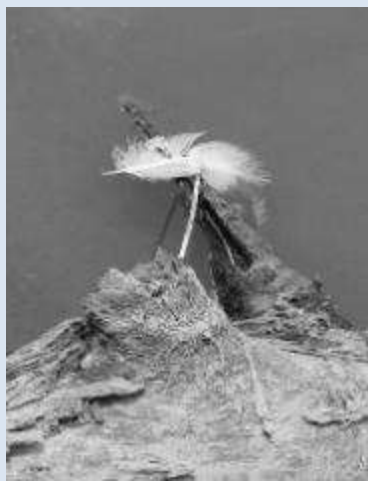


2014 Annual Amateur Nature Photography Contest, Youth Division Winners



Lone Feather B&W
Kylee McMullen
First Place



Dragon Fly in Blue
Kylee McMullen
Second Place



Bridge to Adventure
Benjamin Knight
Third Place



Refuge Manager Dr. Steve Reagan awarding first and second place winner Kylee McMullen (left) and third place winner Benjamin Knight (above).



Friends of Noxubee Refuge conduct an Annual Amateur Nature Photography Contest. Wildlife and/or scenery photographed within Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge and within the dates of this contest are judged by a panel of professional photographers. Winners are announced and prizes awarded during the National Wildlife Week celebration (date to be announced later but usually held in September or October).

From the FONR President- Larry Box



As I write this, the wind chill is in the low teens but signs of spring are evident. The Doyle Arm eagle pair appears to be successful with egg incubation. Any day now, eaglet heads should be appearing above the nest edge. Elm trees are

beginning to show buds and days are getting longer. Warmer days are almost here. That means Friends members will be volunteering to help at the Youth Fishing Derby, Canoe Day, and Eagle Watch Day. As dates are set, they will be published in local newspapers and on the Friends' website. If you have been considering volunteering to help at one of the events or to work in the visitor center, I encourage you to do so. You will find it to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. If you are interested, contact me at the phone number listed below.

In the last newsletter, I reported the Friends Board and Refuge staff had applied to host a Fish and Wildlife Service Friends Partnership Mentoring Workshop. I am pleased to report we were selected and the workshop will be March 26th-28th. The anticipated primary outcome of the workshop is to develop strategies to revitalize the Friends group and recruit new Friends members. If you would like to participate in the workshop, please call me at 662-323-6895.

Any time of the year is a good time to visit the Refuge. Each season of the year and each set of weather conditions have its own rewards. Come to the Refuge and see what you can observe. You will find it interesting.

SPRING IS COMING

When exploring the Refuge this spring, be sure to check out these trails, overlooks, and boardwalks.

Loakfoma Tower
Goose Overlook
Morgan Hill Overlook
Bluff Lake Boardwalk
Cypress Cove Recreational
Boardwalk

Woodpecker Trail
Beaver Dam Trail
Morgan Hill Overlook Trail
Trail of the Big Trees
Wilderness Trail
Scattertown Trail
Dr. Ray Watson Memorial Trail
Craig Pond Trail

Refuge Manager Steve Reagan's Reflections



I don't know if you can see it from where you are, but I see some exciting adventures coming our way. Our October retreat with the board members helped us better understand where we as partners can most effectively work together

to further the goals of the Refuge. As a direct outcome of the retreat, we applied for and were selected to participate in a Friends Mentoring session to be held at the end of March. During the mentoring session, staff and all attending Friends will meet with mentors from Florida and Atlanta to develop ideas and a greater understanding of how our relationship and the Friends Organization can be strengthened.

Like many of you, I continue to enjoy our Behind-the-Scenes Events when Friends are invited to come along with staff on some of our more unique job duties. So far we have handled red-cockaded woodpeckers, blown up beaver dams, set prescribed fire, produced art and now our next adventure is going to focus on paddlefish. Through all the challenges of managing wildlife on our 48,219-acre refuge, sharing them with our Friends is the highlight. I challenge each of you to get involved this year and bring someone along with you when you come. A wildlife adventure can happen at any time!

MSU's Dr. Bruce Leopold Announces Retirement Plans

Former head of Mississippi State University's Wildlife and Fisheries Department, Dr. Bruce Leopold, announced his plans to retire on July 1, 2015, from Mississippi State University after 28 years. "This does not mean I shall disappear into 'retirement limbo'," says Leopold. "I intend to continue to contribute to the profession I love so much through activity with professional societies, NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations), publishers, etc."

He will continue in his current position as Sharp Distinguished Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Executive Director, Center for Resolving Human-Wildlife Conflicts until July. We wish him well in this next phase of his life.



Thank you, Lisa McReynolds, for sharing your pictures on the Friends' Facebook page and giving us permission to use them. She commented, *"One of my daughters and I ventured out on one of Noxubee's trails for the first time yesterday....needless to say, we'll be back. We're very curious to try all of the trails now! It was a perfect day."*

The 2015 Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Contest



Attention young artists and naturalists! The 2015 Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Contest is now open for entries! Explore your natural world and send us your best drawing or painting of a duck or a goose - you just might see it on the 2015-2016 Junior Duck Stamp.

Mississippi contest deadline is March 15 - check the website for your state's receiving site, and contest rules: <http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/>

Last year's Mississippi best of show by Kayla Cauthen (pictured), made it in the top 25 in the country! Who knows what this year will bring.....

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are essential to the mission of Friends of Noxubee Refuge and the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. As federal budgets shrink, support groups become more important in helping to protect our natural treasures for the benefit of present and future generations. Members of Friends of Noxubee are involved, at varying degrees, in a variety of activities consistent with the protection and preservation of the environment.

Visitor Center Staffing
Canoe Day
Noxubee Nature Store
Noxubee Refuge Oral History Project
Noxubee Native Garden
Amateur Nature Photography Contest
Fishing Derby
Adopt a Highway
Noxubee Notes
Friends of Noxubee Website

For more information on volunteer opportunities, email FriendsofNoxubeeRefuge@gmail.com or visit our website at <http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org>.



Eagle standing in nest, may be looking down a bit, but is definitely getting ready to take an approximate two minute flight around the nest area and return to nest. The adult behavior is consistent with eaglets being in the nest.
(Pictures taken 2/14/2015 by Lawrence Croft)



General Membership Meeting
 March 5 - 6:30 p.m.
 Tisdale Auditorium
 Noxubee Visitor Center

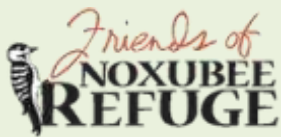
March 5, Program Announced

Dr. Kristine Edwards

Our speaker on March 5 will be Dr. Kristine Edwards. She is an Assistant Research Professor at Mississippi State University and will be speaking on Veterinary Entomology.

(Submitted by J. Guyton)

The quarterly meeting will be in the Tisdale Auditorium of the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. The meeting is open to the public, and there is no charge. Light refreshments and a social time will follow the presentation.



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

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Contributions to this newsletter were made by L. Box, F. Box, S. Reagan, L. Croft, M. McMullen, Lisa McReynolds J. Guyton, A. Dunstan, A. Rasberry, and G. Cotton

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Gwen Cotton, cottongwen@aol.com

JOIN FOUR TODAY!

Individual yearly memberships start at only \$15.
13723 BLUFF LAKE ROAD
 Brooksville, MS 39739

2015 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

MEETING DATES

5-March
4-June
3-September
3-December

For a membership form or information about the Refuge, call 662-323-5548, visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FriendsOfNoxubeeRefuge>, or <http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org>.