

A ROAD TOO FAR

One nice afternoon sometime last year, the wife and I decided to take the jeep out for some back road cruising and we decided to go on a road near the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee Wildlife Refuge. Little did we know what would happen. Since this was a completely new road for us, we took it slow and enjoyed the drive for several miles through the woods until we came upon an old wooden bridge across a creek.

This bridge crossed a creek that was about twenty five feet wide and with banks maybe ten feet high and a trickle of water underneath. There was a washout on the corner of the bridge and so naturally we stopped to inspect before crossing over. The timbers did not seem to be very rotten and the washout could be straddled, maybe. I thought it was safe but the wife, not so much. This was the yellow caution message number one that we were not to proceed any further.

After checking out the bridge, I noticed a very large cottonmouth moccasin under the bridge. This thing was a monster, about the same size as granddaddy moccasin that lives in the backwaters of Bluff Lake. Anyway, it spotted me and opened a white mouth that could have swallowed a softball and actually hissed. Course, I was on top of the bridge and it was in the bottom of the creek which put it about ten feet from me, and so there was nothing to fear or so I thought. This thing started crawling and slithering up the bank right toward me while looking me in the eye with, I swear, evil intent. Not sure, but I maybe said a dirty word right about then. This was red warning message number two that we should seriously consider leaving.

The next thing that happened is totally weird and unexplainable. I will leave it up to the reader to make their own opinion. Anyway, as I was backing away from the shaky bridge and the mad moccasin, an oak limb came crashing down in the road just on the other side of the bridge. This was a live limb about fifteen feet long and five to six inches thick. It had been ripped off the tree somehow and I did not see where it came from. There was not a storm the night before and, at the time, only a slight breeze so the wind did not do it. We did not see or hear

anything or anybody but this was definitely a flashing warning message number three to leave and vacate the area immediately. At this time, I am sure my wife and I said several dirty words.

I jumped back in the jeep, did a perfect three point turnaround and spun the tires getting out of there. Lesson to be learned is that some roads are not to be traveled past a point because some roads can go too far.

Submitted by Tom Gregory

Noxubee Nature Series

March 2 - 6:30 p.m.

Tisdale Auditorium

Noxubee Visitor Center

Dr. William Kallfelz, Instructor of Philosophy and Religion at MSU, will present "Reviving Emerson in Contemporary Environmental Ethics" at our next meeting. Thursday, March 2, at 6:30 p.m. at our Membership Meeting.

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.



We Have Eaglets

Lawrence Croft took this picture of our new eaglets on Feb. 23. The nests in the Dynamite Shed Road area have produced approximately 20 eaglets in the past 12 years.

Meet your FoNR Board Members

John L. Dugan, Jr.

After graduating in engineering from MSU, John lived away from Mississippi until he retired and chose Starkville as his retirement town in 2013. During his career, he worked in the electric utility industry and the construction industry mostly in North Carolina and Saudi Arabia. He is currently the president of the Kiwanis Club of Starkville. His hobbies include cooking and woodworking.

Kara Roberts

Kara was born at the Columbus Air Force Base and grew up in Starkville. She works at the Starkville Public Library and is a member of Grace Presbyterian Church. Kara is a black belt in TaeKwonDo and brown belt in JuJitSu. Her two favorite places are Davis Wade Stadium and Noxubee Refuge.

Beverly Smith

Beverly retired in 2015 as the director of the Larry Box Environmental Education Center, located on the SDH Noxubee Refuge, where she served for 14 years. Prior to being hired to this position, she was finishing her entomology master's degree with her thesis titled: *A Faunistic Survey of Native Bees in the Mississippi Black Belt Prairie*. Since retiring, she has spent her time restoring her childhood home in West Point.

John Tomlinson

John recently retired from Mississippi State University, where his main responsibility was as a lobbyist for the university. He and his wife Susan have been very involved in the Starkville community for many years. John loves the outdoors and is an avid hunter. He is excited to be a part of the Friends of Noxubee Refuge board.

