



Noxubee Notes

Volume XII, Issue 4

September 2015

SIGNS, SIGNS, EVERYWHERE THERE'S SIGNS

Many years ago there was this musical group called the Five Man Electrical Band that recorded a little song that had the chorus "Signs, signs everywhere there's signs. Blocking out the scenery. Breaking my mind. Do this! Don't do that! Can't you read the signs?" The message this song seemed to convey was that there were too many signs and it was also somewhat rebellious in tone. However, signs have an important role to play in our society and have performed this purpose for most of human history. Who knows, the early pictographs may have been advertising the local bison burger or antelope fast food location.

There are many different kinds of signs, such as a sign of the times, hand signs, etc. but, of course, this is about the billboard or sign posts variety. Some of these are famous in their own right. For example the Burma Shave signs or, the most famous of all, The Hollywood Sign. Although, not as big or lit up like the Hollywood sign, the new sign at the picnic area at the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge is still a work of art. It was designed by the Refuge's own Steve Reagan and Andrea Dunstan. I am still wondering why the tree log holding the sign doesn't tip over. You can view the sign online at www.friends-of-noxubee.org/. Actually, this is a custom sign with the purpose of informing our many visitors that they are on a Federal Wildlife Refuge, and it is, as quoted on the sign, "A Place Where Wildlife Comes First." This is a very important message because some may think this is some sort of a wilderness public park, but the first priority of a wildlife refuge is being a refuge for wildlife (sorry, couldn't resist

that play on words), and the second priority is connecting people with nature. Fact is, this message is so important that this custom sign was created at an expense of almost \$2000.

Signs at the Refuge are a big expense. There are many U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service signs at various locations to inform visitors and many of these had to be changed recently when the name changed to the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. There is also, a constant problem with theft and vandalism which costs the Refuge thousands of dollars each year. This is not just kids wanting to decorate their room but also metal theft of aluminum boundary markers. These are now replaced with ones made of vinyl.

The Refuge is a place where the public can find unique outdoor recreation opportunities for the whole family and has thousands of such visitors each year. As you can see, signs are here to give our visitors vital information which is sorely missed when the signs disappear. So if you happen to hear that song about signs everywhere, just know it does not apply at the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. Well, like the DJ says, "Time for me to sign off."

Submitted by Tom Gregory

Dalton Anthony, the volunteer manning Noxubee Nature Store on most Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, retired from Lafayette County School District. Moving to Starkville from Tupelo, he brings experience as the volunteer manager of Friends of the Tupelo Library Store. Volunteer positions are open for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Contact the Volunteer Starkville website if you are interested in volunteering.

Submitted by L. Box

New Volunteer for Noxubee Nature Store



From the FONR President- Larry Box



This is an exciting time for Friends of Noxubee Refuge. One of the outcomes of the near year long process of developing goals and objectives for Friends is the decision by the Friends board to allocate funds to the Refuge for the employment for a part time

Volunteer Coordinator. The number of volunteers at the Refuge has grown tremendously over the last three years. This is primarily due to the effort of the Maroon Volunteers at Mississippi State University and to Volunteer Starkville. It is not uncommon for 25 to 50 individuals to volunteer to assist Refuge staff in various projects. Coordinating that number of volunteers to obtain maximum work efficiency is taking Refuge staff away from tasks that can only be done by Refuge personnel. Yet, the volunteer program is needed to offset the loss of manpower resulting from the significant reduction of federal funds experienced by all national wildlife refuges. Employing a Volunteer Coordinator to be in charge of the volunteer program will ease that situation.

Friends has allocated \$7,800 to the Refuge to fund the position. Elsewhere in the newsletter be sure to read about the Rookery Cam 360 project. Friends has allocated up to \$3,500 for that project. While Friends receives income from memberships, donations, and the Nature Store, income received in a typical year will not cover these two expenses. In the coming months there will be information about fund raising opportunities designed to increase income. If those activities do not generate enough income to cover the expense for the volunteer coordinator and the camera project, a portion of the fund balance in the Friends' bank account will be used.

Cool weather is just weeks away. That will be an enjoyable time to visit the refuge. I encourage you to drive out and take it all in.

Canoeing Opportunities

Three canoeing opportunities remain this year. The Canoe Day program will continue on the third Saturday through the months of September and October. Canoes, paddles, and lifejackets will be available. In addition, canoes will be available on WOLF Day which is September 26th. The lakes are closed during the winter months as part of the waterfowl management program. Get a group together and come take a canoe ride. It is an enjoyable experience.

Submitted by L. Box

Refuge Manager Steve Reagan's Reflections



The Refuge staff and volunteers work hard at managing habitat for wildlife and facilities for visitors. Often this is completed with little fanfare and the results can't often be seen immediately. Regenerating timber for the red-cockaded woodpecker takes

more than 60 years; the Morgan Hill Demonstration Prairie Trail completed through 100% volunteer efforts took three years; and, creating the new Connecting People with Nature Pavilion area and trail has just started and may not be completed for many years. Worthy improvement projects require special support and while in progress often feel like one of those weeks when no matter how hard you work you feel like you have accomplished little. However, it is really just all a matter of perspective.

Last Thursday night's gathering at the improved Morgan Hill Demonstration Prairie Trail to watch the Perseid Meteor Show was a good reminder for me on how some good things take time to develop and simply are not created overnight. A total of 85 people gathered for more than two hours on Thursday night and saw a dozen or so meteors quickly burn themselves up as they crossed the atmosphere. Before you could tell the person next to you where to look, the meteors were gone and their multicolored streaks were but then a memory.

