTRAL  
Winter 2021/2022 • VOLUME 35, ISSUE 4**

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*Some cover and title photos  
from [Dreamstime.com](https://www.dreamstime.com)*

# Neil Garrison Shorts:

Snippets of thought-provoking wisdom and useful information scribed by one of our favorite contributors

## *BATS WERE ONCE CONSIDERED A POTENTIAL WEAPON IN WORLD WAR II*

As strange as it now might seem, there once was a time in world history when overly-aggressive people deviously dreamed up ways to weaponize a creature as innocent as the night-flying bat. Albeit, it was during the years 1941 to 1945.

The whole world was at war. Otherwise-sensible people were spending way too much time figuring out methods to impose wreck and havoc on the other people of this planet.

The thinking went like this: what if we attach some tiny fire bombs to a bunch of bats and then release them in the skies over the paper and wood homes on mainland Japan? The assumption is that the bats would seek out daytime roosts when the morning sun rose again in the east. Likely as not, the bats would ensconce themselves up under the roof eaves of these tinderbox places of human abode.

“What came of all of that?” you might ask. The answer is somewhat comical, in its own quirky way. U.S. military officials conducted a test in the central part of the U.S. The weaponized bats managed to escape their confines when they were

not designed to do so. Fires got started where fires were not intended to be. The commanding general’s brand new automobile inadvertently got set ablaze.

Flames erupted in adjacent military facilities at the weapons proving grounds. The Empire of Japan scored one for the home team without them even having to lift a finger.

Shortly thereafter, U.S. military strategists put the kibosh on this experiment in insanity.

So ends this tragic and dark chapter in our nation’s history of its interactions with the natural world.

## *EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON*

Nobody would ever refer to me as a walking encyclopedia. I don’t have all of the answers. Many aspects of the natural world escape my understanding.

What I do know is this: in almost every instance, Ma Nature does things for a reason; she doesn’t just willy-nilly do things just for the fun of it.

Let’s consider the blackjack oak, it grows in abundance in the Cross Timbers plant community that is shared by many states in our region.

Please explain to me why this

one specific example of native tree species has the very peculiar aspect of tenaciously retaining all of her lower tree branches. That growth habit seems to fly in the face of the fact that these lower branches on the tree are long-since dead seem to fulfill no useful purpose.

This one has me really puzzled. It’s pretty darn obvious why these lower tree branches are dead. No life-giving sunshine can penetrate to that part of the tree, so the tree has jettisoned her fueling of water and nutrients to these now-useless tree limbs.

But still, why does the tree hold onto these tree limbs? If the tree limbs were, instead, allowed to fall to the ground, creatures in the soil would quickly initiate the decomposition process and allow the dead tree material to be converted into beneficial mulch.

I’ve also got to wonder why the tree has all of this fuel close to the earth’s surface where wild-fires could quickly use the material, ladder-like, to climb up into the tree’s living canopy.

I engaged the tree in conversation to ask, but all that I got in return was a mute silence.

*See Neil Garrison, Page 5*

# Neil Garrison (from page 4)

## BETTER LIFE POSSIBLE IF YOU COOK WITH LARD

Like many others, I am forced to fight a daily battle with the pernicious malady called diabetes. A lot of that challenge stems from dietary choices. "If it tastes good, spit it out!" is the meal time marching orders with which diabetes sufferers have to contend.

That being said, you would least expect me to be one of the prominent cheerleaders for the merits of lard as the kitchen ingredient of choice.

Don't eat it, for gosh sakes! Instead, use it as a component

for a batch of homemade bird food. Feeding the wild birds in your home's backyard can be a valuable benefit to your overall mental health.

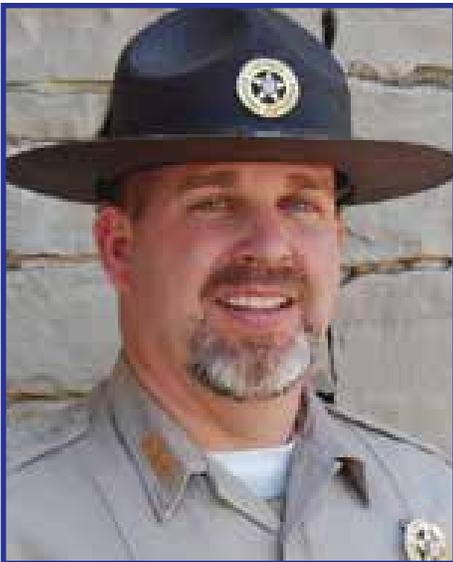
Let's begin. Measure out equal parts of lard, the chunky variety of peanut butter, corn meal and flour. You'll also need a double dose of oats (the "quick" variety) and a double dose of non-medicated "chick starter." (Your local farm/ranch store will most probably have the latter ingredient in stock.). The initiation of the procedure is to mix the lard and peanut butter together; doing this with some heat will aid the mixing task. After that, it is a simple-enough process of slowly adding

the other components to the mix. Easy-peasy! You're done.

