

## In the Manager's Corner...

The grand opening of the Visitor Center was a great success. I was pleased to see the turn out of people and was glad to be on the podium introducing our speakers, Hank Moseley, Jim Tisdale, Lawrence Croft and Jon Andrew. The event was a success due to the efforts of the Friends of Noxubee and our staff. Your contributions were greatly appreciated. I heard from both the Regional Director and our Chief of Refuges on how well everything looked and about the participation in the day's events.

Several members of the *Friends of Noxubee* have been busy keeping the refuge open to the public on weekends and holidays. You have made the refuge available to numerous visitors, who otherwise would not have been able to experience the visitor center. Also, your assistance has greatly increased awareness of the refuge and the *Friends of Noxubee*. A wonderful article on the refuge, Friends group and Larry Box Environmental Center was featured on January 2, in the *Commercial Dispatch*. This goes to show that the Friends group and their actions are getting noticed and making a difference. Keep up the good work!

Our next Friends meeting has been scheduled for January 20 at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Buddy Laird will be our presenter. Mr. Laird is one of our local photographic artists whose work, along with Mr. David McEwen and Mr. Jim Pruitt is displayed in our exhibit hall. It will be an interesting presentation on nature photography and photography methods. Mr. Laird will also be showing a slide presentation of fantastic photos taken on Noxubee. Anyone interested in taking nature photos whether they are a seasoned professional or a point-and-shoot kind of person, will learn something and also go away with a better appreciation and understanding of photography. Bring your questions and a new friend or two, and come on out.

Mark your calendars for noon on Saturday, March 19. In order to show our gratitude for all the help the *Friends of Noxubee* and refuge volunteers provide, we are hosting a "Friends and Volunteers Appreciation Luncheon." Bring your favorite dessert to share and the Refuge will take care of the rest. In order for us to provide the catering service, please call 662-323-5548 by March 11 to RSVP. Happy New Year on behalf of our staff and my family.

Henry R. Sansing

---

*It's a Girl! Refuge Public Use Specialist Andrea Dunstan is home with her baby girl, Kathryn Ann.*

This is a quarterly publication of the Friends of Noxubee Refuge, a nonprofit 501(c3) organization.



P.O. Box 2006  
Starkville, MS 39760  
<http://www.Friends-Of-Noxubee-Refuge.org>

TO

Editor ..... Jacque Tisdale

President ..... Lawrence Croft

Vice President ..... Joe Mulrooney

Secretary ..... Margaret Copeland

Treasurer ..... Esta Hayden

Refuge Rep ..... Andrea Dunstan

### Board of Directors

Larry Box

Jim Taylor

Buddy Laird

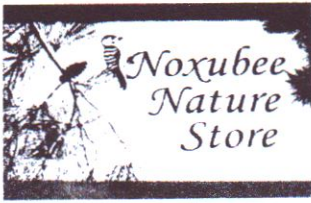
Ray Watson

Ed Lloyd

Sherrie Wiygul



## Noxubee Nature Store Opens, Operation a Success for FONR



Since opening October 2, Noxubee Nature Store has sold more than \$2,000 of merchandise. Of that, \$1,500 will be used to repay a loan from the *Friends of Blackwater Refuge* that helped purchase items to stock the store. The ideas, support, talents and donations of members of

*Friends* have been a major factor in the success of the store.

The woodcraft items donated by Bob Fye have been best sellers. Many of his turtles and alligators found their way into Christmas stockings, and his geese mobiles are flying in several homes. Bob's blue bird houses and bat houses have also sold well. If you have good scrap lumber that Bob might be able to use, please contact him. No scrap is too small! Marion Sansing has been generous with her artistic abilities and ideas, creating beautiful cards and brochures for the store and FONR. Frank Bonner has written and donated a CD-ROM, *Woody Plants that Attract Birds in Central Mississippi: How to Collect Seeds and Grow Your Own Plants*. The CD is easy to use and packed full of information for bird and plant lovers.

Other friends who have given time, effort, items and talents to getting the Store off to a good start are Sammy and Frances McDavid, Jim and Vera Taylor, Henry and Marion Sansing, Edna Wilkerson, Toni Graves, Ed Lloyd, and Larry and Florence Box. Donated items include

books, an entertainment center, a handcrafted box, framed prints, door-knockers, muscadine jelly, wooden decoys, postcards and lumber for bird and bat houses. If you have items you would like to donate, please contact Vera Taylor or Florence Box. Ellie Goodman and Margaret Copeland lent items to use for displays.

