

FRIENDS OF THE NOXUBEE WILDLIFE REFUGE



WINTER 2020

TRAVIS CARPENTER NAMED PROJECT LEADER FOR NOXUBEE

Travis Carpenter has been named the Project Leader of the newly merged Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee and North Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge Complexes. The NWRs include Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee, Choctaw, Dahomey, Tallahatchie, and Coldwater.

Travis is a 20-year veteran of the National Wildlife Refuge System, having worked in two different Regions, three different Refuge Complexes, a Wetland Management District, and in multiple states as a Refuge Manager, Private Lands Biologist, and a Law Enforcement Officer. Currently, Travis serves as the Refuge Manager of North Mississippi Refuges where he manages a diverse array of wildlife habitats at three refuges and 126 Farmers Home (FmHA) lands spread across 26 counties in northwest Mississippi. Prior to joining the Service, he served as a Wildlife Biologist with USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services in both Florida and Mississippi.

In addition to his knowledge of Mississippi natural resources and culture, Travis also served as an Instructor for the National Conservation Training Center NWRS Conservation Easement Course, and the National Easement Team to develop national step-down guidance from our easement policy (601 FW 6). Travis has excellent communication skills and strong partnership building abilities in addition to his diverse land management experiences. Travis has a bachelor's degree in Forestry from Mississippi State University. Travis is married and has three sons. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, and supporting his kids in their tennis, soccer, and band events almost daily. Other hobbies include tennis, gardening, and high-end yard maintenance. Congratulations Travis!

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Winter has finally arrived and with it much cooler weather to get out and enjoy the Refuge! Take a long walk on one of the trails, do some wildlife viewing, or enjoy all of the birds coming south for the winter. My time as President of the Friends is at an end: it has been a privilege serving! I've learned much in my time as President and look forward to continuing to serve as a member of the Friends board.

Calling all Volunteers!! We have a monthly work-day at the Refuge that occurs on the second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. until the last volunteer leaves. We would also like to add to our group that keeps the Visitor Center open on Sunday afternoon for 3 hours monthly (or less often if we get enough people). We are also looking for volunteers to serve on various committees to help the board accomplish a variety of activities: if you are interested in helping, drop us an email! friendsofnoxubeerefuge@gmail.com

Mark your calendar: the next General Membership Meeting and Nature Series takes place on December 5 at 6:30 p.m. in the Visitor Center. It is election time, so nominations will be presented to the membership for new board members and officers. The Nature Series presenters will be David Barge and Steve Prestridge of Barge Timberlands. They will provide of a history of Barge Timberlands and their interactions with the Noxubee Refuge

We are still accepting donations to be put toward re-building the Bluff Lake Boardwalk that overlooks the Rookery. Donations can be made in person at the Nature Store, mailed in, or via Paypal at friendsofnoxubeerefuge@gmail.com. Any way you make a donation, be sure to mark it as being for the boardwalk repair and thanks for all the donations we've received thus far!

See you at the Refuge!

Kara Roberts

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS WILL BE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, AT 6:30 PM IN THE VISITORS CENTER JUST BEFORE THE NATURE SERIES PROGRAM. THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE WILL PRESENT NOMINATIONS, AND ADDITIONAL NOMINATIONS CAN BE MADE FROM THE FLOOR. PLEASE COME AND VOTE!

NOMINEES: PRESIDENT: WAYNE WELLS, VICE PRESIDENT: SUSAN FULLER WATTS, SECRETARY: VERA TAYLOR, TREASURER: ANNA MARIE RASBERRY, DIRECTORS AT LARGE: VICKI MAPLES, DR. STACY HINES, VICTORIA STARNES, AND SUSAN FULLER WATTS.

VICTORIA STARNES

VICTORIA STARNES IS A GRA AT MISSISSIPPI STATE STUDYING WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT ON BLUFF LAKE. SHE IS ORIGINALLY FROM MISSOURI WHERE SHE RECEIVED HER BS IN BIOLOGY WITH AN EMPHASIS IN WILDLIFE FROM MISSOURI STATE. SHE ALSO WORKED WITH THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION FOR A FEW YEARS STUDYING FISH COMMUNITIES, HYDROLOGY, AND WATER QUALITY ON THE OSAGE, NIANGUA, AND BLACK RIVERS HER TIME AT MDC SPARKED HER INTEREST IN FURTHERING HER EDUCATION IN AQUATIC ECOLOGY AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT. IN HER FREE TIME SHE ENJOYS SPENDING TIME AT THE REFUGE AND FOSTERING DOGS AND CATS FOR LOCAL RESCUE GROUPS. AFTER SHE GRADUATES FROM MSU, SHE HOPES TO RETURN TO MISSOURI AND WORK FOR MDC IN THEIR RESOURCE SCIENCE OR FISHERIES DIVISION.

