

FONR Wins Conservation Education Award



Friends of Noxubee Refuge was presented with the 2009 Conservation Educator of the Year Award recently at the February 27, 2010, Mississippi Wildlife Federation (MWF) Awards Banquet in Jackson, MS. The MWF Conservation Achievement Award nominations are solicited each year to honor people and groups in the State of Mississippi that deserve statewide recognition. Our FONR group was chosen for its outstanding efforts toward conservation education. The award, sponsored by the South Mississippi Electric Power Association was first given in 1970. Although typically an individual



honor, there have been four other years (1985, 1991, 1997, and 2008) in which a group of people or an organization has been awarded with this very prestigious honor. Immediate Past President, Larry Box said, "This award comes as a result of the dedicated, long hours all of you have given to FONR. I think the ongoing programs of Saturdays at the Refuge, opening the visitor center on weekends, the Nature Store, the newsletter, the website, and our special projects are the driving forces behind FONR receiving the award. Congratulations and thanks to everyone for making FONR a success."

In addition to the FONR award, Refuge Officer Bobby Gentry was honored with the 2009 Conservation Officer of the Year! Congratulations Bobby!



SHIPMATES Lend A Hand

On Saturday March 13th, a group of students from Meridian, MS, affiliated with the U.S. Navy's SHIPMATE program volunteered their time at Noxubee NWR. The program schedules outings into local communities and focuses on community service projects. While at Noxubee, the students participated in cleanup along



Dummy Line and Section Line Roads and visited the Eagle's Nest. They ended the day with a cookout at the Picnic Pavilion. All of the students were very polite and presented themselves in a professional manner. We would like to thank them for their service and look forward to working with them again in the future.

~ Jason Hunnicutt

General Meeting

April 15
6:30 PM

Noxubee Refuge
Visitor Center

We invite you to join us for our general meeting with a presentation by Dr. Tracy Hawkins. Dr. Hawkins is a Research Ecologist with the USDA Forest Service in Starkville. She will provide general information on Endangered Species Research and the specific results of her research on Pond-berry in the Mississippi Delta.

Snacks will be served afterward.



From The President

Your Friends of Noxubee Refuge colleagues and Refuge staff have been very busy recently. Congratulations to all of our volunteers, especially to Marion Sansing and John Guyton, for their educational activities including the popular Saturdays at the Refuge programs. As a result of your efforts the Mississippi Wildlife Federation recognized FONR with its Conservation Educator of the Year award at its recent 50th Anniversary Conservation Achievement Awards Program at the Jackson Hilton. Congratulations also to Bobby Gentry, Refuge Officer, who received the MWF Conservation Officer of the Year Award at this same meeting. On May 13 at the USFWS Regional Office in Atlanta, John Guyton will receive the "Director's Honors Award for Volunteers" for his outstanding programs in the Saturdays at the Refuge program, so more congratulations to John.

In many ways 2010 got off to a great start for us, but on February 20 we were all saddened by the death of Sam Hamilton, Director of the USFWS. Sam was a Starkville native who enjoyed fishing and hunting at Noxubee Refuge as a youngster, and worked at the Refuge while a student at MSU. Sam was a friend of many of us, had an outstanding record of achievements with the FWS, and will be greatly missed. Plans are underway for a memorial to Sam at NNWR, and you can make donations to FONR for that purpose. Thanks to Jacque and Jimmie Tisdale, Margaret Copeland, and Florence and Larry Box for their work with the supper which FONR provided for Sam's family prior to the memorial service at MSU's Chapel of Memories.

We still have a number of projects where we need more volunteers. I hope you will consider joining our outstanding group of active volunteers if you are not already one. We still need someone to be in charge of the Highway 25 trash pick-up program, and some more members of the team of workers who pick up the trash about four times each year between our signs on Highway 25 south of Starkville. As the weather improves we will be having several "Work-Days at the Refuge" and need someone to help schedule these events. FONR will have an exhibit table at the Earth Day celebration at MSU on April 22 from 9 AM to 3 PM, and we may need a few more volunteers to work at the table so if you have some free time please check with me. If you know of a grant program that fits the needs of the Refuge, or you have an idea for a project that you feel might qualify for such a grant, please talk to Refuge Manager Henry Sansing and his staff. FONR volunteer Janis Bryant is chair of a committee whose purpose is to assist in the preparation of grant proposals, and she indicates that they are ready to help now. We hope to see you at Your Refuge soon.

~ Lawrence Croft

**SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 17
NEXT GENERAL MEETING**

Volunteers Needed

Please contact Lawrence Croft if you are willing to assist with any FONR volunteer activities. Currently we have three specific needs:

Trailwalkers – Bob Thompson needs help monitoring the NNWR trails. This involves regularly walking a chosen or assigned Refuge trail and reporting any problems or concerns to the Refuge staff.

Hwy 25 Pick-up Team – FONR assists with trash pick-up along a one mile section of Highway 25, adjacent to the Refuge.

Oral History – FONR wants to begin collecting oral histories of the establishment and development of the NNWR.