Without being there to experience it yourself, it would have been tempting to ask, was it worth coming? But the real interesting part of the evening was realizing the place, the stars and these particular meteors did not just happen overnight. The Comet Swift-Tuttle, the supplier of these particular meteorites, visits with an orbital period of 133 years and stocks us up with these meteors as it passes. The comet's last pass was 1992 and it will be 2126 before the comet is bright to the human-eye again. So energy deposited thirteen years ago allowed me the opportunity to watch the Perseid Meteor Shower last week, and work conducted last Saturday by Dawg Day Volunteers, today by Refuge staff, and tomorrow by you and other Friends will supply wildlife and visitors into the future.

So when you are helping us as a Friend or volunteer and have one of those days, remember we are often like a comet traveling through time leaving behind what may be uncelebrated benefits to us but opportunities for others.

Rookery Cam 360

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has awarded an \$8,030 grant to Friends of Noxubee Refuge for an innovative camera installation. Rookery Cam 360 will consist of a high resolution, remote controlled camera mounted on a tower in Bluff Lake. The camera will have powerful zoom and 360 degree horizontal and vertical movement. The camera image will be broadcast in the visitor center and uploaded to the internet. During the summer egret nesting season, the camera will provide a live broadcast of the activity in the egret rookery. At other times of the year, the camera will be used to follow the activities of the many species which use the lake. Depending on the season of the year, the camera may be focused upon alligators, wood storks, eagles, beavers, ducks, ospreys, or cormorants. The list of possible subjects is almost endless.

Education is a major component of the project. The camera feed will be a part of the environmental education program provided at the Box Environmental Education Center and at the Refuge Visitor Center. In addition, the feed to the internet will be available to teachers throughout the world. While there are other camera sites on the internet, this one is special due to the pan and zoom feature of the camera.

The Oktibbeha Audubon Society joined with Friends of Noxubee in providing matching funds. Audubon is contributing \$500 and Friends is contributing up to \$3,500.

Special thanks and commendations go to Friends members Tom Gregory and Jim Hemphill. Tom developed the list of needed equipment and Jim used that information to write the grant proposal.

Submitted by L. Box

General Membership Meeting September 3 - 6:30 p.m. Tisdale Auditorium Noxubee Visitor Center

Dr. Steven Reagan will be presenting information on the nesting ecology of the American alligator. As part of the presentation the audience will experience a virtual trip into the alligator's habitat and share in the experience of handling alligators. Dr. Reagan will share information on how many of the most common beliefs about alligators may not necessarily be always true and talk about observations made during his three years of alligator research.

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.

Wildlife Outdoor Learning Festival

Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge is hosting the Wildlife Outdoor Learning Festival on Saturday, September 26, 2015 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM to celebrate Mississippi wildlife, outdoor recreation, and nature-inspired art. The WOLF will include: wildland firefighting equipment demonstrations, Choctaw rabbit-stick throwing, canoeing, archaeological exhibits, a representative from the Jackson Museum of Natural Science, various children's crafts, and many other activities and exhibits for people of all ages. This year's festival will also have a strong artistic theme with the unveiling of artwork from former Artist-In-Residence Jenny Balisle, the announcement of the amateur photography contest winners, and live music by the Cedar Creek Ramblers starting at 11 AM.

For more information about the Refuge please visit the website (www.fws.gov/noxubee, the Facebook page (www.facebook.com/NoxubeeNWR), or call (662) 323-5548.

Submitted by A. Dunstan



Pictures from last year's event.

Artist in Residence

Artist in residence Jenny Balisle and Steve Reagan visit Choctaw Indian Council House Bluff on Noxubee Refuge. Balisle is a well-known San Francisco artist who enjoyed her stay at the Refuge. Visit her website at www.jennybalisle.com. For an interesting account on her stay at Noxubee visit her blog at factorxx.wordpress.com June 2015 archive.

Submitted by L. Box



Location, Location, Location



Shoes make good bird nests, especially when hung from trees.

Top of truck tires? Not so much.



Pictures from the Web

Nominations Committee Report

FoNR members will elect Board members and officers for FoNR during the September meeting. The committee recommends the following:

Officers

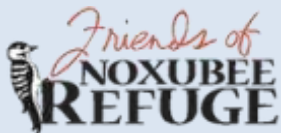
President - Bob Fuller Vice President - Joe Mulrooney
Secretary - Vera Taylor Treasurer - Anna Marie Rasberry

Board Members

Crayton Coleman, Alexa Hutchens, Gerald McKibben

Additional nominations will be accepted during the election process.

Submitted by J. Mulrooney



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

OFFICERS

President, Larry Box
Vice President, John Guyton
Secretary, Vera Taylor
Treasurer, Anna Marie Rasberry

REFUGE LIASIONS

Andrea Dunstan
Steve Reagan

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Florence Box
Crayton Coleman
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Barbara Crawford
Tom Gregory
Ray Ingray
Margaret McMullen
Jim Taylor
Wayne Wells

Contributions to this newsletter were made by L. Box, F. Box, S. Reagan, T. Gregory, J. Mulrooney, J. Guyton, A. Dunstan, A. Rasberry, and G. Cotton

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Gwen Cotton, cottongwen@aol.com

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Brooksville, MS 39739

2015 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

MEETING DATES

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>.