This homemade bird food will be sort of the texture of granola and will require a specialized bird feeder that consists of a tray with a rain hood above. The addition of rain water is anathema to your efforts to provide a nutritious meal to your backyard songbirds.

There is no end to the amount of pleasure you will derive from watching the birds outside of your home's window as you kick back with the morning's cup of Joe and you proceed to read the newspaper.

It is a sure prescription for fun.



NAI Region Six Director - Jay Schneider, Arkansas

I hope this newsletter finds all our members enjoying some great winter weather.

As I write this it is 52 degrees, and the sun is shining – Happy

## NAI Region Six Directors Report December 2021

### 2022 Workshop

The 2022 Region 6 Workshop in February hosted by Columbia, MO is looking to be a great investment in our members, I hope to see many familiar faces and welcome new members into our family. See you soon!

If you are needing financial assistance, please e-mail Amber at [myersa@gmail.com](mailto:myersa@gmail.com) as we have a way to help our members attend.

Do Today Well,

Jay

Winter Solstice! As the shortest day of the year's sun sets, so does my service to Region Six. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as your director, in so many ways, too many to mention! Seeing many new members in my NAI family is the best part and seeing the many family members I have had the privilege to know, over the years, is what I look forward to in the future.

I am thrilled to hand over the director's reins to Amber Meyers and I look forward to seeing the continued growth of NAI Region Six and all my family in it.

# 2021 NAI National Conference Professional Awards acknowledge recipients from Region 6

**T**hree Region 6 members were recognized during the NAI National Conference in Palm Springs, California in November 2021.

Please join the Region 6 Board and *Visions* editor in congratulating them.

[Editor's note - Pictured with award recipients are NAI President Jay Miller (Ark.) and NAI Executive Director Milward Simpson. Clark was unable to attend Palm Springs conference.]



## President's Award

**John Miller,  
Missouri Department of  
Conservation - Retired**

## Master Interpretive Manager

**Clark Hancock,  
Trepertp Consulting, Austin,  
TX**



## Master Frontline Interpreter

**Jerrel Geisler,  
Harris County Precinct 4  
Parks, Houston, TX**



## **State reports**

Arkansas - Chris Pistole

Louisiana - Rusty Scarborough

Kansas - Amber Myers

Missouri - Michelle Soenksen

Oklahoma - Amanda Markey

Texas - Erin Holley



# ARKANSAS REPORT

Hank Mallery, Chief of Interpretation at President William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home NHS:

*(Editor's note - Hank recently reached out to Jay and [Ken] about the Region 6 annual conference in 2023 and shared the following info. Welcome to the humble and hospitable Region 6 Hank! We're glad to have you here!)*

We are about 90 minutes from Hot Springs. I've been running Grand Canyon National Park's Training and Recruitment Program for the past 5 years and have been out of the Interp game for a bit. I've been active in NAI in the past both attending and presenting at National Conferences as well as having been CHI and CIG Certified. I've been in my new position as Chief of Interpretation for about a month now. We are bringing in 2 new Park Guides in December and will have a 4 person Interpretation Team here at that point and I want to get them excited about participating in NAI at both the Regional and National levels.

I was a college student with a few semesters under my belt when I started looking into the National Park Service as a career. In the summer of 1988, I got my first seasonal park ranger job at Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky. My job was guiding large groups of visitors through various parts of the cave telling stories about the resource in an appealing way that would hopefully drive my audience towards stewardship - sharing my belief that all humans are responsible for the world and should take care of it. After that first summer I was hooked and knew that the National Park Service was the career of choice for me. I continued to work as a seasonal park ranger for the next several years while simultaneously pursuing a college degree. I'd work a couple of seasons and save up money to take a few classes then go to school for a semester. I worked at the Statue of Liberty, Federal Hall and Castle Clinton in New York City and eventually got a job up in Boston, Massachusetts doing Freedom Trail Tours. While there I was offered a 4-year Term position and for the last two years of that I asked for Tuesdays and Thursdays to be my days off and I went to school on those days finally getting my degree from the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

Soon after Graduation I took another seasonal park ranger position with Lowell National Historical Park which led to my first permanent position with them. From there I went on to work at the C&O Canal, the Washington Mall and Monuments, and President's Park eventually winding my way west of the Mississippi as Lead Park Ranger for the Flagstaff Area National Monuments to my position as Workforce Enhancement Specialist for Grand Canyon National Park where a big part of my job managing their Recruitment Program has been helping other people discover if the National Park

**AR Report continued  
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Service might be a good career path for them. I am looking forward to new challenges of working in the Midwest Region at WICL managing the Park Interpretive Program. I am a strong believer in Mission-Based Interpretation which relies on creating and sharing compelling resource-based stories designed “for the enjoyment, education and Inspiration of this and future generations”.

