

In the Weeds (Notes from the native plant garden)

If you've been humming along with Grandpa Jones and Buck Owens' "If it weren't for bad luck I'd have no luck at all," (or if that's too big of a generational divide to cross, think of any country song where *my girl done took my dog, jumped in my pickup truck, and left me* and you've got the tune) then there is a native plant that, according to folklore, might have you singing a different song. This plant is as common as banana pudding at a church social and one of the few native plants I've always known about in my history and has always held a fascination for me. This plant is the red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*).



This plant can be found in semi-shade at the edge of woods or on ravines and bluffs. The red buckeye also adapts to a variety of setting in the home landscape including the ability to thrive in full sun.

While other plants are quietly waking us up from our winter hibernation with their blooms of soft yellow, baby blues, and pale lavenders, the red buckeye shoots up a spike of red tubular flowers that look like a string of fire crackers on the Fourth of July and give you no doubt it's time to get up and get moving spring is on its way. Those flowers provide some much needed nutrients to returning hummingbirds and early butterflies. After its big bang of color, the buckeye quietly settles in to producing a leathery pouch of that holds the lucky nuggets inside. In late summer/early fall, the buckeye pouch opens up and the treasures emerge; three or four mahogany brown

seeds with a clean white center that reminded early settlers of the eyes of a buck.

Old time wisdom says to obtain the luck from the buckeye it needs to be carried in a



pocket or kept in a pocketbook or jewelry box where it can be taken out and rubbed when the need for luck arises. To be on the safe side you can rub it every day to hedge your bets. I've seen ones that have been in use so long they are as hard as fossilized wood and resemble the shriveled head of a Cyclops pygmy. As with many things in nature, there is a balance of good and evil, and the same can be said about the buckeye. All parts of the buckeye plant are toxic if digested; so, don't leave these in the candy dish or on the kitchen counter. Keep the luck going by only rubbing the buckeye. No tasting allowed. No matter whether you believe in the luck of the buckeye or not, if you make yourself acquainted with the buckeye in spring, summer or fall, you'll be singing, "I feel lucky today." If I'm lucky, I'll see you in the weeds.

(No plant species were harmed in the writing of this essay. Remember plants in the Native Plant Garden are for viewing not collecting. There's a great big natural world out there to begin your own treasure hunt.)

Submitted by
Vera Taylor

From The President– James Taylor



It is official now. Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge is now Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. The staff hosted a great event on June 22 to rename the Refuge in honor of Sam. They put in a lot of time and effort for this event and are to be commended for a job well done. The Board of Directors of FoNR voted a few months back to help provide financial support for this event, and I would also like to thank The Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Employees (ARFWSE), Ducks Unlimited and Wild Turkey Federation for their support as well. The ARFWSE also paid for the new signs that you see when you visit the Refuge. Be on the look-out for events coming up. You can always check the website, the Friends Facebook page and e-mails that are sent out letting you know about upcoming events. The newest programs we have initiated, the guided trail

walks, started out great with the first one being led by the Refuge Manager Steve Reagan on the Wilderness Trail. Join us for the next one led by Tom Gregory at the Scattertown Trail on September 15. Each trail is unique and offers a glimpse of the variety of ecosystems contained within the Refuge. I would like to thank again all of the volunteers who make our organization a success. Whether you volunteer at the Visitor Center, help with Refuge events, or serve in other capacities I appreciate your help. In any organization such as ours there is always a wide variety of needs when it comes to volunteers. You may not think that you the right skills or background to volunteer, but we can always find somewhere to fit you in and you will enjoy it as well. I hope to see you all September 20, for our final general meeting which will begin at 5:30 with a social hour/pot luck supper followed by a presentation from Xavier Fairley with Prairie Wildlife who will be speaking on conservation planning and practices.

Refuge Manager Steve Reagan's Reflections

As the days begin to shorten and each morning seems a little darker, I cannot yet see Bluff Lake from my window, but I see nothing but a bright future for Sam D Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. With our new name, our new Wildlife Biologist Steven Lewis, and soon our new resident volunteer RV pads, I expect we will only be getting busier with each passing day. With fall's arrival just a couple of months away, we'll soon begin the small game seasons, and these are quickly followed by the opening of deer season for which I too find myself looking forward to with great anticipation. Although I am now just a little too old for the youth hunts, I still find these enjoyable to observe and find myself filled with just a little personal pride knowing I am playing a small part in getting future enthusiast involved for even just one day in the field. Nothing reminds you why we serve as public servants more than seeing a young boy's or girl's face as they eagerly await their chance to participate in the hunt, and at the end of

the day seeing how proud the parents are regardless of whether their child has anything to show for their day's effort. These moments are simply unforgettable. Having been at the Refuge for going on my fourth month, I see some hard choices coming as budgets decline and costs continue to rise. I hope each person who enjoys and finds value in Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee NWR will participate in our upcoming process of revising our Comprehensive Conservation Plan, something we more frequently call our CCP. This document helps map our plans for the next 15-year period and I hope each of you are willing to participate in the development of this plan when it comes time. Well, there is now enough light for me to see Bluff Lake from my office window and an alligator sits just off the shore awaiting a lazy fish to be its meal. Maybe I'll go take a moment to watch.



