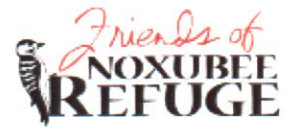


Noxubee Notes



Volume 3, Number 1

January 2006

New Friends of Noxubee Refuge Officers, Board Introduced for 2006-2007

New FONR officers and board members began their term January 1. Some of the officers and directors are familiar but several are new to leadership positions. A bit of introduction follows except for President Mulrooney, introduced in the President's Report.

• **Frank Bonner** is a retired US Forest Service research scientist who headed up the Tree Seed Research Unit in Starkville until retirement in 1996. He is a native of Shelby County, TN, and a graduate of LSU and Duke University. For many years the staff at Noxubee was very helpful to Frank, allowing him to freely collect seeds for research studies. He is glad to repay some of this cooperation by volunteering in the Friends organization.

• **Florence Box**, librarian, is retired from Starkville High School. She began working to help open the successful Noxubee Nature Store. She continues to manage the Nature Store as committee chair. Florence is a lifelong resident of the nearby Oktoc Community. She enjoys traveling, reading, and quilting.

• **Larry Box**, retired superintendent of the Starkville School District and avid outdoors man, enjoys Friends activities and encourages others to get involved in FONR. While in high school he was a summer worker on the Refuge and continues to volunteer frequently. Larry is vice-president of FONR.

• An avid bird watcher, **Margaret Copeland** is a tireless volunteer for Noxubee Refuge and other conservation organizations. She is serving a second two-year term as FONR secretary. She has received several awards for volunteerism, including the Regional Director's Award. Margaret has special interest and expertise in the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. She is a native of Starkville.

• **Lawrence Croft** retired from MSU as Professor and Head Emeritus, Department of Physics and Astronomy. He served as Charter President of FONR and worked tirelessly to implement the Friends group. Last year he received the Regional Director's Honor Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. He will present the February 4 program, *Astronomy for Beginners*, beginning at 5 p.m. at the Visitor Center.

• As a Noxubee county resident, **Gale Haygood** grew up in the "backyard" of Noxubee Refuge. She spent many Sunday afternoons exploring the trails around the lake. Until three years ago Gale worked as an industrial chemist. She is employed with the Mississippi State Chemical Laboratory as a consumer protection chemist.

• **Kermit (Buddy) Laird**, a lifelong resident of Starkville, is manager of the Drafting Department of Gulf States Manufacturers. Hours away from work are devoted to free-lance photography, specializing in nature photography. He is widely published nationally and many of his pictures can be seen in the exhibits of Noxubee Visitor Center. He will conduct the second Noxubee Photography Workshop on April 1. See related article on page 3.

• **Linda Lodato** moved here from New Jersey to be near her daughter, a student at the MSU vet school. Linda liked the area and decided to make this her home. She is an amateur photographer and has been active in FONR activities.

Continued, see Officers on page 2.

Be sure to attend the first meeting of 2006 on January 19 at 6:30, in the Tisdale Auditorium. Sheldon Webster will recount his years growing up on Noxubee.

Know Our Refuge Staff . . . Bobby Gentry

Law enforcement officer Bobby Gentry does all the things you would expect of an officer. He patrols the refuge, checks hunters, breaks up those late night parties, helps stranded motorists—you get it. However, some of the things he does are a bit surprising.

Bobby is one of ten officers belonging to a specially trained team called SORT, short for Special Operations Response Team. The origins of the team date back to 1994, when a Region 4 Drug Task Force was formed to combat the use of Wildlife Refuges as marijuana growing areas. Four successful details or operations found the illegal drugs on Okefenokee, Cache River, Merritt Island and Piedmont National Wildlife Refuges. The benefits of having a team prepared and ready to operate in remote locations with little or no amenities for up to three weeks at a time were obvious. The team became SORT, and no longer focuses only on illegal drugs.

SORT members train together each year and are available, with 24-hours notice, to respond to a variety of situations. Bobby and team members have been involved in Arizona border patrol for illegal aliens and drug smuggling; bear poaching in Okefenokee



NWR; Pelican Island Centennial celebration crowd control; G-8 Conference security at Savanna, GA; protecting Shasta Dam in Redding, CA, and the Department of Interior building in Washington, D.C. following 9/11; initial responses to refuges affected by hurricanes during the past four years; and securing the Vieques NWR in Puerto Rico.

When called upon, SORT steps in and provides extra law enforcement help throughout the nation. Individual members like Bobby Gentry then go back to their own refuges to patrol and take care of their regular law enforcement duties. Until the next time.

