

TALLGRASS PRAIRIE

Docent Newsletter

The Nature Conservancy

June, 1996

June 1 and 2, 1996, *The Nature Conservancy* Annual Meeting, TGP
June 15, Heritage Days

"This N That" from Mary McIntyre, Education and Outreach Coordinator, TNC

The Prairie is in full bloom! Take your Wildflower guides with you the next time you visit and enjoy the bright colored blossoms! I'm looking forward to seeing each of you this summer at events up at the Preserve. Above are those already on the calendar:

Also on Heritage Day, seven of our new docents will be at the Preserve with Dick and I to complete their training. If you are there, and notice our group, please stop and introduce yourself.

Liz Medley, our wonderful historian, has condensed important facts from the ranch history into an organized time line which is easy to remember. Those pages are included (front and back) in this newsletter. Please pull that out and insert it into your docent manual in the ranch history section (D).

Please note on your June schedule that we have begun to schedule people in to work Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. We do not yet have enough people on these days to keep the gift shop open every day of every week, but we're making a good start. If your summer schedule allows you to have open days during the week, please consider helping out on an open day, and let Linda know. We have requests from tour groups to visit all seven days of the week, and, as you know, we have many tour groups who give us no advance notice that they are coming.

Economic Impact - In the last newsletter, we included an article about the Economic Impact Survey which is being conducted at the Preserve. Please note that we will also begin passing out some cards for visitors to take and leave with merchants in the Pawhuska area. These business size cards state our mission on one side. The other side says, "We appreciate the natural beauty of this area and support your local businesses whenever we visit." Please feel free to take some of these cards if you are stopping in Pawhuska enroute to and from the Preserve. Leaving these at a place of business will make the Pawhuska community more aware of exactly how much the Preserve contributes to the local economy. This improves our partnership with Pawhuska residents!

Membership - Remember that The Tallgrass Prairie Preserve and The Nature Conservancy rely entirely on membership contributions to fund our work. Take a minute to discover if the visitor is familiar with the Conservancy, and if they would like membership information. This small amount of time could end up making a big difference to the Conservancy. new trails and an

interpretive center at the Preserve can happen only if we all work to bring in the dollars to underwrite them!

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JUNE CELEBRATIONS

June is traditionally a month of celebrations. A time for parties. Celebrations for graduations and for weddings and for *The Nature Conservancy* annual Heritage Days at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. And this year, we have the *Oklahoma Nature Conservancy Annual Meeting* as well! Wow!! What a time of celebration. What a neat opportunity to gather at the Prairie and enjoy the party, enjoy time together as *TNC* staff and docents. The months of hard work and planning are mostly complete now for the Annual Meeting on June 1 and 2 and this will most certainly be a highlight of our Docent Year.

Everyone Please mark your calendar for June 15---Heritage Day in Pawhuska. Another great *Nature Conservancy Party!* And we have one more real reason for celebration and that is our new docents and the beginning of an expanded number of docent day coverage each week.

George Meyers, who tracks our visitor numbers, writes that there are often comments in the log from visitors, expressing their disappointment that the gift shop was closed and that there was no one available to give information. We are now in a position to address this. What a truly great summer this will be.

Speaking of the Gift Shop, Sue Wheeler reports a new item, a cookbook, Taste of the Territory. This is published by the Service League of Bartlesville and contains recipes submitted by league members. Included are recipes from Cherokee, Delaware and Osage tribes, as well as some from area ranches. The cover is a color photograph of the Tallgrass Prairie. This will surely sell well, especially to out-of-state visitors who are looking for a gift to take home.

And a Wow! Carol Eames and Stu Marshall sold over **\$600** worth of gift shop merchandise one recent Saturday. Sue wonders how they would do with used cars.

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APRIL VISITORS numbered 1100 sign-ins. This included 259 from thirty-one other states and 31 people from foreign countries. Year-to-date visitors total 2346. Through April, we have had visitors from forty-five states and the District of Columbia and from fourteen other countries.

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WORK ON THE PRAIRIE

Do you remember western movies, with all that excitement on the ranch? I don't think it was like that. Just received the news from the preserve/ranch and it is more painting and building fence. Not much like the movies! The bison are grazing the new growth over all the burned areas and are shedding winter coats. Harvey also notes the "coyotes are having pups and bison are calving. It is loving season for the birds and prairie flowers are blooming."

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How I Came to Love the Tallgrass Prairie-----

New docent, **Bill Rinehart**, a Chevron retiree writes "To me, the prairie provides wide open vistas that continually change with the weather and seasons of the year. The expansiveness of it all and the fact that every visit seems to offer something new is attractive to me." He looks forward to his first docent season at the Prairie.

Barbara and Don Sweeney both grew up in Oklahoma and she has four pioneer grandparents! (Editors note: That is really neat, and I don't believe I know another person who can claim that.) Don remembers "with fondness, the rabbit and goose hunts, following my father when I was very young." They spent their working life in St. Louis and are glad to be home.

Several years ago, on an icy January 1, their visiting-from-Chicago son and daughter-in-law, and Nature Conservancy members expressed a desire to visit the TGP. They toured the Ponca City Marland Mansion and then drove east in ice and fog but didn't find TGP. A few months later, when entertaining other guests from San Francisco, and this time, a scorching May day, they finally visited the Preserve. They were impressed by the cool breeze on the headquarters porch and the friendly, informed docents who greeted them. They drove toward Foraker and as they crested a hill, saw the bison herd. "Observing their quiet power is a thrill" writes Barbara. So they signed on as docents.

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Each of us has a reason to volunteer time. Let me know your reason, your thoughts about this place so we can share it with all the docents.

Please fill out the blanks below and send them to me, so we can share your thoughts on the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve with the other docents:

Name _____ Address _____

Profession: _____ Retired Y___ N___ Docent beginning _____

"How I came to love the Prairie" _____

Feel free to write as much as you wish to share. Couples Note: **each** of you please write something.

Nyla Bryan Woody, Editor
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Heritage Day

Please plan to attend Heritage Day on June 15! As well as being fun, lots of good information is passed along which could be useful to you as a docent. The agenda is:

- 10 a.m. Welcome
Bison and Prairie Ecology Presentations
- 10:30 Birding and Prairie Ecology Tours
Native American Presentations
- 12 Lunch with Music by Prairie Fire Band
- 1:15 Welcome
Memorial to Chapman Barnard Cowboys
- 1:25 Invocation
- 1:30 Cowboy Stories and Poems
- 2:30 Closing Comments
Music by Prairie Fire Band

See you there!!

Speakers Bureau Update from Tom Clark

Greetings! Both the Tallgrass and the General Oklahoma programs are up and running. There has been considerable interest in our programs, with sixteen presentations given from early February to the end of May. There are two shows on the books so far for June. We have served civic organizations such as Garden Clubs, Rotarians, Lions, Kiwanis, DAR, AARP, and schools from kindergartners to college level as well as church groups.

I would like to thank our presenters for their time and interest. Dick Baker, Craig Hartline, Shirley Miller, George Meyers, Gregg Moydell and Betty and David Turner have all given presentations, as have Mary and I. It would not be possible without your dedication. A special "tip o' the hat" goes to David Turner. He has logged four different shows!! We hope to have more of our trained presenters involved in the future, as more requests for shows come in. A lot of these requests come from you, our docents, or your friends!!

We are still looking for additional presenters, especially from the western and more southerly areas of the state. This need will become a greater priority as word of mouth spreads the availability of our service. If you know of anyone interested, please have them give me or Mary a call at the office. Thanks. TOM