Chris Pistole, Park Interpreter at Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area:

DeGray Lake Resort State Park Interpreter Kayla Gomance and I recently participated in the NAI virtual CIG trainer course. It was 40 hours over 2 weeks on Zoom, but it was worth the time! Mystina Swaim, Park Interpreter at Lake Ft. Smith State Park, also recently completed the online training. The three of us will be joining the list of CITs we already have for Arkansas State Parks as soon as all our requirements are met.

Courtney King, former desk clerk at Hobbs, recently won 3rd place in the NAI interpretive media awards for her very creative digital scavenger hunt/program, The Untraceables, which is about the leave no trace principles. Congrats to Courtney!

Another National Award was taken home by this Arkansas organization!

Sheri Storie, director for the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission, sent this press release:

Explore Pine Bluff, the tourism division of the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission, received a first-place award and recognition from the National Association for Interpretation for digital works created in 2020. The first-place award, in the category of digital media, included three components of online experiences that were developed as the pandemic brought travel and tourism to a halt.

“In response to travel concerns and restrictions, we developed several virtual experiences so visitors could continue to uncover Pine Bluff’s powerful and fascinating history in a safe and innovative way,” said Sheri Storie, director for the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission. “Through the creative genius of Jimmy Cunningham, interpretive coordinator for A&P, and Jonathan Daniel, founder of RhythmRadius.com, 60 video vignettes were created so visitors to our website could experience the incredible untold stories of Pine Bluff. The collection of videos, housed on our website at [ExplorePineBluff.com](https://www.explorepinebluff.com), includes the Delta Civil Rights Legacy Trail, WA&P Radio Show, and Delta Cinema World.” NAI’s media awards promote excellence in the delivery of natural, cultural, and historical interpretive services. Professionals in the field of interpretation and media development judged the entries, and determined that Explore Pine Bluff’s submission exhibited an outstanding application of interpretive principles, communicated the intended message effectively and in an appropriate manner, and effectively utilized media principles to support the interpretive message.

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## Native American representation in government

*The new Director of the National Park Service is Charles F. “Chuck” Sams III. (Sams is a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Oregon.)*

*The Department of Interior is led by Secretary Deb Haaland (a member of the Pueblo of Laguna, New Mexico). They are both the first Native Americans to hold these positions.*

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### ***Editor's Update:***

As of January 1, 2022, we welcome a new Region 6 Director, Amber Myers, Assistant Director of the Milford Nature Center in Junction City, KS.

We will have an introductory article in the Spring issue of Visions.

In the meantime Amber's contact information is:

[Amber.myers@ks.gov](mailto:Amber.myers@ks.gov)

Milford Nature Center 785-238-3108  
3415 Hatchery Dr. Junction City, KS 66441

Please join us in welcoming Amber.

# LOUISIANA REPORT

## Mansfield State Historic Site

In October, Mansfield SHS had their “Ghosts of the Past” program just before Halloween. During the program, Park staff and volunteers gave nighttime guided tours of the battlefield, during which reenactors in period dress showed the guests the often gruesome aspects of the aftermath of a Civil War battle. In November, visitors came back out during the day for our “Walk with a Soldier” program, a special guided tour of the battlefield led by our guest living historian in full Civil War uniform. This program also included musket firing demos and explanations of the various gear and equipment a soldier would carry on the march.

On the second Saturday of December, site interpretive ranger **Aaron Gates** gave his annual “Christmas on the Homefront” presentation, where he discussed the aspects of Civil War life during the holidays for Northern and Southern families whose loved ones were off fighting in the war.

(Mansfield SHS volunteer discussing Civil War weapons and equipment used by soldiers.)



(Mansfield SHS interpretive ranger Aaron Gates giving his Christmas talk on where the modern Santa originated.)

## Audubon State Historic Site

Audubon SHS held its “A Jane Austen Christmas” nighttime program on Saturday December 4th and saw the highest visitation yet for this program. The program also showed a much more diverse crowd than usual and trended towards a younger family demographic. Activities included a period dance class, tours of Oakley House, Dulcimers, chestnut roasting, wassail and more. The complimentary Friday “A Jane Austen Christmas School Day” saw over 400 students in attendance making it the second busiest school day program that the site has ever held in December.