Barbara Crawford has undertaken the job of enlisting staff for the Store and Visitor Center on the weekends. Please let Barbara know if you can work for a day.

The Refuge staff has been most supportive of the Store, answering numerous questions and helping volunteers feel at home. Public Use Specialist Andrea Dunstan, Administrative Assistant Gwen Cotton and Temporary Employee Laura Bried have been most helpful as well as making sales during the week even though they are busy with their own jobs. Refuge Biologist Dave Richardson built the "woodpecker hole donation box" that generated \$177 for the first deposit. Assistant Manager Brett Werhle and Law Enforcement Officer Bobby Gentry have quickly answered our cries for help with hunting questions and door problems. Manager Henry Sansing has been so supportive, welcoming us to the Visitor Center and sharing his expertise and ideas for the Store.

These first months of the Noxubee Nature Store have been successful. We are looking forward to continued success in 2005 and encourage you to volunteer to staff the Store and/or stop in the Store to purchase an item or two!

## Calendar of Activities

**Regular Meetings of FONR:** April 15, June 16 and September 15. Please mark your 2005 calendars for these program meetings.

**FONR Board Meeting: January 20.** There will be a brief meeting of the Board at 5:30 in the Office/Visitor Center conference room. Please plan to attend prior to the full meeting.

**MS Bat Working Group: February 10.** The Third Annual Meeting of this group will begin at 9:45 in the Rotwein Theater at the Museum of Natural Science in Jackson. There is no cost to attend, and parking fees and Museum admission are waived. For more information, call 601-354-7303, ext. 120. (The Museum recently donated the bat house that was erected near Noxubee's Office/Visitor Center with the help of FONR.)

**Audubon Society Birding Field Trips: February 12, March 12 and April 9.** Participants are asked to meet at 9:00 A.M. in the Refuge Visitor Center parking lot. Members and the public are encouraged to take advantage of these guided field trips.

**Great Backyard Bird Count: February 18.** *Friends of Noxubee Refuge* and the *Oktibbeha Audubon Society* will help

**Bluebird Workshop: February 26 and March 12.** FONR will present the Annual Bluebird Workshop this year at the Refuge. Workshop participants will learn about the Eastern bluebird, see a video and construct their own bluebird house. Parents are encouraged to bring their children. To reserve a place, call the Refuge office at 662-323-5548. FONR volunteers are needed, so call 662-323-8127 to help with one of these fun days.

**FONR Nature Photography Workshop: April 16.** Details will be on the website: [www.Friends-Of-Noxubee-Refuge.org](http://www.Friends-Of-Noxubee-Refuge.org)

### 2005 Southeastern Dragonfly Society meeting, May 27-29.

This Yazoo City meeting is more of a weekend field excursion throughout the area. The main purpose will be to find at least 10 species per county in the last poorly surveyed area of the state; that means voucher specimens will be collected. For more information, e-mail Steve Krotzer at: [rskrotze@southernco.com](mailto:rskrotze@southernco.com).



### Bird Count High, Some Surprises

The annual Christmas Bird Count was conducted on and around Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge on December 18. The 21 participants had a good day of birding; starting early and keeping at it until dark.

During that full day they counted 99 species.

Three rather interesting sightings were reported: a Ross' Goose, an Anhinga (pictured left) and a Merlin. The Merlin is a small dark falcon and was spotted in the barn area of Nita Jean Randal's property that borders the Refuge.

### Newsletter Name a Consensus

Obviously, the newsletter now has a name. It is a consensus choice. Several good suggestions were submitted. For various reasons no single entry seemed to fit. The Refuge's newsletter is the *Noxubee News*. Our *Noxubee Notes* is consistent with that, fits the space, offends no one and sums up what this publication does. It notes things of interest to FONR. Thank you to those who sent in suggestions. While our name may not ZING, it works.



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT: *Some Goals Met in 2004; Some New Ones for 2005*

Thanks to ALL of our FONR Volunteers for all you did in 2004 in support of Refuge Programs.

