



## More Than 200 Nonprofit Groups Work on Behalf of National Wildlife Refuges

### Record Turnout for National Friends Conference

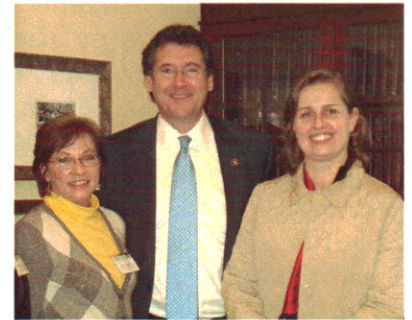
Our members Gale Hagood and Henry and Marion Sansing joined a record number of national wildlife refuge Friends at the largest National Friends Conference held in the history of the Refuge Friends movement. Sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Wildlife Refuge Association, the conference drew nearly 300 Refuge Friends representing more than 160 separate organizations and about 150 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff in Washington, D.C., February 21-23.

The Friends conference focused on such central issues as the impact of climate change on refuges, the vitality of citizen science programs, and how the nonprofit organizations can grow. Refuge Friends organizations now boast more than 50,000 members nationwide, who support the world's most extensive network of public lands devoted to wildlife habitat and wildlife conservation.

Gale, Henry and Marion attended a wide variety of sessions at the conference and learned a lot to share with fellow Friends of Noxubee Refuge. The next national Friends conference will be held in two years, if you are interested you should talk to Henry Sansing or Larry Box.

The day after the conference, February 24, Gale and Marion joined other Friends of wildlife refuges in a collective grassroots effort, visiting Capitol Hill. They enjoyed visiting with Mississippi's Senators and Congressmen. The Friends asked for increased funding, \$514 million, for all 549 refuges, which manage 150 million acres and have been severely underfunded since 2004. They asked their House Members to join the Refuge Caucus, already 152 strong. And they asked for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Representing wildlife refuges in the southeastern United States, Marion also had the opportunity to testify before the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies.

"Everyone we met with was very open minded and interested in what we brought forth. We also talked about Noxubee NWR and its needs of course, such as the completion of paved road access to the Refuge from all three counties and the underfunding of three vacant positions," said Marion. The National Wildlife Refuge Association aided the Friends in getting a joint message to Capitol Hill and provided a great party to all House and Senate members and their staffers with the help of Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement that evening. "It was quite something to be part of 'Capitol Hill Life' for a day, but it was also very exhausting," said Marion.



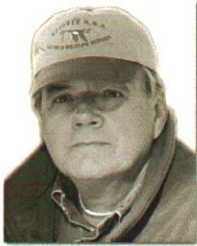
*Gale Hagood, Congressman Harper, and Marion Sansing*

**General  
Meeting**

April 16 at 6:30 PM  
Noxubee Refuge Visitor Center  
Program on Bees by  
Dr. Bob Fye and Beverly Smith

**General  
Meeting**





## From The President

Japanese philosopher Ihara Saikaku is credited with saying "There is always something to upset the most careful of human calculations." Thus it was with construction of the alternative nest for the eagles.

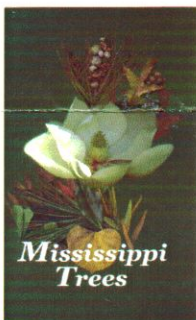
In the last newsletter I wrote about plans to construct a nest for the eagles in hopes that they would choose it instead of the one in the dead tree. Shortly after writing the article, we had everything in place to start construction when refuge biologist David Richardson reported that he suspected the female was already laying eggs. We put plans on hold while David observed the nest for a couple of days. His report came back that they were indeed nesting. That was in mid-December and much earlier than anyone thought they would start laying eggs.

The good news is that now there are two eaglets in the original nest and they are doing well. Hopefully the dead tree will withstand spring storms and the young will be airborne by May. If the tree does fall and the eaglets are uninjured, Friends and refuge staff will spring into action. Margaret Copeland and David have collected nest construction materials and placed them near the site. The tree climber is on standby. The plan is to quickly build a new nest and place the young in it. There are cases where this has been successful in other parts of the country.

Two members of the Friends group, Gale Hagood and Marion Sansing, participated in the National Friends Conference in Washington D. C. in late February. They were accompanied by refuge manager Henry Sansing. We anticipate them returning with valuable information for Friends of Noxubee Refuge.