**LA Report continued  
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# LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued

(Oakley House at Audubon SHS decorated for the Jane Austin Christmas program)



**Louisiana State Arboretum** at Chicot State Park Guided Canoe Tours were very popular this year with visitors to Chicot State Park in Ville Platte, LA. Tours were offered from March to October and gave visitors a chance to see the lake and its inhabitants through three different seasons of the year.



Louisiana State Arboretum and Chicot State Park staff along with volunteers from the community cleaned out and replaced wood duck nesting boxes in Chicot Lake. This year's replacement boxes were provided by the DOVE program (DeSoto Occupation Vocational Education). This program is run by DeSoto Parish Schools and gives students with disabilities an opportunity to learn important life skills.



Home school children enjoying a guided hike at the Louisiana State Arboretum. Several home school groups visited this year learning about topics ranging from trees and birds to insects and reptiles.

LA Report continued  
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# LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued

## Forts Randolph-Buhlow State Historic Site

Forts Randolph-Buhlow SHS was host to this year's City of Pineville's Christmas parade. The parade returned for the first time since 2019. It was a huge success with the brightly lit Louisiana Tourism float being the star of the show. Despite the cool weather, many folks showed up to stand in the elements and watch all of the bands and floats go by, throwing candy, beads and other trinkets. Welcome back, Pineville Christmas parade, we missed you!



## Teacher's Guides

Louisiana's state board of elementary and secondary education voted to adopt a new set of state science standards on March 8, 2017. The new standards will take effect in the 2018-2019 school year, but were not fully implemented by formal educators until 2020 (Pandemic year). I was able to update our Field Trip information according to what the new state standards are for science and social studies. After speaking with several formal educators and understanding how this simple resource can be used to justify in person field trips I was able to post an update to the OSP web page regarding Field Trip Information. This is still a work in progress as I work with the DCRT education coordinator and field park staff on implementing STEM/STEAM educational info.



VIKING  
RIVER CRUISES

## Viking River Cruises and Louisiana State Historic Sites

The **Louisiana Office of State Parks** is proud to announce that Viking River Cruises will begin historic site tours at Rosedown Plantation SHS, PPWHS, and Audubon SHS in 2022. Guest from the cruise ships will be able to take historic tours and enjoy interpretive demonstrations at these state historic sites as fee based shore excursions.



*(Main house at Rosedown Plantation State Historic Site)*

*(Oakley House at Audubon State Historic Site)*



LA Report continued  
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# LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued



*(Pre-historic Native American tool display at Poverty Point World Heritage Site in Epps)*

## State Parks Positive Comebacks

### Cypremort Point SP Ribbon Cutting

Louisiana State Parks and Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, we unveiled updates to Cypremort Point State Park post storm damage, on November 5. New state of the art concrete deck and fishing area with a kayak launch for those who want to

paddle in Vermilion Bay. New and larger beach area, restored with 18,000 cubic yards of new, native sand. New picnic tables, benches, barbecue grills and palm trees throughout the park.

Finishing touches are underway for a new, 8-foot wide wooden boardwalk that will be more than a quarter of a mile through the swamp on the eastern edge of the park. This new walking trail will allow visitors the opportunity to get out into the marsh to view the native plant life and wildlife. I have been working with the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area on securing a grant to purchase new interpretive signage at the park and along this new walking trail.



*Jimmie Davis SP Ribbon Cutting*



*In the photo is the Office of State Parks*

*Assistant Secretary Brandon Burriss, Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser, and Deputy Assistant Secretary Cliff Melius at annual manager's meeting slash cabin reopening ribbon cutting. The cabins at Jimmie Davis State Park, in central Louisiana, were reopened after being hit by tornadoes and later hurricane Laura.*



Louisiana State Parks is partnering with A Year to Volunteer (Y2V) in 2022 to help rebuild Sam Houston Jones State Park, which was severely damaged by Hurricane Laura in 2020. A Year to Volunteer is an RV centric volunteer organization that rallies together volunteers from all over the country to help improve parks and other community benefiting programs. In March of 2022 Sam Houston Jones SP will host 15 RV's that are currently signed

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# LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued

up, which is 32 people, and 6 RV's are on the wait list. The volunteer project will include building a river boardwalk, pavilions, trail boardwalks, and general trail maintenance and cleanup. Sam Houston Jones State Park which suffered damage from Hurricane Laura is expected to reopen for day use spring of 2022.

