

ADRIANNE - JOHNSON - AMY - LAUDER - ERICKSON - AMY - V. - LETHBRIDGE - ANDREA - PUTNAM - BETH - MICHELE - WARGO - CYNDI - COGBILL - DANA - M. - HOISINGTON - DON - R. - SIMONS - DONNA - HORTIAN - DOUGLAS - ALLEN - HARDING - GREG - CLEMONS - HEATHER - RUNYAN - HOLLIE - SANDERS - JAMES - RICHARD - MORALES - JAY - BURNS - JEANETTE - S. - LARSON - JOHN - D. - MILLER - JOHN - T. - MCBRIDE - JR - JOHN - WM. - (BILL) - KIENBURG - JOYCE - UMBACH - KATHLEEN - LESH - SMITH - KATHY - GWEN - MAGRUDER - MILLER - KELLY - C. - FARRELL - KYE - JOONG - CHO. - PHD - LARI - JO - WALLACE - EDWARDS - LAURA - LYNN - MOTLEY - LISA - GARVIN - LORENCE W. LARSON - LORI - SPENCER - LYNDY - FRITTS - MARIA - ELENA - MURIEL - MARION - LOSTROM - MARY - JODI - MORRIS - MATTHEW - KANTOLA - MELANIE - THORNTON - MERLE - E. - ROGERS - MICHAEL - H. - ...

SPRING 2024 VOLUME 38, ISSUE 1

VISIONS

NAI SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

WE ARE SOUTH CENTRAL!

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VISIONS

Newsletter for NAI SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Spring 2024 • VOLUME 38, ISSUE 1

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*Title photos from
Dreamstime.com*

You Can Grow Your Roots in Arkansas State Parks

by Catherine Combs, Park Superintendent,
Lake Frierson State Park, Jonesboro, AR

Lake Frierson State Park is best known for its fishing. Go back a little further in time though, and the beginnings of the lake that so many have fished since 1975, has its roots in the community. The lake's very purpose as a watershed was to aid the surrounding homes and farmlands through flood control and now all in the Jonesboro area reap the benefits from it recreationally. Since then, families have come out to the



park to fish, kayak, walk the trails, and connect to one another. Many of us have roots in a beloved park that we have made many such memories with.

This year, Lake Frierson State Park (LFSP) has focused on growing its roots even more through a new series called Women in the Woods. This series aims to bring women in the surrounding area together to grow in new skills, grow closer to LFSP as THEIR home park, and to grow relationships that foster further adventures in the natural state. Meeting on the first Sunday of

each month, events range from kayaking to fishing to geocaching and more. Interpreters from nearby parks join in to share their own expertise so that those roots may grow not just at LFSP but beyond it to neighboring parks in the state.

The first meeting was in March with Dutch Oven Cooking. The ladies were given a 10/10 for their Dutch Oven creations by expert taste testers (me...I was the taste tester). It was a wonderful start to the year and many of the ladies return each Sunday. The next event will be Backpacking 101 on April 28, which was the original first event in February, but had to be rescheduled due to a rain out. But the rain was for the best because we had many ladies on the waiting list and so were able to reorganize the event into two sessions to include those that were not on the initial list. We expect to have 50 ladies in attendance between the two sessions. This event will ideally be the stepping-stone to an actual



backpacking trip at Cane Creek State Park in September.

Since its announcement in January, all Women in the Woods events for the entire year are already filled up. Through the creation of this series, I am reminded that

so many have a desire to explore our natural resources, but doing so on your own can be a challenging task. Doing so with a friend, however, can encourage you to connect your own roots to nearby outdoor spaces and beyond. It is a powerful thing when



we not only provide interpretation that highlights our parks resources but couple it with a community that reminds us that roots grown together in the resource itself help keep our parks alive. I am so thankful for all the work our state's interpreters do to help foster such connections."

Director's Notes

by Ken Forman

Did you all feel that shift, that slight “oomph” when spring hit? I sure did. It’s the first week of spring, and six weeks ago Punxsutawney Phil forecast that ‘twould be an early spring. Of course, I don’t trust my weather forecasting information to an overgrown ground squirrel. I pride myself on being a scientist and as such follow the warnings of woolly bear caterpillars and the germ of persimmon seeds.



Between you and me, I was planning on running for the office this fall when we hold our regional elections and will have my name on the ballot regardless. In the meantime, we will roll with the ever-changing weather and use it to our advantage, including it in our storytelling.

Your board members have stepped up and are working to provide the services we hope are helpful in your careers. Starting

with our new web address [www.NAISouthCentral.com], the Digital Communication Co-chair team of Heather Runyan and Lindsay Evans are breathing new life into our digital footprint. Scholarship Chair Jeanne Spencer is revamping our system of financial aid and has plans to make the whole process easier. Awards Chair Victoria Wright and her assistant Diana Bliss are working on transitioning from Lauren Marshall’s care to their own. And of course, I have to acknowledge Chris Pistle for stepping in to take over my spot as Visions co-editor. He and Jerrel Geisler are tossing around some ideas for an even more readable and enjoyable newsletter.

Let’s face it, “normal” weather in any of our region’s states is everything but “normal”. What is normal is that the weather is inherently unpredictable, and especially so in the spring and fall. And all of that is perfectly normal.

“The weather sure is wonky this year” is a comment I often hear from visitors. This always strikes me as an odd thing to say, especially from locals. The weather is always wonky in the spring and usually in the fall, too. And how do we interp-types handle this ever-changing, highly unpredictable weather? We go with the flow, use it to our advantage, include it in our storytelling. Because that is exactly what we do.

