



Friends Promote Refuge with Billboard

The Friends of Noxubee Refuge may be the first to have a billboard installed to advertise their refuge. Lamar Advertising offered free advertising space on their currently vacant billboards. The Friends paid to have a 48'x14' vinyl poster printed and Lamar is hanging it free of charge in locations surrounding the refuge. Friends used James Bryant's beautiful photo of Bluff Lake, a winner from the 2005 Annual Amateur Nature

Photography Contest, as a background. In December, the billboard was first installed on Louisville Road in Starkville across from Starkville High School. If you would like to get a better view of the photograph, it is currently available on the FONR website (click on the link for "2005 FONR photo contest winners"); This month you can see it on Hwy 45 in Columbus next to the old University Mall.

GENERAL MEETING JANUARY 18, 6:30 P.M.

We invite you to join us for our general meeting with a presentation from Refuge staff on The Role of Fire in Southern Pine Ecosystems and a social gathering with refreshments afterwards. You may bring a friend; meetings are open to the public. We will discuss the effects of prescribed burning on plant and animal communities and forest structure, and the process of prescribed burning from the aspects of planning, objectives, and smoke management. While much of the discussion focuses on the local refuge, natural and prescribed fire is one of the most effective processes to modify habitats and benefit the animals that rely on them.

AT THE VISITOR CENTER

2006 Memorial Donations

were made in memory of

James Ray Watson

Mary Alice Box

Dr. Kermit Denver Laird

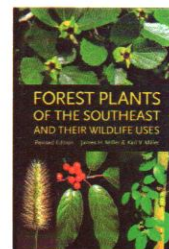
Wynelle McGinnis

These gifts are a living memorial, as they help protect and promote the natural treasures of Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge.

Book Review

WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT RAGWEED AND POISON IVY?

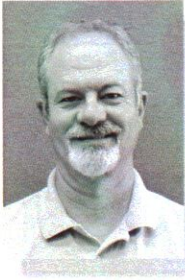
After contact with these two plants and the resulting sneezing or scratching, many of us have most likely asked such a question. As it turns out, these plants are of significant value to wildlife. Ragweed is among the most important seed and cover producing plants for the bobwhite quail, mourning dove, American goldfinch, dark-eyed junco, and various sparrows. In addition, the plant is a common, preferred, white-tailed deer browse during spring and summer. Fruit from poison ivy and poison oak is consumed by many species of song birds during winter.



Woodpeckers, northern flickers, and yellow-bellied sapsuckers are particularly fond of it. These facts are examples of the type of information contained in the book **FOREST PLANTS OF THE SOUTHEAST AND THEIR**

WILDLIFE USES. Authors James Miller and Karl Miller describe 330 species of plants with text and 650 close-up photos. The book is excellent for plant identification, containing detailed information about wildlife usage of each plant.

Highly recommended by Jim Taylor and Larry Box, **FOREST PLANTS OF THE SOUTHEAST AND THEIR WILDLIFE USES** is just one of many nature-related items available for sale in the Noxubee Nature Store.



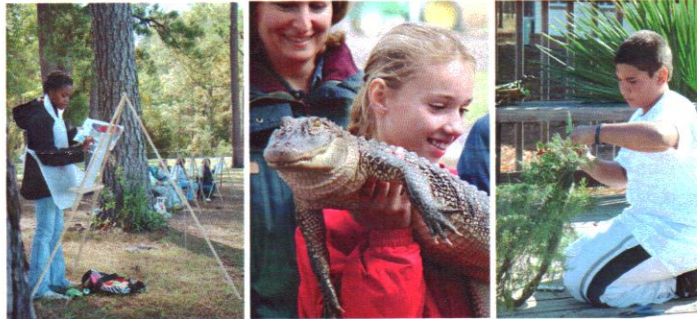
President's Report

Greetings: I hope you had a merry Christmas and a happy new year. Looking back on the fall, I think that you will agree that this fall was the most spectacular that we have had in recent years. Lady Noxubee was in glorious attire. Her fashion designer outdid himself this year.