## Traveling Ranger Update

Our traveling ranger Isis coordinated a Native American Heritage Day program at Fairview-Riverside State Park along with our interpretive ranger from **Stephanie Huber** (Fontainebleau State Park) and Assistant Park Manager/Interpreter **Mark Brink** (PPWHS). Isis was able to have Grey Hawk Perkins (Storyteller, a teacher, artist and historian of the United Houma Nation) to participate with this program presenting traditional native medical plants and herbs used by the Houma people. The program was a success.

Isis retired from the Louisiana Office of State Parks in October. She still assists parks with special projects including native plant gardens.

We have a new traveling interpretive ranger that has been with Louisiana State Parks for 18 years. We welcome Jennifer Viator from Tickfaw State Park to the administrative office. She will be taking on the role as traveling interpretive ranger. We will keep you posted on her exciting interpretive programming.



*(Isis with Grey Hawk at Native American Heritage Day discussing native plants and how native peoples used them.)*

*(Grey Hawk Perkins)*

*(Mark Brink from Poverty Point World Heritage Site demonstrating the Atlatl with visitors at Fairview-Riverside's Native American Heritage Day program)*



LA Report continued  
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# LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued



Here at **Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park**, we have had a busy Fall. Due to the Delta variant we had to modify our Bugs, Bats & Bones event and turned it into activities each Saturday in October which



included 2 movie nights (we showed Jurassic Park and Jumanji) and three evenings of Night Hikes. We had the best Art in the Park program ever with between 300-400 people in attendance and the event went very smoothly! Next, we had a well-attended Nature Ornament program, which has been the finale of our 2021 year. We recently replace our aging trail benches with new composite wood



construction and the installation of 5 of the 8 benches are complete. We are continuing to plan and prepare for our new construction of the new nature center and are in the process of choosing an exhibit design company. Our entire team is looking forward to an awesome 2022! We are busy getting ready for our next even, our largest of the year! 2022 Owl Night will be happening on February 12, 2022.



## LSUS Pioneer Heritage Museum -- Marty Young

Who were the pioneers that settled the northwest corner of Louisiana? Where did they come from? How did they live? How did they adapt to the untamed frontier? These questions and more can be answered with a visit to the Pioneer Heritage Center. After closing down almost entirely to the public March 2020 due to the pandemic, The LSUS Pioneer Heritage Center was able to re-open its doors in November 2021. The

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# LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued

Center is back to conducting interpretive tours of the facility. "We have already had 8 school tours in the 5 weeks we have been open, that's close to 200 students," said Marty Young Director of the Pioneer Heritage Center. "It's a slow start, but it's a start. We have been counting down the days until children, adults and tourist could start to visit us again."

Children thrive and retain so much more when they can see, hear, touch and smell and experience. Nothing allows that better than a good old fashion field trip. The Center was established in 1977 as a joint project of LSU Shreveport and the Junior League of Shreveport. The buildings, exhibits and trained staff guide visitors through the structures that give insight into the diverse cultural history, the natural environment, and the daily lives of the settlers who lived in the region from the 1830s to the 1930s.



## Poverty Point World Heritage Site -- Mark Brink

Things have been getting back to normal at Poverty Point World Heritage Site as COVID-19 restrictions have been easing up. This archaeological site has become one of the main focuses in 3rd Grade Social Studies in Louisiana. Field trips have returned in a big way because of this. We have been hosting hundreds of students a week for guided hikes and hands-on atlatl demonstrations once again, and it's a really good feeling to be back with in-person interpretation. Behind the scenes, we've been working on updating and enhancing our facilities and interpretation with text and signage updates.

## Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges Complex – Becky Larkins

On Saturday, October 30, 2021, Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges and the Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges, Inc. co-hosted the Boo on the Bayou: a Drive-thru Halloween experience event. This FREE, non-scary, socially distant drive-thru Halloween experience was hosted at the Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex's Headquarters location, the historic Bayou Lacombe Center. Five stations highlighted native Louisiana spiders, snakes, alligators, bats and spooky sounds. These stations encouraged participants to learn about these unique, non-spooky animals in a safe socially-distant environment. Participants were also able to view live wildlife at some of the stations and receive a goody bag courtesy of our Friends. The goody bags included an owl pellet dissection kit along with stickers, pencil, temporary tattoos and some candy. Thank you to our station presenters, refuge staff, volunteers and friends who made this event possible where over 540 visitors participated and 216 goody bags were handed out to youth.

LA Report continued  
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# LOUISIANA REPORT

Continued

## LA State Parks -- Jessica Dixon

We are still hosting the Story Trail at Red River National Wildlife Refuge in Bossier City. This project is perfect for these trying times of COVID-19! We will continue the Story Trail into 2023. We installed a mailbox after the last book pages at the end of the Story Trail. Ranger Terri put a journal and colored pencils inside the mailbox for people to write about their Story Trail experience, here are cropped photos of a few journal pages in November.

