

The Nature Conservancy

TALLGRASS PRAIRIE

Docent Newsletter - - - -



July 1997

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

Greetings! I hope that you are all enjoying another glorious Oklahoma summer! We are almost to the half-way point, Fourth of July! Have a safe one!

Nature Room - Our new nature room, just across the breezeway from the gift shop, is now open. Please unlock and push open this door when you first open the shop. The key for the shop fits this door as well. The nature room is for everyone, including children, and displays are designed to be touched! People should feel free to pick up and examine the bones. Nearby question cards may help to get their brains wondering about things. We have relocated a herbarium, with samples of most of the prairie plants, into the nature room. This can be examined at will, but we ask that people be careful to return the pages to the correct slots. Some pages, which depict flowers which are currently blooming, are on the table for people to look at.

On Heritage Day, Doris Mayfield spent time hanging out and said there was a steady stream of visitors. This room is becoming a very popular addition! Your input on the nature room is needed! If you have ideas for question cards which will get the visitors thinking about prairie ecology, please pass them on to Doris Mayfield. These would be questions such as, (when looking at a skull), Looking at these teeth, what do you think this creature might have preferred to eat? From the size of the skull, how large was this animal, and what do you think it was? Also, if you have suggestions for items for the room, or changes to the arrangement, or can provide or build furniture items that might help in displaying things, please let Doris or myself know!

Reminder Cards - We seem to be having trouble this year with people forgetting about their work shifts! Please place these dates on your calendar after you have volunteered for them! We have had some distressing days caused by your forgetfulness! In an attempt to prevent this, we will be sending out reminder cards a few days before your shift. This is an added expense for our program (\$162.00 per season), as well as being somewhat time consuming for our scheduler! PLEASE do your best to show up on time for your shift and stay until its over!

STAY TUNED... for information on area summer ice cream socials (Tulsa, Pawhuska, Bartlesville) which will give you an opportunity to get to know others who volunteer from your area..... and put the date of October 11 on your calendars for the Annual Docent Appreciation Dinner. More information will be coming later, but the event will probably be held in the Pawhuska area as it traditionally is.

Enjoy the bountiful wildflowers across the Oklahoma countryside!

Visitation - George Meyers

We had 1922 visitors signing the register in May, up by .9% from last year. There were 526 visitors from 47 other states, and 46 from 16 other countries. Year to date, we have had visitors from 49 states and the District of Columbia. West Virginians have not visited our preserve! Visitors from other states are most frequently from Kansas, Texas and California, then Arkansas and Missouri.

About half of the Oklahoma visitors are first time visitors; 82.8% of visitors from other states checked the area indicating they were first time visitors.

Our busiest visitor days continue to be Sundays, Saturdays and Fridays. Visitation continues to increase, with visitor numbers about 5 percent higher than last year at this time.

Gift Shop News - Sue Wheeler

We had a great month in May with sales just \$50 short of \$8,000. A great big pat on the back to you all and especially Doris and Iris who worked so hard at the Annual Meeting at Pontotoc Ridge. Our total sales to date for the 1997 year are \$15,285.25.

For you Scramble Square junkies, we have three new puzzles -- bats, hummingbirds and butterflies.

Here's a bit of info about some of the books we sell at the Gift Shop.

BIRDS: We have always carried the National Geographic Field Guide. This was rated No. One by the Cornell Ornithology Lab as far as accuracy, ease of use, etc. Just off the presses is a new field guide, All the Birds of North America. It is from the American Bird Conservancy and comes highly recommended by some of the local "serious birders".

BUTTERFLIES: The best field guide for this area is Butterflies and Moths of Missouri. It is published by the Missouri Dept. of Conservation and again, those that know butterflies tout its merits.

WILDFLOWERS: A Field Guide to the Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers has been our No. One best selling book at the Gift Shop -- 190 copies since the store opened. Doug Ladd, the author, is a Nature Conservancy employee (Missouri) and the spectacular photography is by Frank Oberle who also did the large coffee table book with John Madson on the Tallgrass Prairie. Another useful wildflower book is Oklahoma Wildflowers by Doyle McCoy. Dr. McCoy was a professor of botany and is now retired.