Saturdays at the Refuge programs during the summer and fall were outstanding. The fourth annual youth fishing derby, held on the new ponds in Smith Field, was a huge success. The new ponds greatly improved fishing access. There were plenty of heavy stringers hauled away by many satisfied young anglers.

The following Saturday, the first Ladies Bait Your Hook program in Mississippi, developed by Henry Sansing and taught by Ms. Kris Godwin, was conducted. Ladies learned the basics of fishing in an one-hour session followed by an opportunity to practice their new-found fishing knowledge at the Smith Field ponds. Every participant caught at least one fish, and a few were taught fish cleaning later in the day.

Programs on Mississippi's endangered species, keeping a nature journal, as well as night prowls were held in July and August. Two new programs were offered in September, one permitted participants an opportunity to ride the Refuge on horseback. Twenty-two equestrians enjoyed a ten-mile trek through the Refuge. Another program provided an opportunity to drum with nature. Dr. Robert Damm led a group of twenty in a drum-circle at sunset beside Bluff Lake. A butterfly tour at Morgan Hill and a photo-walk were also held in September. The first weekend in October, visitors were given the opportunity to canoe on Bluff Lake. The Refuge's twelve canoes were fully utilized the entire day. Judging by the responses from participants, this year's Saturday programs were much appreciated by Refuge visitors. Thanks to all who conducted and assisted with these programs. The National Refuge Week Celebration was a big success again this year despite the fog and chilly temperatures. Approximately 300 visitors took advantage of educational programs, craft activities, demonstrations, music, and food. This year's Saturdays concluded with programs on Painting the Fall Colors, Nature Crafts for the Holidays, and a Preparation for the Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Thanks to all who gave their time and talents.



Photos © Marion Sansing

The Nature Store continues to do steady business and provides a source of funds for our programs. Florence Box, Vera Taylor and Marion Sansing have done a wonderful job of stocking our store with truly unique items. Again, one of our most cherished contributors, Bob Fye, donated numerous unique, handcrafted wooden toys and figurines.

Our membership has increased over the past year to 160 members with 92 family memberships, thanks to the efforts of Jack McCarty and Marion Sansing.

On a final note, many of you may not be aware that the National Wildlife Refuge System is in a crisis. Flat and declining budgets are forcing the Refuge System to struggle with fulfilling its mission of wildlife conservation. Recently, two regions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Northeast and Southeast, announced how they propose to deal with these cuts. These "downsizing" plans illustrate the tremendous impact inadequate budgets are having on refuges.

The Northeast Region's plan calls for eliminating 24 permanent positions in the first phase, with more positions slated for elimination later. Some refuges will be considered "stay strong" refuges and will receive the most resources for operation. Other refuges will either lose some positions or be completely de-staffed. In the first phase alone, 17 refuge manager positions are slated for elimination. The Southeast Region's plan, despite the opportunistic abolishment of 64 permanent field positions from 2004-2006, targets 88 more positions between October 2006 and September 2009. This equates to a 20% overall cut in the Southeast Region workforce. You can view the entire plan at this website: <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/workforce/>.

These measures will mean that Friends groups throughout the country will need to step up to help mitigate the effects of these budget cuts. We are planning a brown-bag dinner meeting on January 23 at 5:30 at the Refuge Visitor Center to discuss future plans for projects and programs and FONR's role in support of the Refuge. I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend this important meeting.

See you at the Refuge.

Joe Mulrooney



NOXUBEE NATURE STORE

WHERE ALL PROFITS SUPPORT REFUGE PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

Two lines of jewelry have recently been added to our inventory: Jabebo Earrings and BAMBOO Jewelry. Jabebo Earrings are made from recycled materials and feature nature designs. Unique, in that each pair features two different poses of an insect, bird, or animal, the earrings are colorful and educational. BAMBOO Jewelry designs are also inspired by nature. The cloisonné earrings, pins, and pendants are packaged in handmade bamboo gift boxes.