So, when our Director Amber Myers asked me, four months ago, to be her Deputy Director, I gave it consideration and told her, “Of course.” And when she then stepped down from her position as Director, it meant I found myself as your new Regional Director.

with our new web address [www.NAISouthCentral.com], the Digital Communication Co-chair team of Heather Runyan and Lindsay Evans are breathing new life into our digital footprint. Scholarship Chair Jeanne Spencer is revamping our system of financial aid and has plans to make the whole process easier. Awards Chair Victoria Wright and her assistant Diana Bliss are working on transitioning from Lauren Marshall’s care to their own. And of course, I have to acknowledge Chris Pistle for stepping in to take over my spot as Visions co-editor. He and Jerrel Geisler are tossing around some ideas for an even more readable and enjoyable newsletter.

Watch for updates on the NAI SCR Amarillo Workshop happening next February. Casey Watson’s work on the planning committee is – dare I say it? – AWESOME-SAUCE!

But with all this going on, take a moment to gaze at a star-filled night sky, watch a sunrise, look for wildflowers. Be Outside Often

Ken Forman, NAI SCR Director

Building Bridges - Little Rock National NAI Conference

By Rusty Scarborough, CIT
Shreveport, Louisiana

I just wanted to express a few thoughts of my experience in attendance of the Little Rock NAI conference. Since 2002 I have been a dedicated South-Central Region Member, only missing one Regional Workshop since I became a member. As the National is usually far away and at an inconvenient time for my schedule and our agency does not usually fund multiple trips in one year, I have only attended very few Nationals.

Even though Little Rock would be in the state I began my interpretive career, I had not planned on attending. Caddo Parish Parks and Recreation/Water B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park had undertaken a historic rebuild of a state-of-the-art nature center and as project manager I had a full schedule.

Late Summer I received notification that I had been nominated and awarded the 2023 Distinguished Interpretive Manager award. I was speechless and overwhelmed.....

I have been in the industry for a while, but it seems to me that awards are for those other folks, the trailblazers and longtime foundation of our profession. I was astounded that someone would have taken the time to nominate me, and for a National award?? I am very honored to have been nominated and especially grateful that it was done by someone in another state.

Wow! I have been greatly humbled. I am proud to serve our South-Central community and the NAI organization as a whole. I received so many congratulations and comments of “well-deserved”, that I could hardly wrap my mind around this being for me. And to top it off, to receive this award amongst the peers

that I started my career with and spent much time developing my skills with, meant all the more.

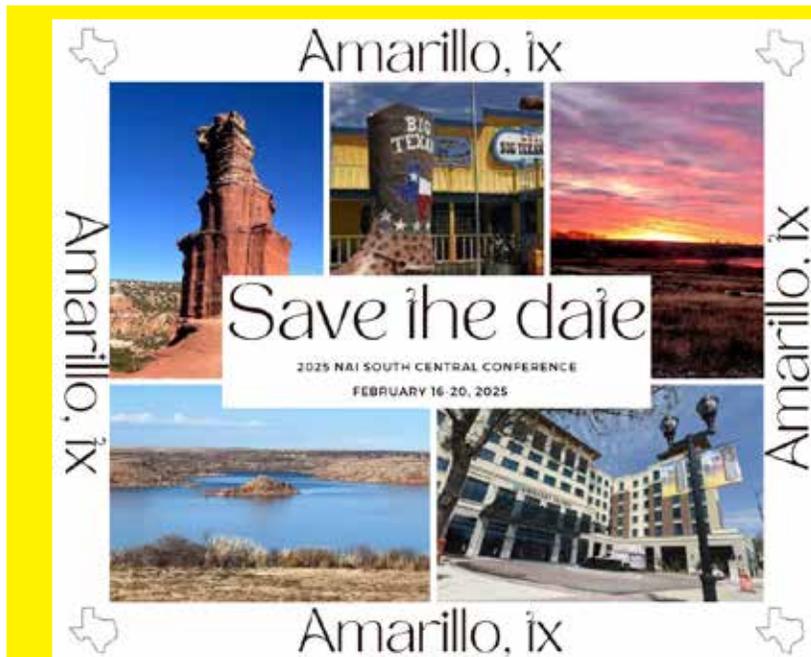
As I mentioned earlier, my agency had not planned on my attending, so had not budgeted for me to attend. I



**Rusty Scarborough, 2023
Distinguished Interpretive Manager**

applied for the Freeman Tilden Scholarship that South-Central offers and I was granted the scholarship. This made it much easier for my superiors to send me to the conference so that I could receive my recognition in person. I am very grateful and in-

debted to the generosity of our stellar region in helping me get to do so!



Amarillo (ah-mah-ree-yoh)

ADJECTIVE

1. (color)
 - a. yellow
*Llevó una blusa amarilla para la fiesta.
She wore a yellow blouse to the party.*
2. (traffic signal)
 - a. yellow
*Con el semáforo en amarillo es mejor parar
With a yellow light, it is better to stop.*

MASCULINE NOUN

3. (color)
 - a. yellow
*El amarillo es mi color favorito.
Yellow is my favorite color.*



State reports

Arkansas - Chris Pistole

Kansas - Lindsay Evans

Louisiana - Rusty Scarborough

Missouri - John Miller

Oklahoma - Neil Garrison

Texas - Lisa Cole

ARKANSAS REPORT

Ken Forman, Educator, Fred Berry Crooked Creek Nature Center, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission:
With Spring Break fully upon us and the busy spring field trip season about to go into full swing, the fine folks here are working hard to ensure engaging and appropriate programming for our visitors. But first we have two large (for us) construction projects to finish.