Upcoming Events

April 17 - CANOEING AT BLUFF LAKE - 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

May 1 - MISSISSIPPI FLORA
Visitor Center at 9 a.m.

May 15- LADIES, BAIT YOUR HOOK - Registration is required.
Visitor center at 9 a.m.

May 22 - ENDANGERED SPECIES
Visitor center at 9 a.m. to 12 noon

May 29 -VOLUNTEER AND FRIENDS APPRECIATION LUNCH
For reservations call 662-323-5548

June 5 - MUSHROOMS
Visitor center at 8:30 a.m.

June 19 - YOUTH FISHING DERBY
Registration is required. Prizes Awarded. 8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
Follow the signs to the ponds.

Please visit our website for additional details about all of our programs!

In Memory of Sam Hamilton

After the Atlanta funeral service for Sam, David Viker, USFWS Chief of Migratory Birds, Region 4, wrote that the temperature outside was frigid as Fish and Wildlife personnel stood at attention. But later "after one of the most moving services I have ever attended, the sun was out and shining hard, my shoulders were actually hot at one point. More eerily comforting than that though: as if on cue with Sam's coffin emerging from the church, waves of 20-30 cedar waxwings flew out of a large holly tree 50 yards away and took off above Sam's coffin--until about 300 had passed. Whether or not the temperature change and the migratory bird flight was heavenly orchestrated, it brought further warmth and comfort to me that passes understanding."



Sam left for us a legacy of how to care, how to share and how to live with each other and the natural beauty which surrounds us each and every day. Sam, we miss you. Catch a big one for us.

~ Kris Godwin



Sam Hamilton was always willing to support and help our students in wildlife and fisheries sciences. About 6 years ago, upon discovery that no MSU students had applied for the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Sam approached some faculty to inquire about the lack of MSU applicants. Because of his allegiance to our natural resource programs and his positive experience here at MSU, he wanted good applicants from MSU. Because of Sam, two young women from MSU entered SCEP as graduate students. Sabrina Chandler and Candice Stevenson both completed MS degrees, and today, both of these young professionals have careers in the National Wildlife Refuge System – thanks to Sam Hamilton.

We have all learned and gained so much due to the dedication and fairness of Sam Hamilton. Even with Sam's status as a professional, he always met undergraduate and graduate students with the same respect and amicable nature as he would a high-level government official. His nature and the way he treated all people combined with his desire to help "critters" and the ecosystems on which they depend will be remembered by seasoned professionals, young aspiring professionals, and the young students that he so graciously met and mentored. He will always be present in our souls, in our profession, and in the legacy that he helped conserve and protect.

~ Jeanne Jones

Rescued Manatee Named “Hamilton”

Friends NewsWire

A juvenile manatee rescued by staff and volunteers at Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge in Florida has been named Hamilton in honor of the late Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sam Hamilton.



In February, the refuge heard reports of a young manatee using Three Sisters Springs on its own with no mother. The manatee already had old scars that seemed to have healed until it was hit by another boat, leaving an inflamed bruise on its back. The manatee rescue team answered the call on February 28. Four people stretched a cargo net under the manatee and carried the animal to land, after which it was taken to Lowry Park Zoo. The refuge asked that the manatee be named Hamilton. The zoo estimates it is about 18 months old – not yet an adult.

Chassahowitzka Refuge Complex manager Michael Lusk says, “Zoos normally keep the manatees for about one year to observe their recovery and make sure they are strong enough for release. After that, they are released in the general area where they were captured and monitored for another year to make sure they are doing okay in the wild.”

When Sam and I talked, we usually ended up discussing two things we had in common: love for Noxubee Refuge and for MSU sports. He always asked about both, but not always in that order!

~ Jim Tisdale

“You Can Learn A Lot From Wildlife”--Sam D. Hamilton

Humans have been fascinated with birds since our ancient ancestors recorded their interest in cave paintings and ceramic effigies. This fascination is easy to understand: birds ability to fly, their colorful and insulating plumage that have been used for hats, blankets and fletching arrows, their light hollow bones that have been used for flutes, their ritualistic courtship behavior and defense of territory, mimicking and mimickable calls, seasonal vacations or migrations and parental care.

And now we have discovered they have been exterminating their nests! Birds are preyed on by a host of ectoparasities that include blood-sucking mites, fowl mites, fleas, blackflies, louse flies, ticks, lice and blood-sucking insects such as blowflies maggots, bed bugs and mosquitoes. Their nest also contain bacteria, viruses and fungi. Research has indicated birds’ medicinal botanical practice of maintaining lichens woody twigs and aromatic plants in their nest with antiseptic, fungicidal and insect-repellent properties has a positive effect on chick growth and feather development. The lichens, herbs and woody or green plant material include Spanish moss and old mans beard, lavender, yarrow, strawflower or everlasting, curry and mint, the inner bark from the eastern red cedar and oak twigs. These medicinal botanicals are placed around the edge of the nest or in it and regularly replaced with fresh material, especially during incubation and nesting. Purple martins use green leaves that emit hydrocyanic acid, or cyanide gas, as they break down as a fumigant.