SUSAN FULLER WATTS

SUSAN FULLER WATTS IS A NATIVE AND RESIDENT OF THE NEARBY COMMUNITY OF SINGLETON IN NORTHEAST WINSTON COUNTY. SHE IS A RETIRED PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL. SHE IS A PROUD GRADUATE OF MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN AND HOLDS A MASTER'S DEGREE FROM MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY. SHE HAS BEEN COMING TO THE REFUGE SINCE HER EARLY CHILDHOOD AND IS A LOVER OF THE OUTDOORS.

DR. STACY HINES

DR. HINES HOLDS A PH.D. IN WILDLIFE SCIENCES, A M.S. IN BIOLOGY, AND A BACHELOR'S IN PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT. HER WORK EXPERIENCE INCLUDES STATE RANGER WITH NC PARKS AND RECREATION; WILDLIFE TECHNICIAN WITH NC WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION; TEACHER AT COLLEGIATE LEVEL FOR OVER 6 YEARS WITH UNC-GREENSBORO; TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-KINGSVILLE; MOUNTAIN EMPIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE; AND CURRENTLY WITH MSU. AT MSU, SHE IS DEVELOPING A NEW MASTER'S LEVEL DEGREE PROGRAM IN CONSERVATION EDUCATION. HER HOBBIES AND INTERESTS INCLUDE HUNTING, HIKING, KAYAKING, PADDLE BOARDING, SEWING, PAINTING, SINGING, PLAYING SAXOPHONES (ALTO AND TENOR), AND TEACHING HERSELF HOW TO PLAY THE VIOLIN.



NATURE CORNER

My name is John Long. I am an Assistant Extension Professor for the Mississippi State Extension Service where I work in the State 4-H department as a youth development specialist. I have been married to the former Leanne Freeman of Gulfport, MS for 15 years and she works for Mississippi State in the Research and Curriculum Unit as an Assistant Research Professor. We have two children: Mary Audrey who is 11 years old and Hunter Jackson who is 6 years old. They both attend Overstreet and Sudduth Elementary respectively.

Our family feels so richly blessed to live just outside of the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee Wildlife Refuge where we spend many hours hunting, fishing, picnicking, hiking the nature trails, looking for alligators, and enjoying the beautiful landscapes that the refuge has to offer. We most recently took our first family adventure canoeing and kayaking Bluff Lake at the annual Refuge Day, where my daughter and I were also serving as volunteers. I had to give my wife a crash course on how to paddle a canoe which she passed with flying colors!

Personally, my most favorite pastime on the refuge is duck hunting. Through the years, I have been fortunate to share many hunts with people that have come and gone and established lifelong friendships. While the hunting can be the best to be found in our area, it is the people that I meet annually that I cherish and love the most. In the predawn hours on most Wednesday and Saturday mornings of duck season, you can find me in the duck check station on the River Road sitting next to the pot belly stove sipping on coffee talking of good times present and past. Oh and if you're lucky you just may get a post hunt invite to our home for what I call "Mrs. Leanne's World Famous Big Breakfast" that consists of eggs, cathead biscuits, slab bacon and deer sausage along with gravy made from the drippings! While I am not a millionaire, I am a rich man. The sights that my eyes have seen and the memories that I have made at the Sam D. Hamilton National Wildlife Refuge are some of the most precious and invaluable possessions that I have. It is my sincere hope that this place that I fondly call "My Little Piece of Heaven" continues to bless and enrich people for many years to come.





WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE NOXUBEE REFUGE

UPCOMING EVENTS

Volunteer Work day: December 14, 9-until
Holiday Social, Noxubee Nature Series and
General Membership Meeting: December 5, 5:30
We'll begin at 5:30 with a soup, sandwich, and
dessert buffet.

Before the Nature Series, we'll have elections of
the new round of board members so be sure to
attend and cast your vote!

The Nature Series presentation will be made by
David Barge and Steve Prestridge of Barge
Timberlands. They will provide of a history of
Barge Timberlands and their interactions with
the Noxubee Refuge



MEET JAY HEATON!

He will be working as an Americorp
VISTA with the Noxubee Wildlife
Refuge on volunteer efforts.

His goal is to help provide
engaging volunteer opportunities
while also educating visitors
on Noxubee's mission. We are
so excited to have
Jay at the Nox!