Our catfishing pond started leaking a number of years ago. The leak wasn't too bad, but over time it got worse and worse. That, coupled with natural siltation meant the pond effectiveness as habitat for bluegill and catfish was greatly diminished. That also meant it was less and less suitable for visiting students to learn the fine art of fishing. Since the Nature Center's opening day in 2005, tens of thousands of area kids caught their first fish in our pond. The kids learned proper fish handling, knot tying, casting, and landing techniques. The pond also attracted a wide variety of migrating waterfowl, including green-winged teal, mallards, hooded mergansers, and Canada geese. Scissor-tailed flycatchers, rough-winged tree swallows, purple martins, and several bat species hunted the flying insects found just above the water's surface. Leopard frogs, bullfrogs, cricket frogs and the ever-present spring peepers called it home. But all that changed two years ago when we drained and dredged the pond in an effort to restore it to its full potential. We tried all sorts of ways to rework and reline the pond. All to no avail.

Finally, earlier this year, through a cooperative effort between our staff, folks from the Wildlife Management Division, and our county's road construction crew, we were able to build a sincere and serious liner of clay and other material that we hope will hold water. Wish us luck. Now we're ready for enough rain to fill the pond before we can stock it with catchable cats.

The other construction project we're working on is reroofing our public pavilion. This open-sided pavilion has served as a meeting and teaching center for us since 2005. Unfortunately, some major support beams are starting to rot away. That means it's time to replace them. Which means replacing the entire roof structure, rafters and all. Our lovely pavilion is now topless and waiting for its new chapeaux. We'll let you know when we are done and share some pictures.

Katie Schroeder, Park Superintendent trainee, Mammoth Spring State Park:

On February 21st the Mammoth Spring State Park closed the dam to re-fill the lake. Many visitors attended this event, and the kids had a blast exploring the pits and crevasses normally submerged by the dam overflow,

interacting with lots of little creatures. The bravest "saved lives" this day throwing fish back into the river. From the time both dam gates were closed it was approximately an hour and a half for the lake to fill back up entirely and resume flowing over the dam; the spring was flowing at 7.1 million gallons per hour.



Leon Tidwell, Public Programs Coordinator, Historic Arkansas Museum:

We are happy to share what we've been doing here at Historic Arkansas Museum in Downtown Little Rock. This year we have begun our Living Craft

AR Report continued Page 7

ARKANSAS REPORT

Guild Days. We have had textiles on Tuesdays, printing and typesetting on Wednesdays, blacksmithing on Thursday and foodways programming on Fridays. These programs are open to the public and we encourage people to drop in. We have been expanding our social media presence by presenting live videos and reels from many of our guild days. We are also using these guild days to create objects that will be displayed in our Trinity Gallery at the end of this year.

On the third Saturday of the month, we have been doing living history programming out on our historic grounds. In January we focused on staying warm in the winter. We cooked a hearty meal in the Brownlee Kitchen, worked on quilting dresses, printed in the Woodruff Print Shop, and stayed warm by our fires. February was all about courtship rituals. We created paper puzzle cards, served a wedding dinner menu, discussed Southern wedding customs and much more. In March, we got gold fever! Our programming compared the lives of the fortune hunters who made their way to California and those who stayed behind in Arkansas. We had a great historic cake in the Brownlee kitchen. We printed and sang a song about the trip to California in the Woodruff Print Shop. At our farmstead we showed off California. Visitors got to pan for gold, watch our blacksmith work and see a meal of pork, pinto beans, hard tack, and pickled vegetables.

We have also been hosting Living Craft Workshops once a month. In January we had a workshop on dyeing fabric with natural materials hosted by Janette Larson. Participants got to dye fabric that they were able to take home. In February, our resident blacksmith, Casey Marshall, hosted a workshop discussing blacksmithing basics. The participants got to take home a nail and steak turner that they made. At the end of March, we will have a basic Chair Caning workshop hosted by Will Darr, a furniture restoration expert. Participants will be able to take home a small stool that they have woven the seat on. We are looking forward to the rest of this year's workshops that will include making watercolor paints from foraged materials, pottery, tin smithing, and more.

Lauren Marshall, Educator, Witt Stephens Jr. Central AR Nature Center, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission:



- The Central AR Nature Center had a busy late winter season with field trips, site visits and partnerships we've maintained for years.
- AGFC hosted their first ever state Trout Day on Jan 27th.
- Working on a new advertising strategy and seeing great success on different classes filling quickly, especially ones with topics like Bluebird Basics or Dutch Oven.
- On March 16th the Nature Center hosted their version of the Outdoor Gear Swap Shop. Over 250 visitors came to buy and trade with vendors.
- Hosted a full week of Spring Break activities and working on our weekend schedule before field trips and shooting sport tournaments arrive.
- Looking forward to Earth Day, STEM Fairs and whatever other event may SPRING up.
- Also looking forward to hosting Jay Miller with a CIG class in late May.