GRASSES: We carry Pasture and Range Plants which was written for the most part by Dick Whetsell, whom you will frequently see up at the Prairie. Phillips Petroleum provided the funding and then gave the rights of publication to Fort Hays State University. We buy the books from them. You will not find this book in most bookstores.

Want to Read a Good Book? We just received 10 copies of Grassland by Richard Manning. We carried a few copies in hardback last year and now its just out in paperback. I first became interested in this book upon reading a glowing review by Jim Lehrer of PBS News Hour fame. Then, Nora Jones called to tell me about a wonderful book she had just finished. The cover says it is "the history, biology, politics and promise of the American Prairie." The dedication is "For bison, for all that created them and for all they create." I think you will find it inspirational -- I did.

SUE

Speakers Bureau - Tom Clark

Dozens of letters have gone out to civic groups, clubs and organizations in the Bartlesville, Pawhuska and Tulsa areas, promoting our speakers bureau and also offering Tallgrass Prairie Preserve workday opportunities! We expect this letter to greatly increase our requests for speakers this fall and in the coming spring. If you are interested in serving as a speaker, and learning the Tallgrass Prairie slide show and the statewide Nature Conservancy slide show, please let Mary know. We will be offering a training opportunity in August, depending on the number of people who express interest.

So far, we have given 15 programs since January in Muskogee, Pawhuska, Stillwater, Tulsa, Broken Arrow, Cleveland, Ponca City, and Glenpool, with eight different speakers participating.

Trail Guide Program -

We are evaluating the success of our Trail Guide program which began this spring. During May and June, six different school groups had trail experiences with our guides. A few weekend guides have also assisted to meet requests on Heritage Day and also June 21 (an environmental law group). Based on information from these guides, we will revamp the program, and plan to start again in September. If you have not attended training, but are interested in working as a trail guide, please let Mary know. We especially need people willing to serve as guides on Saturday, but can increase the size of our Wednesday school group leaders as well. Harvey and Brita have been excited to offer this program, and there is great interest by many people in participating, once we have enough active volunteers!

Notes from the Prairie - Bob Hamilton, Dir. of Science and Stewardship

Those who have volunteered hours on the notorious bison corral painting project will be relieved to know that a seasonal ranch hand, Michael Krebbs, has been working to apply the top coat on the corral!

There have been no recent fires on the Preserve. The bison are ranging in either the southern or northern pasture areas where large/fresh burn patches (from spring) are located. The entire herd is either all together, or in two or three large groups. Most of the adults have lost their winter coats, but some yearlings ('96 calves) are still shedding. The baby count is still at 148, but there has been no firm count since late May.

Dr. Michael Palmer (OSU) and his graduate students are installing longterm vegetation plots in the bison unit for a new research project.

Cowboys at the preserve have been continuing construction on the new 160-acre trap (small pasture) west of the bison pens. This trap will hold the herd during the fall working period.

Volunteers are needed to help with Nature Trail repairs. Bob reports that there has been some bad erosion on the sloped areas (particularly the south end of the short trail, due to heavy rains in mid-June.

Rainfall has been plentiful in late May and June, and as a result, the wildflower showing is impressive! There are carpets of black-eyed susan and conflower on burn areas from summer '96.

Is your name listed on this calendar? If it is, check your calendar, mark the date down, and show up at the Preserve! To change a day, or schedule a day, call Shirley Miller at 836-5349. You may also select a first and second choice of open days, mark them on the calendar, and return the calendar to Shirley at 4635 E. 13th Pl., Tulsa, OK 74112. Thanks!

JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Doris Mayfield Dick Baker	2 Dean and Mary Ellen Johnston	3 Judy Kishner Karin Armstrong	4 Dan Vinyard Karin Armstrong	5 Doris Mayfield Betsy Fitzgerald
6 Don Bruner *2.	7 Barbara Strahm *2.	8 Herb Skidmore Dan Vinyard	9 Barbara Bates Marilyn Fugate	10 Dorothy Buck Judy Kishner	11 Billie Sue and John Ferguson	12 Bill Dinger Wayne Middleton
13 Sandy Frazier Cheryl Kilpatrick	14 * 1. # 2.	15 Lila Brierly Joan Fuller	16 Floyd and Virginia Phariss	17 Nyla and Randy Woody	18 Robyn Stroup Karen Harris	19 George Meyers Wayne Middleton
20 Sherry Beeker Maxine King	21 Al and Liz Medley	22 Barbara and Don Sweeney	23 Dave Dolcater John and Joanne Colbert	24 Linda Anderson Pat Bumpas	25 Stu Marshall Angela Rapp	26 Renel Johnson Renee Weyl
27 Linda Irwin William Mosier	28 Bob and Mary Reeves	29 Sue Wheeler Barbara Strahm	30 Marilyn Keefer Iris McPherson	31 Bill Rinehart Roberta Hovis		

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AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 *1. *2.	2 *1. *2.
3 Don and Barbara Sweeney	4 George McCourt Barbara Strahm	5 Phyllis Connally *2.	6 Dean and Mary Ellen Johnston	7 *1. *2.	8 *1. *2.	9 *1. *2.
10 Sandy Frazier *2.	11 *1. <i>Jim McPherson</i> *2.	12 Lila Brierly Joan Fuller	13 Stu Marshall Dorothy Buck	14 Karen Harris *2.	15 *1. *2.	16 George Meyers *2.
17 *1. *2.	18 Al and Liz Medley	19 *1. *2.	20 Dave Dolcater Marilyn Keefer	21 Randy and Nyla Woody	22 Sue Wheeler *2.	23 *1. *2.
24 *1. *2.	25 Bob and Mary Reeves	26 *1. *2.	27 Joanne and John Colbert	28 Bill Rinehart *2.	29 *1. *2.	30 Wayne Middleton *2.
31 *1. *2.						

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SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 George McCourt Barbara Strahm	2 Phyllis Connally Doris Mayfield	3 Dean and Mary Ellen Johnston	4 *1. *2.	5 *1. *2.	6 *1. *2.
7 *1. *2.	8 Loretta and Van Vives	9 *1. *2.	10 Judy Barto Roberta Wherritt	11 *1. *2.	12 *1. *2.	13 *1. *2.
14 *1. *2.	15 *1. *2.	16 Lila Brierly Joan Fuller	17 Dave Dolcater *2.	18 Randy and Nyla Woody	19 *1. *2.	20 George Meyers Robyn Stroup
21 *1. *2.	22 Bob and Mary Reeves	23 *1. *2.	24 Marilyn Keefer Iris McPherson	25 Bill Rinehart	26 *1. *2.	27 *1. *2.
28 *1. *2.	29 Al and Liz Medley	30 *1. *2.				

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~~open days, mark them on the calendar, and return the calendar to Shirley at 4635 E. 15th St., Tulsa, OK 74112. Thanks!~~

We need your help in early June!!
 Please call Shirley.

JUNE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Cheryl Kilpatrick *2.	2 George McCourt Laban Miles	3 Phyllis Connally Doris Mayfield	4 Barbara Bates Donna Jones	5 Dan Vinyard *2.	6 Stu Marshall Angela Rapp	7 *1. *2.
8 William Mosier	9 Van and Loretta Vives	10 Barbara and Don Sweeney	11 John and Joanne Colbert	12 Linda Anderson Pat Bumpas	13 Carol Eames Dean Johnston	14 Heritage Day Karen Harris Louise Magruder Edith Haraughty Vada Robertson
15 Nune and Tom Richards Don Bruner	16 Al and Liz Medley	17 Lila Brierly Joan Fuller	18 Dave Dolcater Dan Vinyard	19 Randy and Nyla Woody	20 Sue Wheeler Diana Childs Mary Jane Hansel	21 George Meyers Carolyn Mathews
22 Sandy Frazier Linda Irwin	23 Bob and Mary Reeves	24 Don and Barbara Sweeney	25 Marilyn Keefer Iris McPherson	26 Bill Rinehart Carl Wilhite	27 Sue Wheeler Dan Vinyard	28 Wayne Middleton Renel Johnson
29 Mary Cumming Carol Redford Sherry Beeker Maxene King	30 Kathryn Spears Barbara Strahm					