### Terri Jacobson

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Red River National Wildlife Refuge

61 79  
Sharon and Monica were  
here Nov 11, 2021  
Had a good walk!  
  
HE FROM THE 13 Nov 21  
RUSSELL FAMILY!  
God Bless!

I liked the story and  
the trail. I rode my bike  
and stopped to read the story  
pages. It was very entertaining.  
-Wylee  
I had a wonderful time on  
the trail. The story was great!  
-April 11/13/21

11-24-2021  
I had so much  
fun doing it I will definitely  
come again. My name is Nora  
and I had so much fun  
doing it.  
-Vera & Nora

11-13-21 Our first time doing  
the story trail, such a fun  
morning.  
Kylie, Mr  
I like it, will do it later  
Michael

we are having so much fun  
we love it here.  
Liam,  
Sally  
Willis

11/13/21  
We had a great time.  
We saw several different  
footprints. We saw deer  
tracks + hog tracks.  
We also saw a grasshopper  
+ a chickadee bird.  
Thank you for the book  
trail  
Myri, Kaitlyn + Gabe  
11/13/21  
J P P T H

# MISSOURI

## REPORT



**Becky Matney** announces that **Sarah Easton** has accepted the position of Naturalist at the Runge Conservation Nature Center with a start date of November 1. Sarah has been the part-time Naturalist at Runge since March of this year. Her previous employment includes University of Missouri Extension Youth Program Associate for 4-H, substitute educator, Education Interpreter for the St. Louis Zoo, and Farm Educator with the Jefferson Farm and Garden, University of Missouri. Sarah has a Bachelor of Science in Forestry Degree and a Master of Science in Agricultural Leadership, Communication and Education from University of Missouri.

She has extensive experience in presenting and developing outdoor skills programs and natural history interpretive programs for all ages and has a strong interest in working with diverse audiences. Her certifications exemplify her determination to be a well-rounded and knowledgeable naturalist and include BAI (Basic Archery Instructor), Hunter Education Instructor, CIG (Certified Interpretive Guide through National Association of Interpretation), First Aid and CPR, and Discover Nature School curriculum certification.



**Leah Eden** reports a busy summer at Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery in Branson. From June-August, we had 55,318 visitors and provided 182 tours for 3,500 people! We are on track for our Conservation Center replacement to begin in the fall of 2022. The estimated time frame for construction is 18- 24 months. During construction, the Hatchery will be closed to public visitation and interpretive staff will be concentrating on off site outreach and school programs.

**Kendra Swee** at Maramec Spring Park in St. James reports have a great year! On final count the park's two museums saw a combined total of 27,000 visitors in 2021. Despite the ongoing pandemic, interpretive staff presented over 100 programs to 2,500 people. This is a monumental victory for the park, which had 1/3 that many programs and attendees two years ago. School groups scheduled both spring and fall programming this year. The idea of fall field trips is new for the park as well. More programming and events are slated for 2022 with an increase in hours of operation for both of the museums.

The **Association of Missouri Interpreters** Planning Committee would like you to Save the Date for our annual Conference in 2022! The AMI 2022 Conference will take you to where Missouri's interpretive roots grow deeply. A place where history, like a river, runs through Missouri's veins. Discover where the last 2 million acres were added to Missouri; where explorers, pioneers, orphans, guerrilla fighters, American Indians, settlers and bank robbers impacted Missouri's future. Explore a western frontier rich in big river, prairie, oxbow lakes, loess hills, and wetland landscapes that beg you to come and satisfy your adventurous appetite.

**MO Report continued  
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# MISSOURI REPORT

CONTINUED

## **Let Your Interpretive Roots Lead You to the Western Frontier**

September 20-22, 2022 in St. Joseph, Missouri

We look forward to seeing you there!

The Interpretive Site Coalition Workshop Planning Committee is very excited to present our biennial ISC Workshop!

## **Finding Inspiration in a Changing World**

Monday Feb. 7, 2022 from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Tuesday Feb. 8, 2022 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Details coming soon.



## **2022 Region Six Annual Conference**

Join us in person in Columbia Missouri February 20-24, 2022 for Region Six conference.

Hotel and conference center are under one roof at Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton.

Agenda will be uploaded and Registration will go live to the NAI Region 6 website by January 15.

We will update you as we have more information. COVID-19 policies and procedures will be followed according to NAI, the State of Missouri and Boone County policy.

Contact Amber Edwards Chair with questions and concerns [edwardsamb@missouri.edu](mailto:edwardsamb@missouri.edu).