Loraine Walker

Loraine is currently the librarian at the Noxubee County Library. She is known as the "Story Lady" and hosts the Children's Story Hour each week. Her mission at the library is to instill a love of reading and learning into the children she encounters daily. Loraine is a graduate of Mississippi State University and is currently in the master's degree program in library science at the University of Southern Mississippi. Loraine is an award-winning wildlife photographer whose photos have been featured in magazines and publications for state and national wildlife refuges and wildlife conservations groups. Her hobbies, other than photography, include tending to all of her flowers and plants, painting, and training her British Labrador Retriever, Belle.

Wayne Wells

Wayne is a native of southeast Louisiana having been blessed with a terrific career spanning 44+ years in agricultural education and research before retiring from MSU in 2013 as Extension Turfgrass Specialist. Currently a MSU Emeritus Professor, he and his wife Linda have lived and worked in several states from the Deep-South, Northeast and Midwest, taking the opportunity to visit many of our wildlife refuges and national parks from coast to coast. With Noxubee being so close, he considers it an honor to serve on our "Friends" board and a volunteer with Refuge events. Other retirement activities include Habitat for Humanity ReSale Store; MSU Wesley Foundation; Adaton United Methodist Church; President of Adaton Water Association; hunting and fishing; and of course traveling to see children and grandchildren in Ohio and North Carolina.

Dalton Anthony, Nature Store Volunteer

Dalton Retired after 33 years with the Lafayette County Schools and Oxford City Schools. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi. He and his wife Joyce lived 40 years in Oxford. After retirement Dalton volunteered with the Salvation Army Thrift Store and the Public Library. Dalton and his wife Joyce moved to Starkville in 2014 to be close to their daughter Jennifer, her husband Todd Barnette, and 5-year old granddaughter Emily Grace. He is approaching two years of volunteering in the Noxubee Nature Store.

Gwen Cotton, Newsletter Editor

Gwen has been retired from the Refuge for 7 years after working 33 years for 4 managers. She is a member of the Macon First United Methodist Church and is a director of the 4-County Foundation. She and her husband, Dan, spend much of their time traveling to St. Louis and Little Rock to see children and grandchildren. Public use and education are her favorite parts of the Refuge. For her, it is always about the people.

Anna Marie Rasberry, Treasurer

Having grown up near the Refuge, it has always been a part of Anna Marie's life and she is proud to be a part of the Friends' Board to help it thrive as a place for many folks to enjoy for many years to come! She enjoys bird watching, sewing, quilting, and reading. Anna Marie is retired from MSU working in the area of multistate agricultural research and extension outreach.

Vera Taylor, Secretary

Vera is a Noxubee County native and a resident of Brooksville, where she serves as an elementary school teacher. She is a founding member of the Friend's group. Her hobbies include bike riding and walking on the Refuge and exploring new places. What she likes best about the Refuge is its place in the community, the diversity of the people that visit, and the memories that are made. For her, the Refuge is a part of home, where she has deep roots.

Larry Box, Past President

Larry retired as superintendent of Starkville School District in 2002. In 2003 he became a charter member of Friends of Noxubee Refuge. During his first visit to the Refuge in the summer of 1959, he immediately recognized that Noxubee is a unique place for wildlife and people. Box continues to appreciate Noxubee through involvement in the Friends organization as well as through numerous personal visits to the Refuge.

Joe Mulrooney, Vice-President

Joe worked as a Research Entomologist for the Agricultural Research Service and the U.S. Forest Service

until his retirement in 2009. He conducted research on the pests of cotton and research on termites. His hobbies are reading, drawing/painting, playing guitar, mandolin, and harmonica. He belongs to St. Joseph Church where he is a member of the 11:30 choir. He is married to Camille and has two sons and four grandsons. For him, the Refuge is a place of solitude in which to experience God's creation.

Bob Fuller, President

Bob retired as the middle school principal in the Starkville School District in 2009. He is presently an assistant professor in educational leadership at the Mississippi University for Women. He resides on property near the Refuge that was homesteaded by his great-great grandfather in 1859. He is married to Allison Stacey Parvin who is the pastor at BethEden Lutheran Church (ELCA) on Bluff Lake Road. They have three daughters, a third grader and twins in the first grade in the Louisville Public Schools. To him, Noxubee Refuge is a sense of place, of solitude, and a place to experience the many wonders of nature.