September General Meeting September 20, 5:30 p.m.

Larry Box Environmental
Education Center

The final general meeting of the year will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour/potluck supper. Please bring a dish to share at the potluck. The program will follow.

"Visionary Conservation"

The speaker for the September 20, meeting will be Xavier Fairley, Wildlife Manager at Prairie Wildlife in West Point, Miss.

Program: Prairie Wildlife is attempting every day to ensure valued sporting traditions continue to be here tomorrow by engaging in visionary conservation efforts and dedicated community involvement. Their management philosophy involves defining specific resource concerns (soil, water or wildlife), identifying specific conservation practices that will improve ecosystem health, visualizing how these practices fit into the larger landscape context, implementing the practice, and evaluating the response. Prairie Wildlife applies this iterative approach in an adaptive resource management framework to every management decision.

The public is invited to the potluck and program.

October is Membership Renewal Month

October is the month members renew their membership. This does not apply to Life and Family Life members who pay only once. If you have paid or became a new member this calendar year (January 1, 2012 – September 30, 2012) you will not need to pay again this October. Your membership renewal will not be due again until October, 2013. If you have any questions about your membership, you may email, jcb34@msstate.edu, or call, 323-2277, Janis Bryant, Membership Chair.

Board Nominees Named

At the September 20th general board meeting, the nominating committee will submit the names of two individuals to fill the expired terms of board members Joe Mulrooney and Jacque Tisdale. The nominees are Ray Iglay and Tom Gregory.

Dr. Iglay is a professor in the wildlife and fisheries department at Mississippi State. He is the faculty advisor for the student chapter of the Wildlife Society and recently presented a Saturday at the Refuge program on fly tying.

Mr. Gregory is employed with Kemp Associates and is the Oktibbeha County Engineer. He has been involved in Friends activities by helping with canoe day and working in the native garden.

Important Changes to Membership By-laws

To be voted on at September Member Meeting

Enclosed in your newsletter is a copy of Section 3, Article IV, titled Membership, with proposed changes approved by the Board of Directors. At the September meeting, members will be asked to vote and approve those changes that are in bold print in Section 3, and the changes in membership dues for Family, Patron, and Benefactor.

The suggested changes are to clarify membership levels. These changes and/or additions are highlighted in black. The Sustainer level will be eliminated.

Additionally, the board approved minor changes in membership dues.

These proposed changes to membership levels, and dues are as follows:

Individual \$15
Individual Life \$250
Family \$25
Family Life \$350
Patron \$50
Benefactor \$1000
Corporate Sponsor \$200
Honorary: Employees of US Fish and Wildlife Service

Some Successful Saturdays at the Refuge Events

Thanks to Ray Iglay for a great program on fly tying. Everyone had a great time



Great "first" hike led by Manager Steve Reagan.



Seth Woolington enjoyed the Youth Fishing Rodeo held in June!



Saturdays at the Refuge

The Friends assist with educational programs each first and third Saturday in the month. Check back often to see upcoming events. Programs are open to the general public and are free of charge unless noted otherwise. Outdoor programs are "weather permitting." Call 662-323-5548 for more information or reservations.

September 15 - Guided trail walk - Scattertown Trail – Led by Tom Gregory. Meet at Bevils Hill Church parking area 10:00 a.m.

October 6 – Celebrate Refuge Week at Family Fun Day

October 20 - Guided trail walk - Douglas Bluff Trail – Led by Vera Taylor. Meet at Picnic Area Kiosk 9:00 a.m.

November 3 – Guided trail walk - Beaver Dam Trail – Led by Lawrence Croft. Meet at Boat Launch Ramp area 9:00 a.m.

November 17 - Guided trail walk - Watson Trail – Led by Frank Bonner. Meet at Visitor Center parking area 9:00 a.m.

December 1 – Nature Crafts

The Value of Volunteers

Volunteers are priceless to Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge and other 550+ National Wildlife Refuges throughout the United States. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service receives a funding allocation through Congress, and part of the allocation is specifically earmarked for volunteers. The total amount is split up by Region, and then the funds trickle down to the many field stations within each Region based on the number of volunteers and volunteer hours each field station reports from the previous year. This is why every hour matters and helps provide financial support to the Refuge. So, not only are volunteers donating their time but in many ways their donation is then matched based on the hours reported. Simply said, we cannot accomplish what we do without the help of volunteers, especially our Saturdays on the Refuge program.

Submitted by Volunteer Coordinator
Andrea Dunstan

Don't Miss the Family Fun Day and Photo Contest October 6!

A fun, informative event and **free to the public**, this celebration during National Wildlife Refuge week is to increase our appreciation of wildlife habitat and its flora and fauna. There will be numerous exhibits, demonstrations, children's activities and live music. This is our biggest event of the year and should not be missed. It is held in and around the Visitor Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The 2012 Amateur Photography Contest winners will be announced at this event. You have until September 15, 2012 (postmarked by Sept 13) to submit entries. See the complete rules and entry forms at <http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org/photo-contest-rules.html>.