# OKLAHOMA REPORT

Beginning in 2022 **Ms. Wilma Mankiller's** facial likeness will be featured on the face of the US quarter in the "American Women Quarters Program". This strong Oklahoma Native American woman is honored and recognized as not only the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, but is also the first woman elected as chief of a major Native American tribe. She is quoted as saying "Remember that I am just a woman who is living a very abundant life. Every step I take forward is on a path paved by strong Indian women before me."

With strong female leadership in mind, let us welcome the new hires joining Oklahoma State Park's (OSP) interpretive team. **Kristen Perry** and **Sierra Coon** were hired at historic Greenleaf and beautiful Sequoyah State Park, respectively, after both diligently working as seasonal part time staff with the agency. **Amanda Thomas** interned with OSP this past summer and when a full time position became available at Thunderbird State Park threw her hat into the applicant pool. Thunderbird State Park wisely caught it. Out in western Oklahoma we had two new hires in two of our Oklahoma Original 7 State Parks. These positions are very exciting for OSP and their parks, as these interpretive positions have not been filled many years. **Sierra Harwood** was hired earlier this year at Roman Nose State Park where she brings her own spin on the 4 mile beloved "full moon hike" to Inspiration Point. Quartz Mountain has been in a whirlwind remodeling and renovation since OSP resumed management of the park and during all of this moving and shaking at Quartz Mountain, **Makayla Marshall** was also hired. Now she gets the great pleasure of helping to develop and guide interpretive programming there.

**Tom Creider** retired from Oklahoma State Parks at the end of 2020 after devoting 47 years of his life to educating and enlightening generations of guest's throughout the Oklahoma State Park system AND the throughout the great state of Oklahoma. The stone amphitheater and trails of Quartz Mountain State Park have a deep personal and professional significance to Tom and on October 23rd, 2021 the "Tom Creider Cave Trail" was dedicated to Tom in commemoration of an extraordinary commitment to OSP and visitors! Mr. Creider, his two daughters, and his grandchildren then led the trail dedication guests on an interpretive hike along HIS trail.



Park Naturalist Leann Bunn with **Tenkiller State Park** shares an update on her 21st NWTF Women in the Outdoors (WITO) event held the first weekend of November. Leann reports that 101 ladies of all ages were introduced to the outdoors and to our hunting heritage during the event, with 27 different classes and 3 mentored hunt opportunities to choose from! This WITO event was made possible with the help of 30 instructors, 6 hunt mentors (including herself), 13 volunteers, and five partnering properties that allowed them to conduct part of the event. WITO is all about giving women a chance to do something that they have

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never done before or have felt beyond them before.

Kaylyn Paulsen (Director of Education) and Claire Stephenson (Education Supervisor – Visitor Programs) are happy to tell the story of how Peepers, the spectacled owl, found a roommate and friend at the Tulsa Zoo. Peepers hatched at the Tulsa Zoo and was hand-reared as a chick to become an ambassador animal for education programs. As an imprinted animal, he is enriched by human interaction.

Despite the daily time he has with his caretakers and program audiences, we believed Peepers will benefit from having another spectacled owl to socialize with when his human companions can't be with him. Luckily, there happened to be another spectacled owl, named Dewey, in a similar situation at another facility also accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Dewey is also a hand-reared ambassador animal. So, who more perfect to be Peeper's companion? Both facilities agreed that this would be a positive management decision that could improve welfare for both Dewey and Peepers. Since arriving at the Tulsa Zoo Dewey and Peepers have bonded with each other and shown positive, species appropriate interactions. These behaviors as well as an improvement in their appearances have indicated an increase in welfare for both birds. Next time you visit the Tulsa Zoo, look out for Dewey or Peepers during a chat with one of our Education Interpreters.

*Photo includes Education Specialists Sarah Varnell (left, with Dewey) and Bethany Stewart (right, with Peepers)*



**Tulsa Zoo** is making zoo visits even more memorable with walking tours every Saturday that will run through April 2022.

This unique walking tour experience offers insight into the animal world with engaging stories, interesting facts, observations of some of the zoo's most popular animals, and the conservation efforts to preserve these species in the wild. This 45–60 minute tour focuses on our Lost Kingdom, Giraffe Experience, and Rhino Reserve exhibit complexes, featuring Asian and African animals. Check out the Tulsa Zoo website for more info and to reserve tickets.