Bobby graduated from Arkansas Tech University in 1982 with a BS in Fisheries and Wildlife Management. He began working for the USFWS in February 1986, at Wichita Mountains NWR, OK, as a Park Ranger (LE Officer), and transferred to Noxubee in November 1987. He has two children, Jessica and Samantha, and one grandson, Tanner Shurden. ■

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: 2005 was a Busy Year for FONR

Greetings. I hope you all had wonderful holidays. It's hard to believe that 2006 is here already. I am both excited and apprehensive about serving as your President for the next two years. Lawrence Croft has done a great job of getting this organization on its feet. He deserves a big pat on the back for the tremendous amount of time that he spent seeing FONR off to a good start. That's what makes me a little apprehensive. I have some big shoes to fill, but with your help I think that we can continue to build on the momentum that Lawrence has given to us.

Since many of you do not know me, I thought I would give you a brief biographical sketch. I grew up in Memphis and moved to Starkville in 1977 to begin a Masters of Agriculture program in pest management. After completing my degree in 1978, I worked for the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service in Helena. I returned to Starkville in 1980 to begin a Ph.D. in Entomology at MSU. As a graduate student I began working for the Agricultural Research Service's Cotton Host Plant Resistance Research Unit in Starkville. After finishing in 1984, I continued to work in cotton host plant resistance until 1990 when I took a job with ARS at Stoneville, MS, working in insecticide application technology. Then in 2000, I returned to Starkville for the third time to work for the U.S. Forest Service's Wood Products Insect Research Unit doing research on termites. I was grateful to be able to return to Starkville and especially grateful for the opportunity to once again spend time on the Noxubee Refuge.

Looking back on 2005, FONR had a busy year.

- The Native Plant Garden was initiated through a lot of hard work from FONR volunteers, most especially Marion Sansing and Bob Brzszuk. Three days of planting and two days of mulching should help the garden get off to a good start. Thanks to all of you that helped with that project.
- The Morgan Hill Prairie Demonstration is also off to a good start. Refuge staff burned the area and spread gravel on the trail. Jim Taylor applied herbicide to knock back some of the unwanted vegetation.
- Buddy Laird conducted a nature photography workshop in April, and FONR sponsored a nature photography contest beginning in June. Sixteen entrants participated in the first FONR nature photography contest. Winners were announced during Refuge Family Day.
- The fishing derby was a success again this year. There were lots of smiling young faces that day in June. To tell the truth, I think the grown-ups enjoyed it just as much.
- Refuge Family Day in October, a part of Refuge Celebration Week, was outstanding with about 400 in attendance. The programs, activities, and music from Jubilee were excellent.
- The trail walkers continued to monitor conditions of the trails on the refuge and placed new trail markers on all the trails.
- The Nature Store in the Visitor Center completed its first year in operation. Florence Box and Vera Taylor have done an outstanding job of stocking the store with much help from Bob Fye's wood crafting talents. Florence and Vera are in need of help with researching new items from manufacturers to add to the store's inventory. Anyone wishing to help should contact Florence or me.
- Volunteers have kept the Visitor Center operational on weekends and holidays. Thanks to Barbara Crawford for coordinating that project. She can always use additional volunteers to work the VC. I encourage members to consider volunteering at the VC. It is a worthwhile and enjoyable way to help FONR.
- The website committee, under the leadership and technical expertise of Mark Goodman, improved the quality of FONR's website. Check it out: www.Friends-of-Noxubee-Refuge.org.

Thanks to all who have given their time and talents to FONR's programs and activities during 2005. I encourage members who have not gotten involved to make a point to do so in 2006.

In conclusion, I'd like to make use of my poetic license if I may. This fall I thought that since I was going to become the President of the Friends of Noxubee Refuge that I ought to get to know Mother Noxubee a little better. I spent as much time as I could this fall riding my bike along the trails and roads of the refuge, some of which I had never been on. I got to see Mother Noxubee in her gait attire just before she takes her winter rest. I thoroughly enjoyed the time that I spent with her. Just as with any relationship, the more time you devote to it, the more meaningful it becomes. I recommend that to all of you. I suggest that you get out and spend more time with Mother Noxubee walking or biking her trails and roads; you won't regret it. Another way to build a relationship with Mother Noxubee is to get involved with some of the programs and activities of FONR. This is an excellent way to develop rapport with Her and other members of FONR. So, if you have already broken a New Year's resolution and are looking for one that's easy to keep, I suggest you consider a resolution to spend more quality time with Mother Noxubee.

