

American Spirit of Volunteerism

Were the "Good Old Days" really as good as we make them out to be? Looking at conservation, it is evident that we have come a long way in the last century; species have been brought back from the brink of extinction and large tracts of land have been set aside for preservation. We now recognize the land as an ecological community, even though we are still drawn to look at species, habitats or resources individually.

While the public spirit of our modern world is mostly perceived as self-absorbed, less neighborly and not very compassionate, and we do wish for old times again, many of us don't realize that more Americans are involved in civic activities than any time in our history. Half of our population devotes four hours a week to volunteering for the cause of their choice. And it is not just women anymore who contribute their efforts. These days the American volunteer spirit has spread to all ages



and genders. This generous participation plays an important role in our national life, giving us an opportunity to make a difference and shape America's national character. Volunteerism does not only raise our nation's character but also the character of each participant. Do we spend our spare time in becoming a better person, do what is expected of us and living up to the American spirit of lending a hand? Not only that, we come away feeling exhilarated by having made a difference. It makes us proud. It gives us a sense of freedom and it makes us feel good.

Social activist and onetime government official John Gardner thinks that almost every major social breakthrough in America originated in the volunteer sector. "If volunteers and voluntary organizations were to disappear from our national life, we would

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon



Margaret Copeland receiving recognition

On April 14, Henry Sansing and the Refuge Staff hosted the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon.

Over 40 volunteers were treated to a catered lunch with all the trimmings. The Refuge staff recognized all attendees by giving each a volunteer pin. The Friends presented a Certificate of Appreciation and a Corporate Membership to Justin (Jay Tee) Thompson from Lamar Outdoor Advertising for their support. Jay Tee has been instru-

mental in displaying our billboard along highways in Oktibbeha, Clay and Lowndes counties. Lamar has also featured four different David McEwen photographs with the Friends' logo and web-address on a digital billboard in Starkville and Columbus. A Certificate of Appreciation also went to Mark Goodman for creating and maintaining our first website. In recognition of her NWRA Volunteer of the Year Award, Friends presented Marion Sansing with a plaque, now displayed in the Visitor Center. Three members of the Cole family were honored for their completion of the Junior Refuge Ranger

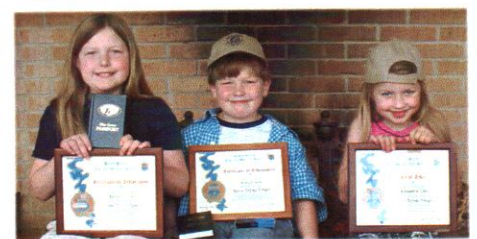
GENERAL MEETING JUNE 21, 6:30 P.M.

We invite you to join us for our general meeting with a presentation from Ann Smith of Friends of Black Bayou in Louisiana. Ann is the president of one of the most prosperous friends groups in the refuge system. She will share their stories of success. There will be a social gathering with refreshments afterwards. You may bring a friend; meetings are open to the public.

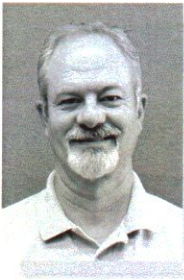
AT THE VISITOR CENTER

be less distinctly American. The sector enhances our creativity, enlivens our communities, nurtures individual responsibility, stirs life at the grass roots, and reminds us that we were born free. Its vitality is rooted in good soil -- civic pride, compassion, a philanthropic tradition, a strong problem-solving impulse, a sense of individual responsibility and an irrepensible commitment to the great shared task of improving our life together."

Program. They received certificates, caps and Blue Goose Passports. Henry honored numerous volunteers for their extra efforts and support with Certificates of Appreciation, pins and embroidered fleece blankets. His kind words and appreciation were gratefully accepted by everyone. The luncheon ended with drawings for door prizes furnished by the Refuge and local businesses.



Savannah, Samuel and Alexandra Cole



President's Report

The spring weather has been a bit uncertain this year with hot temperatures in April and cool temperatures in May. Currently, Mississippi, Georgia, and Northern Florida are under extreme drought conditions. Fortunately, we

are not experiencing the wildfires that are burning in the Okefenokee Swamp.

Saturday programs at the Refuge continued this spring despite the uncertain weather. Temperatures were much too cold to enjoy Painting the Colors of Spring when Melissa Dixon hosted the painting workshop on April 7. The three participants were driven into the visitor center by the wind and unseasonable weather. Henry and Marion Sansing, along with yours truly, spent Earth Day, April 21st, helping Friends of Osborn Prairie to clear cedar trees from the Prairie. Henry ran a chainsaw all morning while Marion and I dragged downed trees to fill nearby gullies. By noon, we were all ready for the couch. The efforts of all involved will help reclaim parts of the Black Prairie. On May 5, Linda Lodato led another of her informative Photo Walks. Participants enjoyed the outing and the opportunity to improve their photographic skills. Bob Brzuszek led a group of 12 on a plant walk to learn more about Mississippi flora on May 19th. The weather was cool with bright sunshine, ideal for a morning walk. That afternoon, Larry Box, Marion Sansing, and I picked up trash along our mile of adopted highway.