Here I will list a few of the high priority goals we set for last year, which have been met, and I will identify the committee chairs who led some of these projects, but do not have the space to recognize all who made important contributions to their successes. One of our goals was to begin publishing a quarterly newsletter and our editor, Jacque Tisdale, published Volume 1 Number 1 in April. Jacque has done an excellent job and the newsletter is an important asset to FONR. In late June, Mark Goodman assumed the task of developing a website for FONR and by the end of August he had us on-line with a very informative, useful and attractive site. Florence Box and her "Sales Outlet Committee" worked very hard and opened the outstanding Noxubee Nature Store on October 2, in time for the Grand Opening of the Visitor Center--to whose success so many of you contributed. This very active committee has continued to improve the Nature Store and refine its operation. FONR Volunteers have kept the Visitor Center and Noxubee Nature Store open on weekends and many holidays since October 2. For the relatively smooth operation of this project we owe many thanks to Barbara Crawford, Scheduling Chair, and her dedicated team of volunteers. FONR needed professional looking stationery, membership brochures, membership cards, decals and some items bearing the FONR Logo (T-shirts, mugs, etc.) for sale in the store. Marion Sansing did an excellent job in helping design all of these and more.

Some goals for 2005 are the establishment of functioning committees for membership, publicity, newsletter printing and distribution, education and fund-raising. Therefore, we need volunteers for chairs and members of the following committees:

- MEMBERSHIP (with members in Columbus, Starkville, West Point, Louisville, Macon, Sturgis and other nearby towns and communities to recruit individual and corporate members)
- PUBLICITY (with members in nearby towns and communities who will establish working relationships with areas newspapers, radio and TV stations, etc.)
- NEWSLETTER PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION (to have the newsletters printed and mailed to the membership)
- EDUCATION (to develop and present educational programs for students and the public, and to lead field trips, etc.)
- FUND-RAISING (to seek funds to support refuge programs that are not federally or otherwise funded)

Several of the tasks listed above have been taken care of thus far by our FONR Secretary Margaret Copeland, in addition to her many responsibilities as secretary and volunteer on several projects, but she needs help.

We also need more volunteers to staff the Visitor Center on weekends so we will not overwork the members of the current team. Work began in early January on the Native Plant Garden at the Visitor Center. Work will continue throughout the year on the Demonstration Prairie and Trail at Morgan Hill. Jim Taylor's Trail Walkers have identified maintenance work that needs to be done on some of the Refuge trails. So you see, volunteers with a variety of talents are needed to assist with these and other projects. We hope that YOU will become a volunteer this year.

*Lawrence Croft*

*Editor's Note: The strong leadership, hard work and dedication of Lawrence during the formation of this Friend's Group and its subsequent success is immeasurable. Thanks, Mr. President.*



### Eagles Here, Five Sighted

During December, five eagles have been sighted around Bluff and Loakfoma Lakes. Three immature and two mature eagles were seen in the course of a few minutes, confirming the total. Courting behavior has been observed, so there is hope the mature couple will nest on the Refuge. The eagles can be spotted any time, but the best time seems to be late in the afternoon. One day a pair could be seen for several hours off the Visitor Center deck. Reports indicate the eagles also fly between Browning Creek lake and the Refuge.

Go try your luck at seeing the eagles. Don't forget the Nature Store and Visitor Center are open weekends from 10 to 4.

### Native Plant Garden Added to O/VC

The area surrounding the new Office/Visitor Center is changing. A collaborative effort between the Refuge staff, FONR,

volunteers from the MSU Department of Landscape Architecture and the Mississippi Native Plant Society are installing a native plant garden. The garden will focus on the diversity and beauty of Mississippi native plants and demonstrate landscape uses.

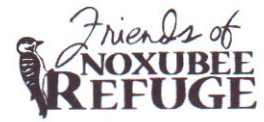
During the Fall Semester at MSU, 33 students of Dr. Bob Brzuszek's "Design One" class submitted plans for various gardens. In early December, Noxubee staff and FONR volunteers reviewed all the plans and heard many of their oral presentations. Everyone present was impressed by their high quality.