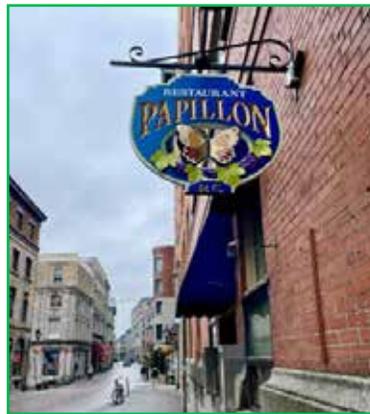
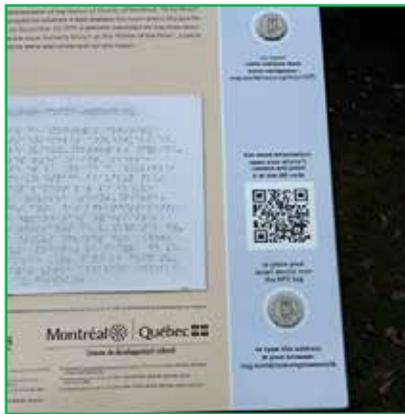
AR Report continued page 8

ARKANSAS REPORT



Jay S. Miller, Owner, Interpretive Communications:

Jay has just returned from upstate New York where he led the CIG training for nature center, Corps of Engineer, and Mohawk Tribe members. He then spent the weekend in Montreal where he found an amazing variety of interpretive media throughout the cobblestone streets of Old Town.



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

In January we had another successful event, The Wonders of Winter Wildlife or WOWW, which coincides with Eagle Awareness Month. Many people attended the Birds and Breakfast portion, where we have a local bird bander and students and faculty from the University of Arkansas assisting to band the birds they catch and then share those birds with the public. We had a local raptor rehabilitator share her live birds in a program, along with several tabletop education booths and crafts. We ended with a lively game of Arkansas Wildlife Jeopardy using quiz bowl buzzers and everyone ended up with at least one prize! The Birds and Breakfast program is repeated monthly from January through April, ending on our Earth Day celebration on April 20th.

We're gearing up for the total solar eclipse on Monday, April 8th, with many of our Arkansas state parks in the path of totality. Hobbs is just outside of that path but will see around 98% of the sun obscured. Parks with lodging, cabins, and RV camping are mostly booked up already, and everyone at those sites are preparing for tons of guests. Parks will be offering special eclipse programming on April 6th and 7th, but not on the day of the eclipse so that we can all assist with directing traffic and monitoring parking areas as needed. Overall, it will be a great opportunity for folks to make special memories in the great outdoors!

KANSAS

REPORT

Lindsay Evans, Park Naturalist, Ernie Miller Nature Center:

- A lot of excitement is happening! Our second annual May the Forest Be With You event is being held on May 3rd! We had so much fun with the first one - the immersive event was a hoot! May the Forest Be With You is an exciting outdoor/indoor event for families that combines the wonder of nature and space science with the magic of Star Wars®. Costumes and cosplay were welcomed and encouraged as kids and families attended Jedi academy, explored outer space in our new planetarium, and had the opportunity to visit our raptors up close to learn how they navigate through darkness.



- In other news, **Ernie Miller** has been busy teaching the best trade in the world, interpretation! CIG training was held in January. Attendees from Fort Osage and Missouri Town (Jackson County Parks), plus attendees from F.L. Schlegle Environmental Library, a student from Colorado State University,



as well as our own Park Police and AmeriCorps worker.

- Speaking of whom, welcome **Grace Rockers**, our AmeriCorps worker. Grace is spending the year with Johnson County Park and Recreation Districts Outdoor Education Department at Ernie Miller Nature Center as a service member through AmeriCorps Kansas. Her position is funded by a grant awarded to the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE).

Grace grew up and lives in Lawrence, Kan. She graduated from Kansas State University in May of 2022 with a Bachelor of Science in park management and conservation and a secondary major in natural resources and environmental science. While in school at K-State, Grace spent two summers as a camp counselor for Lawrence Parks and Recreation and one summer as a seasonal park ranger for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. After graduation, Grace spent a summer in Utah working for the USDA Forest Service as a seasonal recreation technician and

then worked for a year as a part-time naturalist with Prairie Park Nature Center in Lawrence.

Her position aims to bolster environmental literacy by increasing the number of programs our Outdoor Education team does and the number of individuals we contact.

AmeriCorps is an independent agency of the United States Government that engages more than five million Americans in service through a variety of stipend volunteer work programs in many sectors.

**KS Report continued
Page 10**

KANSAS REPORT

How cool!! Your whole life ahead of you. So grateful you are here at Ernie Miller, Grace.

- Lastly, for now, our portable planetarium has been reaching participants to the moon and back! Well, at least 20 programs at different schools and sites with over 450 participants!

(Contributions of news items made possible by Ernie Miller Staff, Andrea Joslin, Regina Wasson, Amber Lamble, Amy Isenburg, MC Rose, Alisa Grunewald, and Grace Rockers.)



Marty Young, LSUS Pioneer Heritage Center:

The **Pioneer Heritage Center** is off to a good year with many students visiting and enjoying the interpretive tours. We have expanded our outreach by working with the State and National Park system. We have also been doing many programs for assisted living facilities. Currently, we are preparing for our annual spring fundraiser, Authors in April. The proceeds go towards preservation and programing.

Terri Jacobson, Red River National Wildlife Refuge:

- Three basic birding classes on three consecutive Friday evenings for adults and Saturday birding field trips. Each class covers different birds: identifying water-fowl & water birds; identifying & attracting backyard birds with native plants & bird feeders; and identifying migratory songbirds (warblers, vireos, buntings, tanagers) & learning about eBird and Merlin.
- The Story Trail continues with second Saturday crafts and educational activities and a new book each month. The very last story trail book managed by ranger Terri Jacobson will be taken down on July 10th.