Dr. Frank Bonner continues to make significant progress on the Watson Trail, across from the visitor center. He has identified 34 trees, shrubs and vines and finished writing the text for a brochure and audio, so visitors can learn about these native plants of the Refuge. Dr. C.T. Carley, Jr. is making the signs that will mark the plants



Photo © Joe Mulrooney

along the trail. Marion Sansing is designing a hand-out with a map and description of the trail. Jack McCarty is arranging the audio production to be combined with plant images and loaded into MP3-players. Visitors will be able to use the hand-out and the players for self-guided tours. It is innovative projects like this that make me proud to be a member of FONR. Word is getting around the National Wildlife Refuge Association about FONR. Thanks go to Frank, Marion, and Jack for spearheading this project and to all those who helped clear the trail. Congratulations to Gwen Cotton, Barbara Crawford, and Marion Sansing who were presented with Regional Directors Awards by the Fish and Wildlife Service at a ceremony in Atlanta for their outstanding contributions to refuge projects and programs. FONR is proud of you.

The success of FONR is dependent on the dedication of its members. I hope that you will think about how you can contribute to our organization for the betterment of the Refuge. If anyone has ideas that they would like to see implemented on the Refuge, please let me or one of the board members know. We

need your input. I have asked Marion to include her Washington acceptance speech as an inspiration to our members and as a reminder of what our organization is about.

See you on the Refuge.

Joe Mulrooney

Where is it now?

You can still see our billboard on Hwy 50 in West Point.

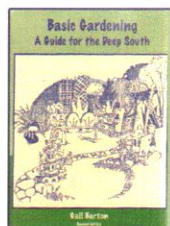


It will be in Louisville on Highway 25 by the end of June, south bound about a half a mile before the 4-way stop.

Book Review

BASIC GARDENING

Gail Barton, a Starkville native, horticulture teacher at Meridian Community College, and gardening columnist for the Meridian Star is also the author of *Basic Gardening; A Guide for the Deep South*. Spiral bound and divided into five sections, the 278 pages cover a



wide range of basic gardening tips written in a conversational tone. The sections, Personal Garden Design, Choosing the Plants, Planting and Maintaining Your Garden, Special Effects, and Understanding the Basics,

are well illustrated with pen and ink drawings, and filled with hints and ideas, such as "scratch and sniff before buying new plants" and the recipe for willow water, to be used as

a root stimulant. Though not indexed, the table of contents allows easy access in locating topics. Called a "plant fool" by her husband, Gail's writing conveys her extensive experience in gardening in the South, as well as her love of gardening. Wildlife lovers will find information on creating backyard habitats and the use of native plants in home gardens. Auto-graphed copies of *Basic Gardening* are available in the Noxubee Nature Store.

Marion's Acceptance Speech for NWRA & NFWF Volunteer of the Year Award

Assistant Secretary Scarlett, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel humbled and honored and I am very happy to be here with you today to receive this award. No one can accomplish alone the task spoken of today in my connection. It is, therefore, with profound thanks that I accept this award on behalf of all volunteers working in conservation.

I would have achieved little without the great support from the Friends of Noxubee Refuge, the communities surrounding the Refuge, MSU, especially the Refuge staff and last but not least the wonderful support and understanding from my husband Henry and my son Sidney.

Assistant Secretary Scarlett thank you for your kind words and for being here today. I hope that we can send the message of importance of our natural resources with you today. We all work and speak for a world that has no money for campaign contributions, that does not march and protest, but one that suffers quietly. Our natural world is our only true future and we are its advocates. We not only have a great love for it, but we also understand the importance of its well-being. So much of it has been destroyed and put in an imbalance, that we have to work hard to stop its demise, try to repair and recover what ever we can, but that requires funds, funds that are being cut. Volunteers can only do so much and I think that our federal government relies on us too much -- or does not recognize the importance of this issue.

We all know that we are at war and that there is great cost involved, but

we are not asking for much.

We have to educate future generations on the importance of our natural world and how to take good care of it, otherwise all is in vain.

What will we tell our great-grandchildren, when they ask us whether we made every effort to preserve our natural world for them and future generations? I grew up in Germany, where my generation asked our grandparents what they did to help the Jews in the 1930s and 40s, what they did during the Kristalnacht. I believe that the biggest challenge humankind faces in this century is conservation.

I pray for all of us, that together we succeed in building a better world by conveying our love and understanding of nature, and that in doing so we may make this world a better place for our, and future generations of all sentient beings, habitats and resources.

