

TALLGRASS PRAIRIE

Docent Newsletter

The Nature Conservancy

April, 1996

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 13, Workday

Education Op - April 16, Biodiversity lecture, Tulsa Garden Center, 7:30PM

Education Op - April 3,10,17,24, Wildflower identification, Tulsa Garden Center

April 15, Reservations for TNC annual meeting

May 11, Workday

June 1 and 2, TNC annual meeting at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

June 8, Workday

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EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

"WHY SAVE BIODIVERSITY? A Leopold Perspective"

Tallgrass Prairie Docents are invited to attend the **April 16, 1996** meeting of the Tulsa Audubon Society where this will be the topic of the program. Aldo Leopold has been recognized as one of the twentieth century's leading conservationists. Through his essays and technical articles, Leopold promoted preservation of the biological riches of our land, *including flora and fauna of ecosystems.* (editors emphasis) The meeting will be at the **Tulsa Garden Center at 7:30PM** and this is a great opportunity to hear Charles Luthin, who holds an M.S. in Zoology from the University of Wisconsin-

Madison. He has worked for the past fifteen years with international conservation organizations, promoting wildlife preservation.

The Leopold Foundation, founded in 1982, continues to promote and encourage a deep respect and appreciation for the land and all its wild inhabitants, through preservation of wildlands, education and training, scientific research and restoration of native landscapes. Luthin, executive director, will present a slide show with the program

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"This n' That" from Mary McIntyre - Education and Outreach Coordinator, TNC

Spring has finally sprung! For *The Nature Conservancy*, that means the trees are budding, the grass is greening and docents are 'docenting'! We had a great time at the reorientation and if you weren't there, we missed you and hope to see you soon. Fifty docents attended the event on March 9. In addition to learning a lot of new stuff, old acquaintances were renewed and new acquaintances were made. The afternoon tours were especially informative. Those of you who have not seen the stained-glass windows at the church should make that effort. They are beautiful. (editor note: not only beautiful and inspiring, but so historic. They were produced in Germany prior to WWI and the technology to gain such an array of rich colors has been lost.)

NEW DOCENTS - Our class of new docents will begin their training on April 6 in session at UCAT. We are still taking reservations and expect the class to include about 35 people. It's not too late to encourage your friends to participate. We'll squeeze them in!

INFORMATION BOARDS - We are in need of help with information displays for Tallgrass Prairie visitors at the headquarters area when docents are not on duty. Current displays are informative, but have been there a while and the large board near the parking lot is empty. Are there any of you out there who would like to tackle the project of keeping information on these boards and changing it every month or so? The work would require access to a typewriter or computer and printer. Information can be gleaned from docent manuals or docent newsletters. Seasonal information and bison updates are also available from the newsletter or from Harvey Payne or Bob Hamilton. Please call me at (918) 585-1117, ext. 22 if you can help us with this need.

WILDFLOWER WORKSHOP - Remember to sign up for the short course on Spring Wildflowers offered through the Tulsa Garden Center. Class dates are April 3, 10, 17 and 24. Contact Caroline Swinson, (918) 746-5125 for reservations or more information

ANNUAL MEETING - Don't forget to make your reservations for the annual *TNC* membership meeting to be held at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve on June 1 and 2. These reservations are due in, April 15.

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NEWS FROM THE PRAIRIE

No Burns this spring, due to the dry weather. Bison will begin shedding their winter coats soon and baby bison should be

arriving on the Prairie about the same time this newsletter arrives at your address. Fencing on the 1400 additional bison acres continues.

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SPEAKERS BUREAU

The Tallgrass Prairie slide show is up and running. As of March 11, we had already given four presentations with 8 more scheduled before April 15. Bartlesville is a hotbed of interest with five shows there.

The General Oklahoma slide show is rapidly nearing completion with a few maps needed along with proofing of the commentary. "This has been somewhat more challenging to put together, due to the scope of the project, but I believe it will be something we can be proud of when it is finished. I've given the show the preliminary title: "Oklahoma, Land of Contrasts, And of Diversity." says Speakers Bureau coordinator, Tom Clark.

If you are interested in becoming a presenter for the Speakers Bureau, especially from the western and southern areas of the state, please call Mary (918) 585-1117 or Tom (918) 747-2337.

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VISITORS numbered 325 in February.

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Editorial

"How I came to Love the 'Prairie'." will be the primary theme of articles over the coming months, as we plan to feature each docent in time. So begin to think about how you came to be involved with TGP.

I grew up on the prairies of Kansas in a little town near the Nebraska state line. My parents, my grandparents and my great grandparents had all been prominent in the community-- and I could not wait to leave there when I graduated from highschool. But over the years, I have found that I have very deep roots in the Prairie. My Dad could

remember vast stretches of the tallgrass, 'up to the chest of the horses' shortly after the turn of the last century and and he would watch storms come across the land. He taught me to love the power and beauty of the weather on the prairie. In recent years, Mother showed me old wagon trails and little country churches, now marked only by the little cemetery plots.

I read an article recently by a Texas writer, John Graves, author of "Hard Scrabble" and "Goodbye to a River". I would like to quote him, if I may, because he has put into words, a thought that kind of says it for me. Graves writes "To grow up among tradition-minded people leads one often into backward yearnings and regrets, unprofitable feelings of which I was granted my share in youth---not having been born in time to get killed fighting Yankees, for one, or not having ridden up the cattle trails. But the only such regret that has strongly endured is not to have known the land when it was whole and sprawling and rich and fresh----" and the regret is sharpened for me each change of season, with the color, power and drama of the Prairie. (My personal regrets, rather that war and cattle drives, are that I would have liked to write for a cause during the progressive era prior to WWI, 'robber barons' or child labor and wear those beautiful clothes.)

Being a docent at The Nature Conservancy's Tallgrass Prairie, involved in the protection of the whole ecosystem, is about as close as I will ever get to the Land "when it was whole and sprawling--." And I am so glad to have the opportunity.

Nyla Bryan Woody, editor

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Editorial

On behalf of the TGP Docents, I want to thank Mary, and docents, Dick Baker and Jo Brooks for the splendid day they planned and executed for our returning

docent reorientation day! The information presented on March 9, was timely and well prepared, the lunch excellent and the Pawhuska tours very well done. Our great thanks to the tourguides!! We know the city of Pawhuska will realize much favorable comment and returning visitors from their efforts in maintaining their historic town and in presenting the history so well.

And to our very own, Carol Fames, for her thoughtful slide presentation and comments on the subject, "Why Bother?", Applause! Your efforts in getting the docents UP for the season will surely ensure another successful year for the program at The Tallgrass Prairie.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU and WELL DONE, to each of you, from us all!!

Nyla Bryan Woody, editor

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TNC Docent Newsletter, Nyla Bryan Woody - Editor; Mary McIntyre - Program Director; Harvey Payne - Director, Tallgrass Prairie; Bob Hamilton - Director of Science and Stewardship, Tallgrass Prairie Preserve.

APRIL

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 Dave Dolcater Joan Fuller	4	5 David Turner Barbara Strahm	6 Iris McPherson Marilyn Keefer
7 Linda Meistrell	8	9	10 Roberta Wherritt Judy Barto	11	12 Randy & Nyla Woody	13 George Meyers Carol Eames
14 Ralph & Pinki Tolson	15	16	17 Virginia & Floyd Phariss	18	19 Stu Marshall Charlie Moomaw	20 Gary & Renee Weyl
21 Jo Brooks Bill Dinger	22	23	24 Liz & Al Medley	25	26 Barbara & Don Sweeney	27 Dean & Mary Johnston
28 William Mosier Dorothy Buck	29	30				