Retired naturalist Neil Garrison reports that he manned an educational booth in August at the “**Traditional Trade Days**” event at the Oklahoma Historical Society's Chisholm Trail Museum in Kingfisher, OK. Neil would also like to ask you “Where is the smallest national park in the U.S.?” The answer: Guthrie, Oklahoma! This postage sized parcel of land is located behind the Guthrie Post Office and measures 100' wide and 100' deep. This National Park's genesis was the Land Run of 1889 and the 100' x 100' plot just so happens to be the location of the original Land Office, where Land Run applications were officially filed.

# TEXAS REPORT

Tiara Chapman, Recreation Supervisor for the **City of Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area** reports that, “[She is] on the operating Board of GP Red and they have developed a new program for young professionals, called PREPP - Parks and Recreation Emerging Professionals Program. This is a 15-month certificate program designed to help folks who are ready to take the next step in their career but need help with competencies like budgeting, strategic planning, facility management, human resources, etc. Applications are open and the 1st cohort begins in mid-January. I’m looking to promote in my current role so I applied and have been accepted. I know that this program will help me demonstrate and build the skills needed to get into management so I’m passing along this information to the young professionals in NAI Texas. Here is the link to *register*”.



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<https://publicaffairs.ucdenver.edu/programs/professional-development/leadership-training/parks-and-recreation-emerging-professionals-program>



Gene Harmon, Manager of Inheriting Heritage, LLC wants to introduce himself to membership in our Region writing, “I have been an NAI member since receiving my CIG in 2013. Before moving to northwest Texas in October of last year, I was part of the Sunny Southeast Region and served a term as its Deputy Director. I am the owner and manager



of Inheriting Heritage, LLC, which provides interpretive programs and consulting for state parks, national parks, historic sites, museums, and other organizations. It is all based on NAI’s teachings of helping guests/visitors make personal connections to sites. My

website is <https://inheritingheritage.com> and includes links to my Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as to my YouTube channel.”



Hannah Catherman, Director of Education for **Sea Turtle, Inc.** in South Padre Island writes, “We are undergoing a period of growth here at Sea Turtle, Inc. We are hopeful within the next year to break ground on the

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construction for a new sea turtle hospital that will provide both patients and staff with the most up-to-date care available. We have also introduced new virtual learning programs for both children and adults! Participants can immerse themselves in the world of sea turtle rescue and rehabilitation or learn about the many adaptations that turtles possess!"

Caleb Harmon, Park Program Coordinator at **Lower Colorado River Authority Parks** reports: "Based on the continued success of our newest community programs we will continue to offer Art in the Park, STEAM Lab and Family Land Arts into the winter months ahead. The winter programming roster will remain focused on our ability to offer more creative, hands-on, process-based experiences to the community. These experiences allow families to connect with nature while providing an opportunity to deliver our parks stories to a diverse audience. We are ecstatic to continue offering our Family GPS Nature Quest program for parents and kids looking to engage in joyful nature play activities that awaken the senses and spark inquiry through a series of self-guided mystery box stations. For families and groups with older children, we offer STEAM Lab. STEAM Lab participants engage in hands-on, tinkering activities and experiments to gain a better understanding of how our world works. Our Art in the Park program provides both families with children and adults another example of process-based experiences we offer using nature as inspiration, driving creativity and self-discovery."

Carrie MacDonald, Manager of Volunteer Services for the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** is hiring and about to launch a new docent training class. MacDonald invites those in the Austin area to please consider joining their Wildflower Center paid or volunteer staff.

<https://www.wildflower.org/about/jobs>.

<https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll/ap?AP=443702776>

Stella Luna, Program Support for **San Antonio River Authority** invites people to join their In-Person Certified Interpretive Guide Course, March 1-4, 2022 at the Mission Reach Operations Center in San Antonio, TX.

Louise Torrance, Distance Learning and Engagement Coordinator for **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department** reports, "Our Distance Learning and School Engagement program mission is to inspire stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of Texas by providing free, accessible, educational content and experiences to all learners! TEKS-aligned TPWDiscover programming turns our public lands into outdoor classrooms and helps remove the barriers of cost and access to provide outdoor classroom experiences for students across Texas.

She further states that "in 2020-21, interpreters and Coastal Fisheries staff virtually programmed for 12,481 students from Texas and beyond! Beach Exploration by Lisa Reznicek and Jordan Kieffer brought sun and sand to students in Waco, El Paso, Fort Worth, San Antonio and Houston while Lit by Fire by Walt Bailey had a class from Ghana learn the art and history of candle making. Batty for Bats by Nyta Brown was the most viewed program with 114 live and 722 recorded student views. Check out our current program offerings through Connect2Texas: <https://www.smore.com/krhn7> and our collection of videos on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/TexasParksandWildlifeEducation>".

## 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).

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### DEADLINES FOR *VISIONS* ARE:

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