Two new titles of interest to outdoor lovers are WILDFLOWER WATCH by Margaret Gratz and TURKEY ROOST TALES by Bobby Dale. Both authors are from Tupelo, Mississippi. Gratz, the Earth Lady columnist for the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, describes more than two hundred wildflowers native to the northeast corner of the state, while Dale's book relates his and his hunting buddies' stories. Dale has also published DOUBLE GOBBLE. All are enjoyable reading and are available at the Nature Store.

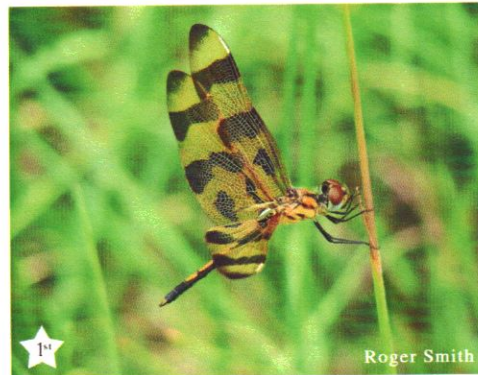
STORE HOURS

MON-FRI 8:00AM - 4:30PM
SAT-SUN 10:00AM - 4:00PM



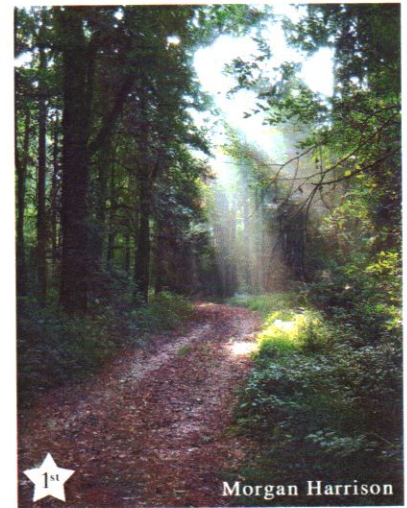
Photography Contest Was Well Received

FONR accepted 37 entries for its Second Annual Amateur Nature Photography Contest. Unfortunately there were no youth entries in 2006 and we sure hope to change that this year. Photos were judged in two separate categories, Wildlife and Scenery, by two professional nature photographers, David McEwen and Buddy Laird. In the wildlife category first place went to Roger Smith



1st

Roger Smith



1st

Morgan Harrison



EDITOR NEEDED

NOXUBEE NOTES is in desperate need of an editor. Unfortunately Jacque Tisdale resigned last year and so far we have had no one show interest in the now vacant position. If you are interested, please contact Joe Mulrooney at 662-338-3129 or 662-323-7121.

Saturdays at the Refuge

Every first & third Saturday of the month, weekend programs and activities are made possible with the help of Friends of Noxubee Refuge. Check our website, a local newspaper, or call the refuge at (662) 323-5548.

Activities identified with the blue badge are also part of the Junior Refuge Ranger program.

- JAN. 6, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.  Eagles & Waterfowl, a guided bird walk
- JAN. 20, 5 p.m.  Astronomy for Beginners

from Starkville, second place to James Felix from Columbus, and third place to Kathrin Dodds from Jackson. All winners in the scenery, plants or people category were from Starkville, with Morgan Harrison receiving first place, Lawrence Croft, second place, and Roger Smith, third place. The winning pictures can be seen on the FONR website. All photographs have been on display at the visitor center since October, where the Refuge has installed a new gallery system. Ribbons and prizes valued at \$100, \$50 and \$25 were awarded for each category. The contest was organized and sponsored by FONR. Applications for the 2007 contest are available at the visitor center. All entries must be photographed on Noxubee NWR between 10/15/06 and 9/15/07.