Joe Maloney

Officers...Continued from page 1

- **John Long** is a native of Sturgis, MS. He works for the Mississippi State University Extension Service in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology. He lives in Starkville with his wife Leanne and his black Lab, Gabe. John is pursuing a Ph.D. at MSU. In his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, and spending time outdoors.
- **Jack McCarty** has lived in Starkville the majority of his life. He grew up hunting and fishing with his father at Noxubee Refuge. He is a graduate of Starkville High School and MSU. He serves as the Director of Development for the Southern Region for Ducks Unlim-

ited, Inc. Jack and his wife, Jimmie Faye, enjoy fishing, traveling and spending time with their Chocolate Lab, Redlin.

- New treasurer **Sherrie Wiygul** retired as biology teacher at Starkville High School at the end of last school year. Her past conservation activities include battling the Mirex fire ant spray program in environmentally sensitive areas and working with the long-disfunt environmental group, CLEAN, to stop the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. She lives on a farm in Winston County, where she and her husband, Glenn, raise sheep. ■

FONR Takes a Big Role in Making Saturday Activities Possible

FONR is assisting with refuge activities the first and third Saturdays of each month. Volunteers are needed to make them a success. If you can help, please call Marion Sansing at 662-615-4374 or email marionsansing@aol.com. For additional information call Andrea Dunstan at 662-323-5548, or check the FONR website at www.Friends-of-Noxubee-Refuge.org.

- Jan. 14 9:00 - 1:00 Work on Boardwalk in Native Plant Garden.
Jan. 21 9:00 - 11:00 Introduction to Backyard Birding:
in preparation for the Backyard Bird Count on February 11.
Extra binoculars are available.
Feb. 4 9:00 - 11:30 Walk the site for a new trail off Hwy. 25.
5:00 Astronomy for Beginners:
slide show and outdoor stargazing. Presented by Lawrence
Croft. Bring binoculars; extras are available.
Feb. 18 10:00 - 11:30 Bluebird Workshop: make & take a box home.
Registration is required.

- Mar. 4 10:00 - 11:30 Repeat of Bluebird Workshop
Mar. 18 8:00 - 12:00 Earth Day activities, Photo Walk at 8:00
April 1 Photography Workshop taught by Buddy Laird;
registration and fee required
April 15 TBA Celebrate John Muir

Laird Teaches 2nd Photo Workshop

Kermit (Buddy) Laird will teach a one-day photography workshop April 1. This is the second year FONR has sponsored the workshop with Laird. The award winning nature photographer says, "The workshop will benefit anyone wanting to photograph nature, be they beginner or expert. It is applicable to both users of film and digital formats." The full day workshop begins at 8 a.m. at the Tisdale Auditorium in Noxubee Visitor Center. There is a registration fee of \$50 which includes handouts and lunch. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from an experienced professional. Call the refuge office at 662-323-5548 to register.

Help Wanted

Noxubee Nature Store needs help in several areas. Please choose one or more jobs!

- Assist in sales at FONR meetings, Noxubee Refuge Day, special events
- Preview catalogs and web sites for recommendations of items to purchase for resale
- Assist in maintaining stock
- Represent Noxubee Nature Store at crafts fairs, bazaars
- Write brief book reviews of Nature Store books for Noxubee Notes.

Contact Vera Taylor (734-5334) or Florence Box (323-6895) for more information.

New Plants in Native Garden

Work continues on the native plant garden in front of the Visitor Center. FONR volunteers put in additional plants in the fall that include the following perennials:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Bee Balm | Lyreleaf Sage |
| Butterfly Weed | Mallow |
| Cardinal Flower | Mistflower |
| Drooping Coneflower | New England Aster |
| Evening Primrose | Oxeye Daisy |
| Horsetail | Sneezeweed |
| Iris | Sunflower |
| Joe Pye Weed | Tickseed |
| Lady Fern | Yarrow |



As time permits, each will be identified with markers.

Nature Store Showcase of FONR Talent

Noxubee Nature Store has several new items for sale, some unique to the store. Among the items are a wooden laser-made ornament designed especially for the Store. The ornament features the silhouette of a Red-cockaded Woodpecker feeding its young. An attached card gives information on the woodpecker.