- Kids Bird Camp takes place in June.

Jessica Dixon, Louisiana Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism:

- Bayou Segnette State Park hosted the Louisiana High School Bass Nation anglers as they launched their boats to compete in the 2024 East Spring Qualifier. One hundred and forty-three boats didn't let a passing cold front with freezing temperatures and relentless wind keep them from casting. A duo representing the Livingston Parish Bassmasters won the tournament with five bass weighing 12.81 pounds anchored by a 3.30 pound large-

**LA Report continued
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LOUISIANA REPORT

mouth.

- The Southeast Louisiana Council Boy Scouts of America along with the Pontchartrain Astronomical Society (PAS) hosted a stargazing event for cub scouts in the wave pool parking lot. PAS members and Park Manager Jody Crochetiere set up their telescopes for an evening of gazing up at celestial bodies. Around 50 stargazers were able to see Jupiter, Saturn, our moon, and Orion's Nebula.



- **Forts Randolph & Buhlow State Historic Site** saw 64 guests for their "*Winter of 1865*"

living history program the third weekend in January. Visitors experienced a time warp as they watched soldiers work together to construct two cabins in preparation for a bitterly cold winter. Reenactors also demonstrated the life of a soldier by performing drills, musket exhibits and Dutch oven cooking.



- The Orleans Audubon Society hosted a "*Birding at the Park*" event at Fontainebleau State Park on Saturday. Forty guests enjoyed a four-hour hike through the park spotting cedar waxwings, blue grey gnatcatchers and two bald eagles.

- Twenty-two students from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, park staff and volunteers from six other local organizations (pictured) teamed up with the Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative to finish the winter 2023 iris restoration project at Fontainebleau State Park. An estimated 5,000 irises were relocated from a remote pond in the park. These native irises were intentionally transferred to an area where they will multiply easily and be accessible to visitors. Both the park staff and the LICI are looking forward to the area's first bloom.



LA Report continued
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LOUISIANA REPORT

- Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site spent a month presenting outreach programs. First, the site conducted a living history program with a Q&A session for 50 people from the LSU Rural Life Museum. The major topic covered was best practices, including how to deal with difficult histories in museum spaces.



- Despite chilly temperatures on January 10, 11 people sang along at La Table Chantante at the Blue Moon Saloon in Lafayette. Five of the singers are pictured with Interpretive Ranger Jolène Adam. Becca and Brittney, two young women from Lafayette, attended for the first time.



Rosedown Plantation SHS

The annual Rosedown Easter Egg Hunt hopped off with a record breaking 100 plus visitors to the historic site. Egg hunters were greeted by the Easter Bunny, delicious cupcakes and punch. 6 golden eggs were found and the winners awarded chocolate bunnies.



Parents with their children enjoyed the beautiful azaleas in the gardens and later playing historic children's games in the back of the house.

Rusty Scarborough, Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park:

Walter Jacobs Nature Park has moved our temporary offices to near downtown Shreveport. We are doing quite a lot of outreach as we plan our new facility. The 3-mile project for the sewage lift station is almost complete and next month we should have the final bids in from the GC and Subs. The 100% design of our exhibits from Taylor Studios Inc. have been submitted and proofed. We are very excited to see this project come together. The exhibits are looking phenomenal!





MISSOURI REPORT

Mark Van Patten, National Ozark Scenic Riverway, National Park Service:



In December of 2021 the Round Spring Ranger Station at Ozark National Scenic Riverways, approximately 13 miles north of Eminence, was destroyed during a robbery and arson. In 2024 we'll open a brand new, amazing log building on the same footprint as the original. The log cabin style is aesthetically pleasing in the natural setting and gives a nod to rustic structures built by Ozark settlers and as well as the architecture of lodges and cabins in the earliest state and national parks. Round Spring State Park was one of Missouri's first state parks, created in 1924, along with Alley Spring and Big Spring.

Offices for park interpreters and law enforcement rangers are included in the new ranger station, which also serves as a visitor center for the Round Spring area. Tour tickets for Round Spring Cave will be sold daily from June 1 through Labor Day for three guided tours each day. If you haven't visited lately, head over to Round Spring. Park Guides will be on hand to provide interpretive talks about the cave, the Current River, and Round Spring, and answer your questions about the area.

See our flyer in the newsletter for more information about our big Solar Eclipse Event! Visit www.nps.gov/ozar for more information about Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

Jamie Hubert, Interpretive Center Manager, Weldon Spring Site Interpretive Center, Dept. of Energy:

In January, after more than 20 years with Missouri State Parks, I resigned my position to accept the role as the Interpretive Center Manager at the Weldon Spring Site Interpretive Center in St. Charles, Missouri. The Weldon Spring site is run by the Legacy Management section of the Department of Energy and is the site of the former Weldon Springs Ordinance Works and Weldon Spring Uranium Feed Materials Plant. The site was declared a Superfund site in 1987, and cleanup was completed in 2001. The site's 41-acre disposal cell is surrounded by 150 acres of restored prairie—a testament to our commitment to long term monitoring and stewardship of the site. The Interpretive Center opened in 2022 and showcases exhibits that highlight the site's contributions to our nation during WWII and the Cold War. My team consists of 5 interpreters that provide public programs and standards-based programs focused on inspiring the next generation of leaders in STEM.