- FEB. 3, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.  Celebrate World Wetlands Day
- FEB. 17, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  Bluebird Workshop
- MAR. 3, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  Women in the Outdoors, don't miss it!
Pre-registration required
- MAR. 17, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  Bluebird Workshop
- APR. 7, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  Paint the Spring Colors
- APR. 21, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.  Earth Day Celebration at Osborn Prairie



From the Refuge Manager

It has been a busy winter so far. Hunting season is underway with an average turnout of deer hunters and harvest. It also looks like this summer's improvements in the Prissock Fields and green-tree reservoirs really paid off by helping increase our waterfowl numbers. Species diversity has increased also, including one unusual hybrid -- a white-phased or partial domestic strain, snow white mallard.

This summer we hope to get the rehabilitation project for Loakfoma Lake going full swing. Noxubee County will start paving 3.2 miles of gravel road this summer, to complete the pavement from the Refuge to Highway 45 in Brooksville. With the assistance of the Federal Highways Administration we will improve and rehabilitate 30.5 miles of Refuge interior roads over the next three years.

Recent budgets have necessitated staff reductions across the refuge system. As a result, Noxubee Refuge has become Noxubee Complex, and we now have the supervisory oversight and admin-

istrative duties for Choctaw National Wildlife Refuge. Presently staffed by three employees, Choctaw is a unique 4, 218-acre bottomland hardwood area along the Tombigbee River near Coffeeville, Alabama.

Reflecting on 2006, I am amazed at the Friends' accomplishments, including the public programs and the enthusiasm of the members who helped put it all together. It's obvious that the Friends of Noxubee Refuge is a leader among Friends groups across the nation. The whole staff and I are thankful and feel fortunate to have this group providing support for Noxubee and the refuge system.

I would like to invite all members to our Third Annual Friends and Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon to be held April 14, at 12:00 p.m. at the Larry Box Environmental Education Center. Please make your reservations by April 9th, at 323-5548. I look forward to seeing you all there.

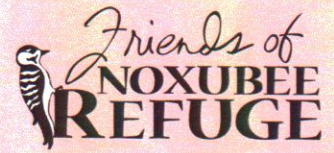
Best wishes for the New Year.

Henry Sansing

Biannual Southeastern Friends Conference at Ding Darling NWR

On the beautiful island of Sanibel, Florida, 167 participants from 40 refuges had a chance to share a wealth of knowledge and listen to great speakers. Joe and Camille Mulrooney and Marion Sansing attended, representing the Friends of Noxubee Refuge. The three-day meeting offered presentations and workshops with opportunities to share ideas and experiences with Friends from other refuges. Sam Hamilton, our Regional Director; Jim Kurth, Deputy Director; and Evan Hirsche, President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, gave praise and

expressed their appreciation to all Friends (40,000 nationwide volunteers). Current issues of budget cuts and shortfalls were the primary topics. The ever-greater need for help from Friends groups to fill manpower & financial gaps, as well as raising awareness and staying in touch with state representatives, was expressed by all. The conference was hosted by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Ding Darling Wildlife Society and the National Wildlife Refuge Association. Friends enjoyed a warm welcome, beautiful accommodations and a well-organized conference.



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

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Larry Box	Vice-President
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JOIN FOUR TODAY!

Your tax deductible contributions will be used to fund current and future projects and programs at Noxubee NWR. Individual membership starts at only \$15.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- * Invitations to special tours, events and presentations
- * Noxubee Notes, quarterly
- * 1-year membership in Natl. Wildlife Refuge Assoc.
- * Quarterly newsletter from Noxubee NWR
- * Volunteer recognition
- * Membership card and decal
- * Voting privileges
- * Quarterly meetings held on the third Thursday of January, April, June and September

2970 BLUFF LAKE ROAD
BROOKSVILLE MS 39739

<http://Friends-of-Noxubee-Refuge.org>

For a membership application or information about the Refuge call (662) 323-5548