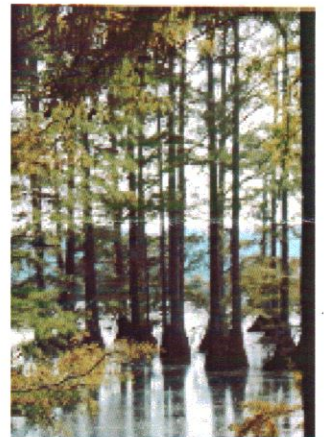
While visiting daughter Marion Sansing, Klaus Schiessler from Munich, Germany, constructed several Brown Creeper nesting boxes for the store. To make the box look as much like the natural nesting site of the Brown Creeper as possible, the bark is left on the slabs of hardwood used in construction. Sarah Kinard painted gourds for sale, and John Long made and contributed turkey calls. Also added for sale are the *Mississippi Gardener* magazine, a guide to gardening/landscaping, and Walt Grayson's new book, *Looking Around Mississippi*. Friends of Noxubee has a wide variety of talents!

Photo Contest Well Received, New Contest Announced

Participants entered 26 photographs for the FONR First Amateur Nature Photography Contest held last summer. The photos were judged by professional nature photographers David McEwen and Buddy Laird and amateur photographer Linda Lodato. Winners were announced during the October National Wildlife Week activities.

In the adult category, James Bryant from Starkville was named first place winner. Kathrin Dodds from Jackson placed second, and third place went to Sarah Kinard from Brooksville. In the under 16 youth category, Mary Catherine McKibben, Mathiston, won first place, with Carley Beard from Columbus winning second place, and Sharon Davis from Starkville placing third. All photographs are on display at the Visitor Center.

FONR is sponsoring a second Amateur Nature Photography Contest with some rule changes. All entries must be photographed on Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge between October 2005 and September 2006, allowing entrants to take advantage of the four seasons on the refuge. Digital photos will be accepted with limited modifications. There are two categories: wildlife and scenery. Official rules and an entry form for the 2006 contest will be available at the refuge visitor center and the Friends' website. ■



Mary Catherine McKibben
First Place Photo, Youth

In the Manager's Corner . . .

Well, I mentioned in the last newsletter that it wouldn't be long before we were fussing about cold weather, and here it is. I hope you noticed the wonderful display of fall colors we had this season. It was one of the prettiest I can remember. The weather was also perfect for the opening of deer and waterfowl seasons. We thought our hunt numbers would be down this year because of Hurricane Katrina and high fuel prices, but that hasn't been the case. Permit sales are the same as last year. General visitation hasn't decreased either as our guest register logged visitors from 38 states and 15 countries for the year.

I want to thank all our Friends and partners who helped make our October 15th National Wildlife Refuge Week event so successful. The weather could not have been more accommodating, and we had an excellent turnout with approximately 400 visitors enjoying the day's festivities. Mark your calendars for next year's event.

The native plant garden is coming along well with another 266 cubic yards of mulch having been spread and 883 native plants having been planted. Construction of the boardwalk in the garden is also progressing. Friends and volunteers have contributed numerous days, and 386 hours to date, towards the completion of this project. Good job gang!

More progress is coming our way! On December 5th, I was pleased to present a grant to the Noxubee County Board of Supervisors. The grant will help fund the paving from Bluff Lake Road to the existing pavement on Lynn Creek Road leading to Highway 45 in Brooksville. A special thanks is in order to Senator Thad Cochran who made the funding available and to Senator Trent Lott and Congressman Chip Pickering for their support in obtaining the funding.

Happy New Year and Best Wishes for the holidays to all our Friends!

Henry Sansing

\$\$\$\$\$ Renew Membership in FONR: Enjoy Full Array of Programs \$\$\$\$\$

Enjoy all the activities and programs highlighted in this newsletter and more, when you renew your membership or join FONR for the first time. The current membership rates are as follows:

\$15 regular individual membership
\$20 family membership
\$100 patron membership
\$100 corporate membership
\$250 individual life membership
\$350 family life membership
\$1000 sustaining membership
\$5000 benefactor membership

Other methods of donation include memorial gifts, bequests, designated gifts, etc. All donations are tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to:
Friends of Noxubee Refuge
2970 Bluff Lake Road
Brooksville, MS 39739

This is a quarterly publication of the Friends of Noxubee Refuge, a non-profit 501c(3) organization.



2970 Bluff Lake Road
Brooksville, MS 39739

<http://www.Friends-Of-Noxubee-Refuge.org>

Editor Jacque Tisdale

President Joe Mulrooney

Vice President Larry Box

Secretary Margaret Copeland

Treasurer Sherrie Wiygul

Refuge Rep Andrea Dunstan

Board of Directors

Frank Bonner John Long

Florence Box Linda Lodato

Lawrence Croft Jack McCarty

Gale Haygood Jacque Tisdale

Buddy Laird