Jamie's new contact information is:
Jamie Hubert (She/her)
Interpretive Center Manager
7295 Highway 94 South
St. Charles, MO 63304
636-300-2616 (Office)
Jamie.Hubert@lm.doe.gov

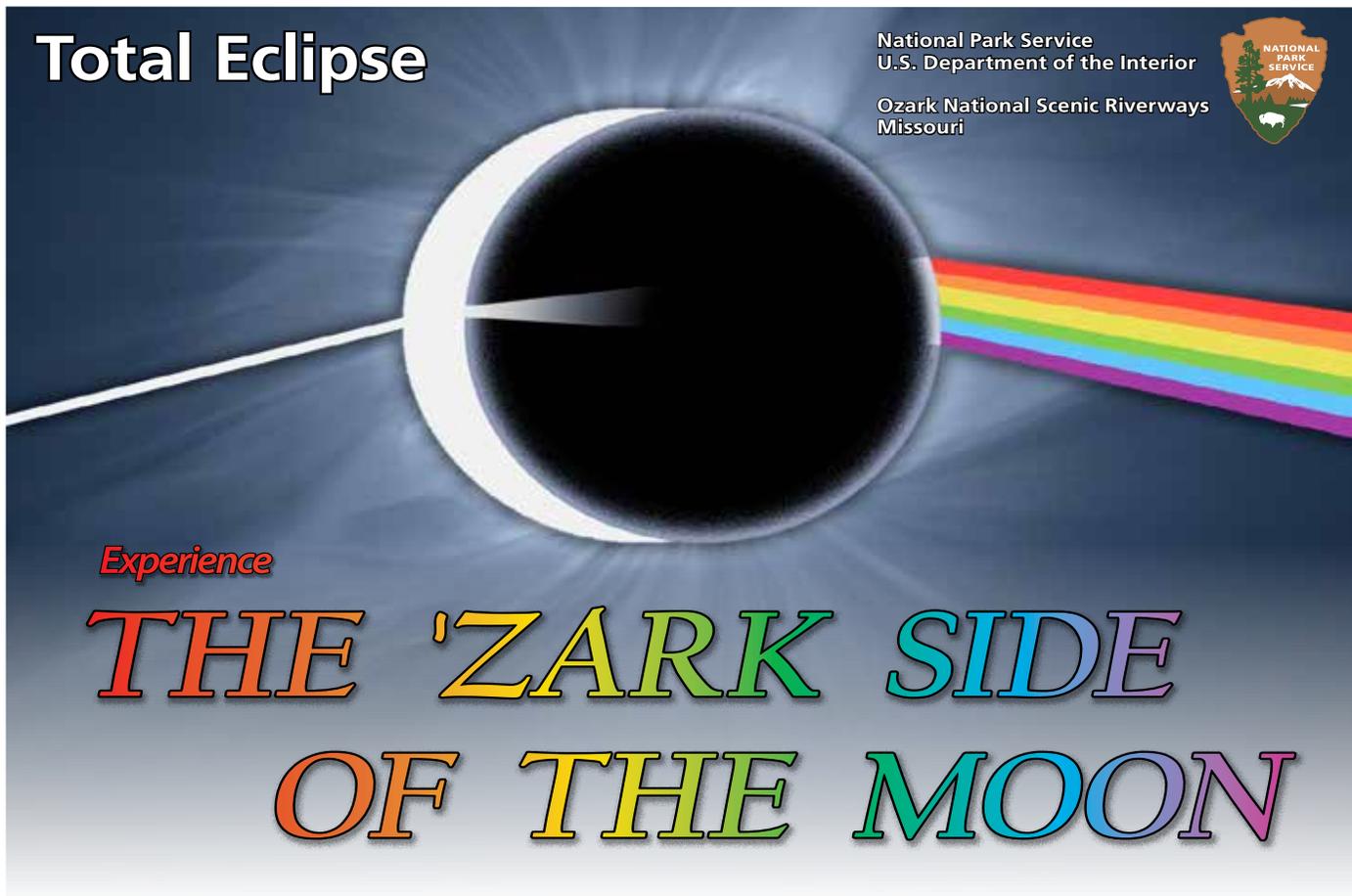


MO Report continued Page 14

Total Eclipse

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Missouri



Experience

THE 'ZARK SIDE OF THE MOON

April 8, 2024: Total Eclipse in the Ozarks

Join us for an “astronomical” viewing event at Big Spring, near Van Buren! This event features eclipse crafts, activities, ranger programs, and a chance to see Smokey the Bear’s hot air balloon. The Current River is a perfect backdrop to this awesome day!

-  The total eclipse will begin at 1:55 pm and last about 4 minutes.
-  Parking will be limited. Make plans to arrive well before the total eclipse begins.
-  Free, certified eclipse glasses will be provided by the park.



Visit our eclipse page for details, schedule, and recommendations.
<https://www.nps.gov/ozar/planyourvisit/2024-eclipse.htm>

[nps.gov/ozar](https://www.nps.gov/ozar)



[ozarkriverwaysfoundation.org](https://www.ozarkriverwaysfoundation.org)



[fs.usda.gov/mtnf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/mtnf)

MO Report continued
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MISSOURI REPORT

Kendra Swee, Interpretive Services Coordinator, Maramec Spring Park:

Maramec Spring Park has had a busy off-season! Over the winter work was completed on several major projects. At the **Maramec Museum** several exhibits have been renovated with updated LED lighting and new, more inclusive, interpretive stories. Several other exhibits were opened, and work has begun on preserving items within those exhibits, such as a mid-1850's ore deposit map. The park is also working with Middle Tennessee State University on both interior and exterior panels highlighting the Trail of Tears movement through the Maramec Iron Works. Also, several new interpretive panels were completed for the historic ruins area of the park. These will be installed this spring and will be a great addition to the interpretive story for the park.