NATURE STORE

The Noxubee Nature Store operates in the Visitor Center. The store is open daily Tuesday through Saturday 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. On April 1st, a new Refuge adult T-shirt will be released. The store is stocked with wildlife books on various topics. Regular items such as mugs, water bottles, and coffee tumblers are available as well as an assortment of children's wildlife toys. Noxubee Refuge decals, pins, and magnets make great souvenirs. Visit your Nature Store. All proceeds go to the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge for special programs and activities. When manned, the Nature Store also now accepts credit cards.

Submitted by D. Anthony

Blue Bird Boxes Available at Nature Store



Posted on Facebook by Vicki Maples:
"It didn't take the bluebirds very long to find the new birdhouse I put up for them. Thank you to the Nature Store and [Dalton Anthony!](#)"

From the FONR President– Bob Fuller



Thank you for being a member of the Friends of Noxubee Refuge and a supporter of the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. Your patronage is essential for our local public lands to fulfill its mission. Our FoNR membership is growing and

visitation to the Refuge is at an all-time high! Spring is arriving and with it comes the blooming of the beautiful bouquet of varying green colors of the hardwood leaves and the abundant native wildflowers on the Refuge. My native Springtime favorites are the simple Mayapples,



the striking red blooms of the Buckeye,



and my all-time favorite, Indian Pinks.



A reminder that Canoe Day will begin in March and go through October (3rd Saturday of each month). The canoes and kayaks are free, but donations to our Friends group are appreciated.

Come on out, enjoy the Spring weather, and the many venues open to the public on your Refuge!

The camera is live!

Subscribe to our YouTube channel :

[Friends of Noxubee Refuge YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Refuge Manager Steve Reagan's Reflections



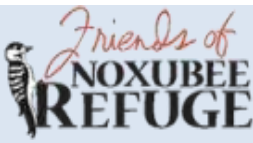
I find myself with a few minutes of time. There is a light rain this morning and I don't hear or see many people around the office. As I look out my office window I see water droplets falling from the roofline. Grass and other green vegetation are beginning to grow from

the mowed lawn. Small loblolly trees standing about eight inches tall are popping up from the lake-side rough while the mature trees frame my view. I keep noticing several small sparrows moving quickly by along the water's edge. They glide by so fast it is hard to even register they were there until they are gone. A male wood duck is perched on the arm of the sunken branch that extends out from under water while only the female's head can be seen from within the wood duck box. I wonder, are they already laying eggs? The lake's water is smooth with a delicate quilt-like pattern moving across it while cypress trees still appear to be in their winter's rest. A small grebe in its funny little way is swimming by. The way its head moves forwards then back makes me think of a wind-up toy. A trio of coot is moving through the grass grabbing a little bit here, then a little there. Through the window glass I am surprised to hear a small flock of red-winged blackbirds. Looking closer I see several blackbirds in the nearby pine. Listening to their kok-kor-ee call make me remember time sitting on the edge of a New England marsh watching male redwings set up their breeding territories and each male calling back and forth. I spent hours watching their interactions. Coming back from my memories, I look towards the back of the lake. It still looks like winter. The trees are gray and the clouds are dark. To make this distant gray world seem friendlier I keep hoping to see one of the bald eagles maybe sitting in one of the far trees, but if they are there I cannot spot them.

It's amazing how much is going on in place with nothing happening.

Vicki Maples has posted this video of the eaglets with an adult. Thanks for sharing, Vicki.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FriendsofNoxubeeRefuge/permalink/10158396582535624/>



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 B. Fuller, A. Dalton, F. Box, J. Mulrooney, T. Gregory, S. Reagan, J. Pruitt, V Maples, B. Lindley and G. Cotton

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
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Individual yearly memberships start at only \$15.

13723 BLUFF LAKE ROAD
Brooksville, MS 39739

2017 Noxubee Nature Series
March 2
June 8
September 7
Dec 7



Jim Pruitt just posted this great picture of a great-blue heron on the Friends' Facebook page. Thanks for sharing, Jim.
Photo by Jim Pruitt



Upcoming Canoe Days

March 18 from 9 am to Noon
March 25 from 9 am to 3 pm
(3rd Saturday of each month through October)



Youth Fishing Rodeo Coming Up

Contact the Refuge for details of the upcoming fishing rodeo for youth. This is always a popular event and both kids and adults enjoy the day!



American Kestrel photo taken by Bobby Lindley.