Spring is a great time to visit the refuge. By the time you are reading this, "green up" will be well underway, weather will be pleasant, and refuge animal inhabitants will be very active. I plan to be there to take in all of it. Hope to see you there also.

~ by Larry Box



## Book Review: Mississippi Trees

Are you looking for an excellent tree identification book? *Mississippi Trees* may be just what you need.

The introduction to *Mississippi Trees* states that the book is designed for Mississippians to use as an aid to identification of trees common to the state. Additionally, it states the purpose as giving useful and interesting information not usually included in

technical identification books.

The format features each tree on two pages. The first page briefly describes the leaves, twigs, buds, fruit and flowers, bark, physical attributes, propagation, habitat, ecology, wildlife value and uses, timber value and uses, landscaping information, and other interesting facts. The second page consists of color photographs of leaves, fruit, bark, flowers, and twigs of the tree.

Prepared for the Mississippi Forestry Commission by the Department of Forestry at Mississippi State University, *Mississippi Trees* is a valuable resource for identifying trees by both professional and amateur dendrologists. Contact the Mississippi Forestry Commission or your local extension office for information on obtaining a copy.

~ by Florence Box

## Prairie Stewardship Day

Please show your support to our Friends at Osborn Prairie on Tuesday, April 14, in an effort to help with cedar eradication. Osborn Prairie is in dire need; cedars are taking over one of the last remnants of the Black Belt Prairie, with its distinctive ecosystem. Activities include cutting and moving of trees of all sizes. Please see our website or contact Jovonn Hill (325-2961) for more information on how you can help!

## Noxubee

## Nature Store

WHERE ALL PROFITS  
SUPPORT REFUGE  
PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES



**STORE HOURS**  
MON-FRI 8:00AM - 4:30PM  
SAT 10:00AM - 6:00PM  
SUN 1:00PM - 5:00PM



# Feature Animal: The Striped Skunk

As you drive the county roads around the refuge, an unmistakable, universal odor may assail your olfactory senses. Yes, it is dead skunk in the middle of the road. The unpleasant smell can carry over a half mile.

In our area of Mississippi, we predominately have one type of skunk, the striped skunk. This is the one most people think of automatically when they hear the word skunk. This skunk was the one who befriended Bambi as Flower in the Disney cartoon movie. This skunk is "usually" characterized by two broad white stripes on its back meeting in a cap on the head and shoulders. However, this coloration can vary from all white to all black with each individual.

A striped skunk is about the size of an average house cat, with a head and body 13-18 inches long, a tail 7-10 inches in length, and a weigh of 6 to 14 pounds. Most skunks are capable of five or six sprays of musk in a row, although one is usually enough. When threatened, the skunk raises its tail straight up and sprays its scent up to 15 feet (the mist may reach three times that far). Ammonia or tomato juice can be used to remove the odor from clothing. Another remedy for the odor can be found on the website for "Myth Busters."

Striped skunks mate in late winter to early spring. This is the reason we are seeing so many skunks hit and killed on the roads right now. As the skunks travel in search of mates, they often cross roads without making it to the other side. In mid-May four to seven young will be born blind, with very fine hair clearly marked with black-and-white patterns. At six to seven weeks, when their scent has developed, they are weaned. The young accompany the mother out of the den to forage about two months after birth.

Striped skunks eat just about anything. They are mostly nocturnal and feed on a wide variety of foods. Plants and fruits are a small part of their diet. Larval and adult insects, such as grubs, grasshoppers, crickets, beetles and wasps, constitute the largest part. Small mammals, eggs of ground-nesting birds and turtles, and amphibians also help make up their diet. They have even been known to raid chicken coops on rare occasions.

In winter they do not hibernate, but during extremely cold weather, may become temporarily dormant. The striped skunk also has the dubious distinction of being the number one carrier of rabies in the U.S.

Great horned owls are the chief predators of skunks in general. They strike from above, without warning, not giving the skunk a chance to spray.

Sometimes skunks take up residence under houses. Believe it or not, skunks are beneficial in the reduction of rodent populations and helpful in the reduction of insects. They can, however, make a mess of your yard and become a nuisance to household pets, not to mention smell up the yard. Live trapping and removal of the pests is the only way to insure they do not stick around. For more information on this method, contact your local Animal Damage Control agency at Mississippi State University, telephone 662-325-3014.