This spring we have a lot more planned for the park, including a pollinator festival! Bugs, Birds, and Blooms Pollinator Festival will happen Saturday April 13th, 2024, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Several native plant nurseries will be on-site as well as other vendors of natural items. Education booths will be provided by several Missouri organizations and family-friendly entertainment will be provided by Fishin' Magicians and Wildheart!

Alison Bleich, Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center, Missouri Dept. of Conservation:

Please join me in welcoming **Sara Mobley** as our new Naturalist for the **Community Conservation Team and Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Education Center**. Since mid-2019, Sara has worked at the Wonders of Wildlife where she served in the roles of Guest Engagement Guide, Educator I and II before becoming Lead Educator in March 2022. In addition to developing and giving programs, Sara supervised, and trained adult docents as well as part-time staff.



Sara's duties will include delivering Tier 1 education programs in our region until the new Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Education Center opens in 2025. Then she will transfer to Branson (her hometown), where she will be a key team member at the new SOTH facility.

Sara says she is thrilled about her new adventure, "My journey in wildlife education began at 14, when I started volunteering at a local zoo. With a degree in environmental science, I am passionate about connecting people of all ages with nature and wildlife. Box turtles and great horned owls are some of my favorite species! Outside of work, I enjoy reading and crafting. I am very excited to join the team and getting to know everyone!"



Laura Motley relays that naturalist LeeAnn Bunn was the recipient of the Oklahoma State Parks’ ‘Employee of the Month’ award. Congrats!

Amanda Markey, Grand Lake State Park, shared that Oklahoma State Parks now has six naturalists, plus an additional four employees that are Recreational Coordinators.

Amy Stephens, Edmond History Museum, writes:



The **Edmond History Museum** just wrapped up a statewide symposium to brainstorm about the upcoming 1930’s New Deal centennial. Many rock structures and art pieces made by the CCC and WPA still exist in parks and on city property. Now is the time to start thinking about any awareness and tourism efforts. Edmond’s Stephenson Park was just renovated, and the 1936 rock entrances and bridges were incorporated into the new design – just one example of saving history to the modern era.

On June 15, Edmond History Museum will host its Second Route 66 Blue Hippo Festival, which is a celebration of Edmond’s quirky fiberglass hippo along the Mother Road.

On July 3rd, the museum presents the “Songs & Stripes: Big Band Show,” which is a reenactment of a 1940’s Bob Hope-style USO Tour with great music, singers, comedians, and an infusion of Edmond’s military history.

Donna Horton relayed this information:

The **Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art/the University of Tulsa** has hired another new executive director. The most previous “new” executive director, Susan Neal, oversaw the storage of The Gilcrease’s collections and the demolition of the building. Brian Lee Whisenhunt, a Tulsa native, will start on April 15.

Probably the most interesting item of news for our members would be how The Gilcrease has reached out to provide art in the community while its collections are currently unavailable. One of the temporary 2024 installations of Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood was completed in February at Oxley Nature Center. I hope the program continues after the museum reopens.

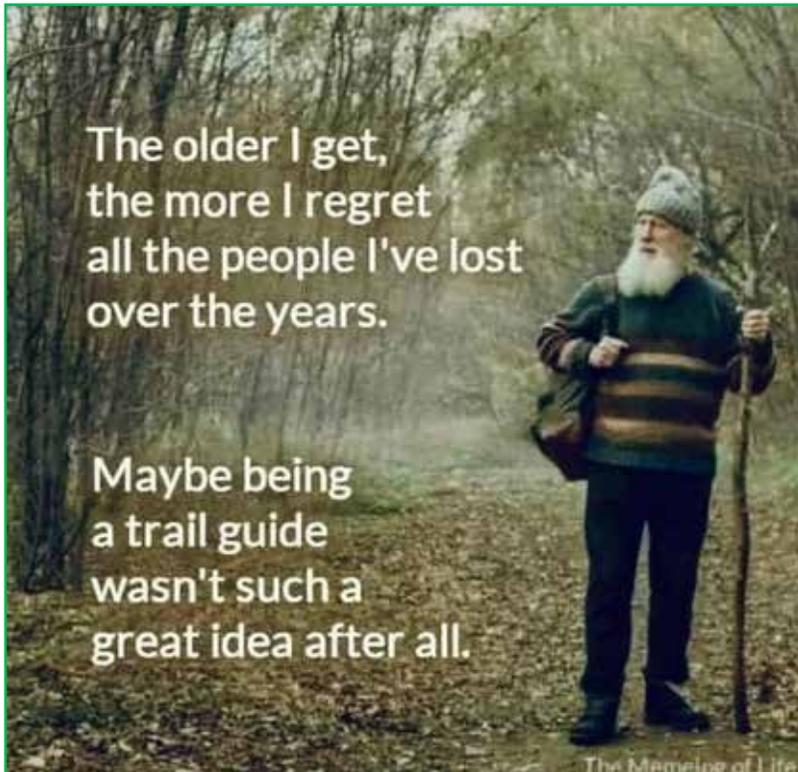
<https://www.tulsakids.com/gilcrease-builds-on-success-of-community-art-program-for-2024/>

Oxley Nature Center has had such a response to recent programs that they have had to consider how to offer additional sessions. I know the Junior Naturalist program has a second and maybe a third group meeting monthly now.