A few of these avian medical botanists include the European starlings, purple martins, American crows, Red-tailed hawks and bald and golden eagles. "You can learn a lot from wildlife!"

Like Sam, we also grew up exploring and having a fascination of nature and decided to honor him by publishing briefs that reflect the essence of his immortal quote, "You can learn a lot from wildlife." If you have examples of what we can learn from wildlife, please send them to us.

~ John Guyton, Ed. D. and Henry Sansing



Meet The Board: Barbara Crawford

Friends of Noxubee Refuge member since 2003 and volunteer at Noxubee Refuge since 2000, Barbara Crawford was born and raised just south of Dayton, Ohio. She attended Queens College in Charlotte, North Carolina, for her undergraduate degree in Chemistry and went on to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for her Masters in Chemistry. While in North Carolina she met and married the late Crayton Crawford who was also a chemist. They moved to Los Alamos, New Mexico, where his job took them. While living in New Mexico, they had two children, Karen and Gail. In

1959 they moved to Starkville, Mississippi, on the day Old Main Dormitory burned. Their third daughter Catherine was born in Starkville.

Barbara taught at Mississippi State University for four years, and then went to Wood Junior College (temporarily) to teach. She taught there for 25 years and was the Academic Dean from 1976 through 1994, when she retired.

She is still living in Starkville and is very active with Aldersgate Methodist Church. She enjoys playing bridge, keeping her cats company and traveling. Travels include some pretty distant and fascinating places: Patagonia (the country not the place in AZ), Antarctica, Turkey, Egypt, and she especially enjoyed Iceland.

The Refuge staff has thoroughly enjoyed the dedicated efforts Barbara has made in keeping the front desk manned during holidays and weekends. Often she ends up manning the desk herself. She also volunteers one day a week to be a receptionist and helps with some of the office work. For her volunteer efforts, she was awarded the Regional Director's Volunteer of the Year Award in 2008.

Noxubee Nature Store

WHERE ALL PROFITS
SUPPORT REFUGE
PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES



NEW MERCHANDISE

A wide variety of new items might spark your interest, if you haven't visited the store lately. We carry a nice selection of books. In addition, Peggy Guyton recently donated several bird houses and handbags.



STORE HOURS

MON-FRI 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
SAT 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
SUN 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM

MSU Students Lend A Helping Hand



Members of the Kappa Alpha Fraternity helped with some much needed volunteer work from 9:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. on March 27 at the refuge. They began by assembling five benches which the Refuge had purchased. After completing that task, they picked up litter along the main levee, around the boat launch area and along the road in front of the Visitor Center. Kappa Alpha continues to be a strong supporter of FONR and the Refuge. Thank you!





Manager's Corner

With spring upon us visitation on the refuge has really picked up. Many people are coming out to enjoy the excellent fishing at Noxubee, but many are just enjoying the Refuge; from picnicking to bird watching. We have also had a good number of turkey hunters showing up in the mornings. The

almost unbelievably wet and very cold winter has made for beautiful spring colors on the Refuge. You should see and enjoy this unfolding nature event at your Refuge as soon as you can.

Unfortunately this wet weather has hampered many projects over the last few months including road work and prescribed burns. The overlaying and paving work on the current paved roads will begin in May, so be aware of detours and contractors working to improve our visitor access. Recently we have been able to complete 1,100 acres of prescribed burning with help from MS Sandhill Crane Refuge and Southeast LA Complex, but we are still 3,900 acres short of our 2009/2010 burn season goal. Weather permitting, you will see more prescribed burning on the Refuge and if you see our "Smoke Ahead" signs, drive cautiously. A Prescribed Fire Specialist position has been advertised and we are looking forward to having this position filled soon. In addition, the vacant Office Administrative position has been advertised and I hope to select someone soon.

I am proud that the Friends of Noxubee Refuge was recognized and awarded the Conservation Educator of the Year by the MS Wildlife Federation. Also congratulations to John Guyton for being chosen to receive the Southeast Region Directors Honor Award for Volunteers, for his work with the Saturdays at the Refuge programs.

It is with heavy heart that we mourn the loss of Sam Hamilton our Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Sam was a friend and stern conservationist with a great vision for the direction the Fish and Wildlife Service should take, now and in the future. Sam believed in Refuges being for wildlife and people. He was a proud advocate of Friends groups and he was certainly proud of the Friends of Noxubee. We will carry on Sam's vision and guidance in the years to come. Although we miss him, he will be remembered every time we do good things in the name of conservation.

Mark your calendars! Our annual Friends and Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon will be held on Saturday May 29 at 11:30 a.m., with lunch at noon. In order to help us with our lunch preparation, please RSVP with Andrea Dunstan at 323-5548 ext. 26, by Friday May 21. For the adventurous, canoes will be available after lunch to explore Loakfoma Lake.

I hope to see you soon out on your refuge.

~ Henry R. Sansing



is an independent, non-profit 501(c)3 organization, dedicated to conserving our natural resources through volunteer work and fund raising.

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