The traveling display of the 2011 Photo Contest winners at the Starkville Library.

Meet the New Biologist



Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge welcomes their new wildlife biologist, Steven Lewis. Steven is a 2005 graduate of Mississippi State University, majoring in Wildlife Science within the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture. Prior to his arrival to the Refuge, Steven has held wildlife biologist positions with USDA Wildlife Service in Arizona, U.S. Army Fort Gordon in Georgia, and the U.S. Forest Service - Delta National Forest, Mississippi. Most recently Steven served as deputy refuge manager at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama. Steven, his wife Lindsey, and baby boy Grant are planning to move into Starkville community. Steven said, "I am looking forward to getting settled and the great opportunities both the Refuge and the community have to offer." If you see Steven while at the Refuge be sure to give him a hearty welcome.

Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge

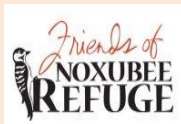


Volunteer Bob Fye shakes hands with Sam's grandson Davis.

Photo by Lawrence Croft

Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge was recently renamed (February 2012) in honor of the Fish and Wildlife Service's former Director Sam Hamilton. Sam, a Starkville native, worked at Noxubee as a Youth Conservation Corps summer enrollee in 1971, and it was this job that he credited for influencing his life's path. He grew up coming to the Refuge to hunt and fish, and it is fitting that this refuge, out of the 550+ throughout the United States, carries his name. He served as Regional Director of the Southeast Region for twelve years before being nominated for Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington D.C. by President Obama. He was approved and worked for less than a year when he died suddenly of a heart attack while skiing.

The renaming ceremony, held on June 22, was well attended by over 250 members of Sam's family, friends and supporters of the Refuge. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe and the 8 regional directors from as far away as Alaska were all at our refuge to honor Sam Hamilton. It is with pride that our signs now proclaim we are the SAM D. HAMILTON Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge.



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

OFFICERS

President, James Taylor
Vice President, Gale Hagood
Secretary, Vera Taylor
Treasurer, Anna Marie Rasberry

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Florence Box
Janis Bryant
Gwen Cotton
Barbara Crawford
Margaret McMullin
John Guyton
Joe Mulrooney
Jacque Tisdale

REFUGE LIASIONS

Andrea Dunstan
Steve Reagan

JOIN FONR TODAY!

Individual yearly memberships start at only \$15.

2970 BLUFF LAKE ROAD
BROOKSVILLE, MS 39739

For a membership form or information about the Refuge, call 662-323-5578 or visit <http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org/>.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Gwen Cotton, cottongwen@aol.com

2012 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP DATES

September 20

Contributions to this newsletter were made by J. Taylor, L. Box, A. Dunstan, V. Taylor, G. Hagood, G. Cotton, J. Bryant, J. Tisdale and S. Reagan

Section 3-Membership (delete regular)

A person shall become a member by submitting a membership form and paying **dues for the designated category to Friends of Noxubee Refuge. These designated categories are:**

A. Individual- A single person may join at a single membership rate **for one year paid to Friends of Noxubee Refuge.**

B. Family- Persons residing in the same household shall obtain a Family membership by submitting a membership form and paying membership dues **for one year to Friends of Noxubee Refuge.**

C. Life – An individual who pays life membership dues in one sum will become a Life member. A family which pays family life membership dues in one sum will become family Life Members. Life members and Family Life Members shall pay no annual dues, yet, they shall retain all rights and privileges of a regular member.

D. Patron – **Any person or business may join by paying membership dues to Friends of Noxubee Refuge for one year. The designated dues amount shall be determined by the Board of Directors.**

E. Corporate Sponsor- **Any company or business may join by either paying membership dues or providing in-kind services to the organization for one year or for one Friends activity once a year every year. In-kind services shall be equal to or exceed the membership dues which shall be determined by the Board of Directors. Any business or company that is interested in becoming a Corporate Sponsor must be approved by the Board of Directors**

F. Benefactor- **Any company, business, organization or individual might be named as Benefactor at the discretion of the Board of Directors.**

G. Honorary- A member or non-member may be designated an Honorary member by a vote of three-fourths of the Board of Directors at a business meeting. Honorary Members shall pay no dues. They shall have all rights and privileges of a regular member except they shall not have the right to vote.

H. Employees of United States Fish and Wildlife Service- Employees of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service shall become non-voting members by submitting a form to the **Friends of Noxubee Refuge.**

Section 9 changed to Section 4- Voting Rights- All paid members shall have the right to vote a single vote at all meetings of the general membership. A Family Membership is entitled to two votes. All votes must be in person.

Section 10 changed to Section 5- Dues-The Board of Directors shall have the power to prescribe annual membership dues. Renewable membership dues are payable in October.

Section 11 changed to Section 6- Termination of Membership- Failure to pay annual dues will result in automatic membership termination.