I saw that **Angelina Stancampiano**, formerly naturalist at Sequoyah State Park, has been making the national news during the fall and winter with her Women Who Hike programs in Wyoming.

**OK Report continued
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OKLAHOMA REPORT



Neil Garrison shared these items:

“The older I get, the more I regret all the people that I’ve lost over the years. Maybe being a trail guide wasn’t such a great idea after all.” I can’t remember the source. Sorry!

An Oklahoma museum may be getting a new name. The **Pioneer Woman Museum** is in Ponca City. A pioneer woman statue is on the grounds nearby. The Oklahoma Historical Society has been kicking around the idea of rebranding the facility. The new name might be “The Women of the West” Museum ... or ... maybe: “The Oklahoma Women” Museum. The conjecture is that this name change discussion is due to the confusion created by a like-named facility in Pawhuska, Oklahoma – i.e., Ree Drummond’s Pioneer Woman restaurant.

The “living history” program at the **Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center** (Enid, OK) started out in 2019 as a once-a-month event. Due to its popularity with the visiting public, the program was expanded into a bi-weekly

program. The “living history” re-enactors (decked out in authentic period clothing) enable the museum visitors to watch (and participate in) the various skills and trades of the late-1800’s.

Message From Lindsay Evans, Our Digital Communications Chair

Hey there, my awesome intercommunity! I am missing your energy, wisdom, and community already. I can’t believe I have to wait all the way until February next year before being around you all again. Some may say that kind of wait is torture (Hi, I’m some!). Here I am blocking February 16th-20th, 2025, literally the ONLY thing I can and will plan for that far in advance.

Well, I may be a lot of things but the one thing I am super-duper pumped about is taking over as the new DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR, woot! Heather Runyan has been a

champ in helping me learn the rope, so you’ll still hear from both of us for just a wee bit longer, but I am so excited for this opportunity!

You may have already noticed some changes to the website, nothing scary I promise! We have moved to a new domain! Instead of our website address being www.NAIRegion6.Wordpress.com, our website is NOW: www.NAISouthCentral.com.

Looks good, right? Sensical in a way. Don’t worry though, any links to the old address will reroute you to

our new website. Check it out and see all the site contains! Please let us know what you’d like to see on

our site in the future. It is for YOU, ya know. Okay, I’m done babbling.

Talk later friends!
Lindsay Evans



TEXAS REPORT

Katie Raney, Field Interpretation Coordinator, Texas State Parks:

Texas State Parks interpreters gathered in February at the annual Statewide Interpretation Conference for professional development and networking. After a year of celebrating Texas state parks' legacy and success during the Centennial, this year we "chose our own adventure" as the conference theme. Interpreters attended concurrent sessions on topics like impostor syndrome, accessible digital design, geocaching, and more. On field trip day, some attendees got certified as archery instructors, others visited the National War in the Pacific Museum in Fredericksburg, Texas, and even more explored Inks Lake State Park and Longhorn Cavern State Park.



Stella Luna, San Antonio River Authority (SARA):

SARA's Regional Park Coordinating Council is hosting Certified Interpretive Guide training from April 30 to May 3, 2024, at 100 E. Guenther, San Antonio, Texas. There is still room in the class! In addition, they are offering two scholarships for Students/Volunteers/Passionate Citizens who work or live in Bexar, Wilson, Karnes or Goliad County. They will announce scholarship winners on March 15. Be on the lookout, they are planning to host a CIH training in the Fall as well.



Tim Brys, Education Collections Manager, Perot Museum of Nature and Science (Dallas): Tim is always seeking new and interesting items to add to the teaching collection to keep things fresh for visitors. His highlight specimen for this month is a seed and leaf combo from a tree known as a Moon Tree. In 1971, around 500 seeds were sent into space in a canister aboard the Apollo 14 mission. The original seeds came from Loblolly Pine, Sycamore, Sweet Gum, Redwood, and Douglas Fir trees. About 420 seedlings were started from the germinated seeds upon return to Earth. Those trees were sent to various locations around the country, but the locations were largely lost. In 1996, a schoolteacher's request

to NASA led to the organization enlisting the help of the public to help identify

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TEXAS REPORT

any remaining Moon Trees. The Perot has a seed and leaf from a Sycamore Moon Tree in their teaching collection, and if you'd like to see the actual trees, you can visit the Moon Trees site.

Stephnie Coufal, iZone Imaging (Temple, TX):

Stephnie shared their latest project, a series of interpretive panels for the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) in New Hampshire, designed in partnership with MajaDesign. The LPC raises public awareness about the ecology of loon habitat, threats faced by loons, and the work required to monitor, study, and protect the loons of New Hampshire.



According to the NAI South Central Region website, the regional board is in need of help with the following board positions:

Elections Chair

Please contact Ken Forman for more information if interested

NAI SOUTH CENTRAL REGION *VISIONS* NEWSLETTER

PUBLICATION INFORMATION



Visions Newsletter is the newsletter for South Central Region of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). The South Central Region includes states of Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas.

For Region 6 information go to www.NAISouthCentral.com.

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

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LOUISIANA: Rusty Scarborough, CIT, Walter Jacobs Memorial Nature Park, Shreveport, LA

MISSOURI: John Miller, Reed Spring, MO

OKLAHOMA: Neil Garrison, Martin Park Nature Center (Retired), Oklahoma City, OK

TEXAS: Lisa Cole, CIG, Government Canyon State Natural Area, TX

To email a board member: NAISouthCentral@gmail.com

DEADLINES FOR *VISIONS* ARE:

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