Refuge staff and FONR are beginning to merge the plans into a workable master plan for the garden. The design students have volunteered to help, so why not join also? Contact the refuge office at 662-323-5548 or call Marion Sansing at 662-615-4374. If interested in the Native Plant Society, call Dr. Bob Brzuszek at 662-325-7896





# Noxubee Notes



Volume 2 Number 1

January 2005

## Photos, Hints Presented by *FONR* Member Laird

The January 20 program for the *Friends of Noxubee Refuge* will feature Nature Photography presented by Kermit Laird of Starkville. Kermit is a charter member of the *FONR* and serves on the Board of Directors. The program will give an overview of nature photography, from working with small close-up subjects to the larger reptiles, birds and mammals and will include hints on floral portraits, landscapes and abstracts. How-to tips will be presented with illustrations and will include what equipment to use in the field, where to find your subjects, how to approach wildlife subjects, how best to compose your subject, when to make your pictures, how to determine exposure and more. Personal anecdotes from his field experiences will make the program enjoyable and entertaining, as well as informative.

Kermit has pursued professional-level photography since 1989. His intent is to build a business based on producing revenue through self-publishing and licensing the rights to "stock" photographs for a number of end uses including advertisements, cards, calendars, prints, posters, books and magazines.

Kermit's photographs have been widely exhibited throughout Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas, the most notable being at the Museum of Natural History in Houston, Texas. He has lectured and made slide presentations to many groups, clubs, schools and colleges. His photographs and articles have been published in national and regional magazines, including *American Photo*, *Canoe*, *Ducks Unlimited*, *Outdoor Photographer*, *Falcon for Kids*, *Tenn-Tom Sportsman*, *Louisiana Conservationist*, and *Mississippi Outdoors*. He has worked in a volunteer service agreement with the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, and has been a donor artist for the local Celebration of the Arts for many years. He is a member of the North American Nature Photography Association.

To enjoy this interesting program, plan to be in the Tisdale Auditorium January 20 at 6:30.

*Note:* A Nature Photography Workshop is scheduled for April 16. Details will be posted on the website.

## Know Our Refuge Staff . . . Gwen Cotton

Gwen Cotton is not yet a "fixture" at Noxubee, but she has been Administrative Assistant since 1977. In the intervening years, Gwen has seen many changes; most notable are the technological and physical upgrades at Noxubee. Gwen said, "There were no computers when I started, but we did have an electric typewriter and one telephone line."

While there have been only four Managers during Gwen's tenure, she has helped thirteen Assistant Managers who have gone on to become Managers throughout the United States—from Washington, D.C. to Alaska and Hawaii and in between.

Personnel and equipment may have changed, but Gwen says her job remains the same. She is the contracting officer; she tracks the Refuge



budget that in good years topped \$4 million, maintains payroll and personal paperwork; and in her words does: "just the normal stuff an administrative assistant is supposed to do."

She obviously does a good job at those tasks, being the recipient of the *Regional Director's Award for Outstanding Performance*. She also is called upon frequently to share her computer expertise at other Refuges and at the Regional Office.

Gwen enjoys her job, saying, "I love Noxubee, the people I meet, and the job I do. Every day is fun-- well, some days . . ." Could she be thinking of the hectic hunting season?

Gwen holds a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Southern Mississippi, and lives in Macon with husband Dan, a retired wildlife biologist. Their son, Bill, is a student at Ole Miss, and their daughter, Braley, lives and works in Arkansas. Since granddaughter Addy's birth, Arkansas is Gwen's favorite place to visit!

## Noxubee Office/Visitor Center Opens with Style

The October 2 official Grand Opening of Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge was well executed and well attended. Almost 300 people signed the register with several others circumventing it. Manager Henry Sansing served as host for the brief Opening Ceremonies. Speakers included Aide of Chip Pickering Hank Mosely, who delivered congratulatory remarks from the Congressman; former Refuge Manager Jim Tisdale, who gave insight into the process of getting the facility built; *FONR* President Lawrence Croft, who explained the role of the Friends group; and Assistant Regional Director Jon Andrew, who congratulated

all those associated with the procurement and operation of the new Office/Visitor Center.

After the ribbon cutting, visitors toured the Office/Visitor Center, looked at the displays and viewed the film in the Tisdale Auditorium. Outside, there were a number of interesting booths set up and manned primarily by Refuge staff and Friends. Every comment this editor heard was complementary. Refuge staff and *FONR* are to be congratulated-- it was a memorable opening day of a Center that will be a highlight for the Refuge for years to come.