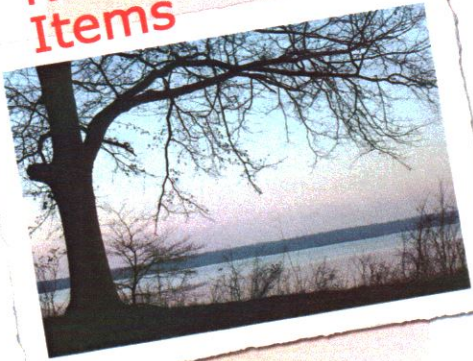
I would like to end, with a quote from the much-loved father of conservation, Aldo Leopold:

We shall never achieve harmony with land, any more than we shall achieve absolute justice or liberty for people. In these higher aspirations, the important thing is not to achieve but to strive.

NOXUBEE NATURE STORE

WHERE ALL PROFITS SUPPORT REFUGE PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

New Items



Beautiful and artistic landscape photographs of the Refuge by Linda Lodato; printed on Watercolor Paper, or Canvas.



Lapel Pin




Cozy Polar Fleece Throw with embroidered logo; charcoal with black stitching. Great for picnics, or just to keep in the car.

STORE HOURS

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

Saturdays at the Refuge

 JUNE 16, 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.


Fifth Annual Youth Fishing Derby
Registration \$5 - \$10, ages 4 - 15

 JULY 7, 8 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.


Nature Photography for Kids & Teens
Registration required, all ages

JULY 21, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Bluff Lake Canoeing at spillway boat ramp; life jackets & paddles will also be provided.

 AUGUST 4, 2 p.m. auditorium


Celebrating Rachel Carson

 AUGUST 18, 10 a.m. - 12 P.M.

Fun with Plants, fun facts & tidbits

 SEPTEMBER 1, 11 a.m.

Butterfly Tour at Morgan Hill Prairie

 SEPTEMBER 15, 10 a.m. auditorium

Alligators in Illinois? Presented by the MS Museum of Natural Science

Every first & third Saturday of the month, programs are made possible with help of Friends of Noxubee Refuge and are free of charge, unless stated otherwise. Check our website, a local newspaper, or call (662) 323-5548. Activities identified with the blue badge are also part of the Jr. Refuge Ranger program.



From the Refuge Manager

Our Friends and Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon was successful with 46 in attendance. Our guest speaker could not attend due to bad weather, but she will speak on June 21. Like last year, the food and the camaraderie were excellent. It's not easy to thank all of our friends and volunteers, but the luncheon is one way that the Refuge can show its appreciation of such an excellent group of individuals. Friends members who had over 500 hours of volunteer service received certificates and pins. A few who I thought went beyond the call were given the new embroidered Friends of Noxubee fleece throw. I certainly hope more of you can attend next year as you are all valuable members who are making a difference. I extend a sincere and heartfelt appreciation to Barbara Crawford, Marion Sansing and Gwen Cotton for receiving Regional Director Honor awards (See article below.) You all went above and beyond the call of duty.

Usually, the sun comes out after turbulent weather! If you remember, I mentioned in the January 2007 issue about budget cuts and staffing reductions being implemented across the Southeast refuges due

Director's Awards

The Regional Director's Awards Ceremony is held each year to honor superior volunteers, employees, partner organizations and individuals for their help and support of the USFWS in the Southeast Region. Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge was very well represented with two volunteers and one employee. Refuge Manager Henry Sansing proudly accompanied the three ladies to Atlanta to receive their awards. Barbara Crawford was honored for her outstanding efforts in keeping the visitor center open every weekend and holidays, coordinating volunteers and participating in various other activities. Administrative Assistant Gwen Cotton was honored for

to budget short-falls. In the April issue I wrote about the Friends groups going to Capitol Hill and the good work the McCartys did meeting with staffers of two senators and three congressmen. All of the letters Friends members have sent encouraging their congressman to join the Refuge Caucus have started to pay off. Also, Friends from four states attended the Public Witness Day to personally urge the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee to increase support for the Refuge System. We just received two morale boosters. Our Region was earmarked an extra \$7.5 million for habitat management shortfalls in our 2007 budget, and the House Appropriation Committee has unanimously proposed \$451 million dollars for our 2008 budget. This is the funding that we need to maintain staff and complete the work. The Bill still has a long way to go before it becomes law. It has to go before the full House for discussion, debate and passage. So let me encourage all of you and all the groups across our nation to keep up the good work, and hopefully, we will see our budget funded as it should be.

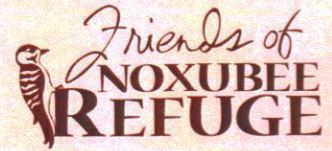
Thank you all!

Henry Sansing



Regional Director Sam Hamilton with Honorees: Marion, Barbara and Gwen

routinely going above and beyond the call of duty. She accepted administrative, procurement and budgetary duties for Choctaw NWR on top of her duties at Noxubee and accomplished those in an excellent manner. Marion Sansing is the only volunteer, who has been honored with the National Refuge Volunteer of the Year Award and the Regional Director's Award the same year for her creative and program development efforts.



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

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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 NWRA
- * Noxubee News, quarterly
- * Volunteer recognition
- * Membership card and decal
 - * Voting privileges
 - * Quarterly meetings

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

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

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