~ by Andrea Dunstan

*June 18*

Save The Date - 3rd General Meeting - ~~July 16~~

## Saturdays at the Refuge

**April 4**

Nature Journaling  
and the Art of Seeing  
with Robin Whitfield  
8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

**April 18**

Earth Day  
Celebration  
*lots of activities  
and information*  
9 AM to 12 PM

**May 2**

Native Plant  
Propogation  
with Gail Barton

**May 2**

Bug Day and Night  
with Dr. Guyton  
*collecting, identifying and  
pinning insects*  
3:30 PM to 9:00 PM

**May 16**

Endangered  
Species Day  
*lots of activities  
and information*  
10 AM to 12 PM

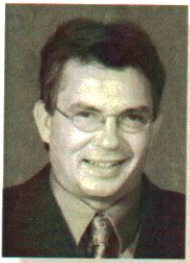
**June 6**

Ladies, Bait Your Hook  
*fishing for all levels  
of expertise,  
ladies and girls only*

**June 20**

7th Annual Youth  
Fishing Derby  
8 AM to 10 AM  
Registration \$5 - \$10





## Manager's Corner

It has been an interesting winter with temperatures jumping all across the board. Fishing season opened with a couple of inches of snow on March 1st. It was great to see Mississippi fishermen in a blizzard on Bluff Lake!

If you have not been out to the Refuge lately, you should come on out. The eagles have been getting a lot of attention with two young in the nest. The alligators are also out and sunning on warm days.

The Loakfoma Lake project is complete and the lake has been refilling. We are looking forward to the completion of its stocking throughout the spring and summer. The lake will be open for boating, but fishing will not be allowed for a couple of years in order to get the fish population to a sustainable level.

I had the pleasure of attending the "Friends Unite" Conference in Washington D.C. It was one of the biggest turnouts yet. The topics were informative, and the strength of Friends from around the nation going to Capitol Hill was unparalleled. Friends of Noxubee teamed up with the Friends of St. Catherine Creek and visited all of our Mississippi lawmakers. Marion was also invited to attend House and Senate Interior appropriations hearings, where she testified on behalf of Refuge System needs. It was a great day to be on the Hill, with a new administration at work, a new Congress in session and a Presidential Address to a joint session of Congress.

The Refuge System did get a piece of the stimulus package (\$284 million) with funding to construct new facilities, complete restoration and resource enhancement projects and some roadwork funding through the Federal Highway Administration.

Noxubee Refuge had a request package in order and, therefore, received a portion of the \$2.8 million allocated to the Southeast Region for shovel-ready road projects. We were pleased to learn our Refuge will receive \$2 million for roadwork. This will allow us to complete the majority of the work that was planned prior to the unprecedented fuel and materials cost increases which occurred over the last two years. We are looking forward to having the majority of the paved roads leading into Noxubee Refuge repaired over the next two years.

Our Volunteer/Friends Appreciation Luncheon will be held in the fall this year due to prior scheduls. Hopefully we will have a date to put on your calendars by the next newsletter.

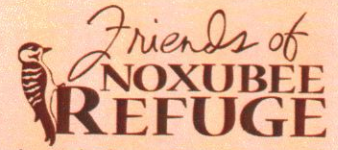
I am looking forward to seeing you out on "your refuge" real soon!

~ Henry Sansing

## Volunteers Needed

Volunteers, Friends organizations and other partners are essential allies for many programs within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Every day these devoted individuals and organizations play vital roles in helping the Service fulfill its mission and many important goals. Each year, volunteers, Friends organizations, and partners generously give time, expertise and resources to the National Wildlife Refuge System, fish hatcheries, and other Service offices. They play an important role in helping serve over 40 million visitors who enjoy our public lands.

During Fiscal Year 2007, 37,881 volunteers donated 1,491,152 hours. The value of their labor was \$27,988,923, using the Independent Sector's current dollar value of \$18.77. Their in-kind services equaled the equivalent of 717 full-time employees.



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

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- \*Noxubee Notes, quarterly
- \*1-year membership NWRA
- \*Noxubee News, quarterly
- \*Volunteer recognition
- \*Membership card & decal
- \*Voting privileges
- \*Quarterly meetings

For an application or information about the Refuge call (662) 323-5548.

### EDITOR

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