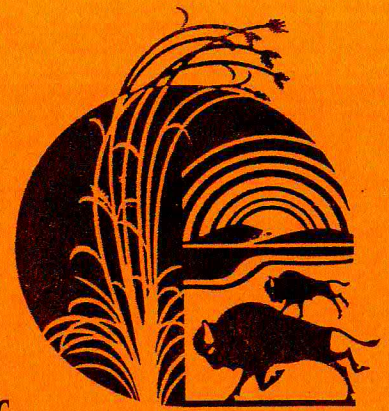


THE DOCENT NEWS



For Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docents September 2002

TNC Update

- Timothy Grogan, State Director

Together, we are entering a new era for the Nature Conservancy. In its first 50 years, the Conservancy has become by far the largest and most effective environmental organization on the planet, directly protecting more than 94 million acres of the lands and waters critical species need to survive. Yet, the threats to these species are growing even faster than we can address them through our traditional land acquisition methods. We are winning many battles, but losing the war.

We are therefore adding new strategies to our arsenal aimed at leveraging our precious resources to implement conservation strategies on a much larger scale. For instance, at a preserve such as Tallgrass Prairie, our priority will be to take the threat abatement strategies we have demonstrated on the 40,000 acre preserve and export them to the surrounding two million acre ecoregion.

Self-management by docents allows us to continue these very important programs at our preserves, while focusing the time and attention of our staff on achieving lasting and tangible results through the ambitious new strategies.

Please be assured that the Conservancy will continue to fully support the docent program. Jerry Wagener has generously volunteered to direct the program. We are working with him to provide all of the financial and administrative support he needs to continue the high standards of the program.

My personal thanks to each of you for the valuable time you have contributed as docents. With your continuing support, the Conservancy will continue "saving the last great places."



Prairie News

- Bob Hamilton,
Assistant Director TGP

The cowboys are working on the last one mile of new fence to add the Mary L. Pasture, 1,326 acres, to the

bison unit this fall. They are also spot spraying serizea lespezeza.

Since August 22, we've conducted seven summer burns totaling 1,545 acres. There is one more burn left to go.

There are approximately 400 to 450 calves. An exact count will be available after roundup!

Groundbreaking on the research facility is expected in early 2003.

Lots of slow critters are moving about the preserve. Look for box turtles, rattle snakes, tarantulas.



**Mark your
Calendar with
these important
dates!**

**Docent Round-Up
November 16th**
(See page 2 for details)

**Docent Recognition
Dinner
December 7th**
(See page 4)

TGP Update

**- Harvey Payne, Director
Tallgrass Prairie Preserve**

The Nature Conservancy has always invested a high percentage of its money directly into conservation. Private donors and governmental funding sources expect such an approach to conservation. This method of doing business has certainly contributed to The Nature Conservancy's tremendous growth. However, such growth also requires periodic reviews of standard operating practices. Accordingly, The Nature Conservancy is attempting to refocus its efforts to leverage conservation and to invest an even higher percentage of its money directly into its conservation work.

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is conservation. Outreach has never been a part of the Conservancy's stated mission and it has decided to minimize its funding in that area. This is not to suggest that The Nature Conservancy does not consider outreach an important component of its conservation mission. Rather, the Conservancy believes that outreach can be achieved by volunteers.

The staff at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve remains as committed as ever to the docent program. We certainly do not intend to degrade the docent program in any manner. We are simply re-tooling the program to comply with The

Nature Conservancy's general policy.

The only constant in life is change. We have gone through a number of changes since the inception of the docent program in 1994 and the program is now stronger than ever. We feel that with the outstanding volunteer leadership that has come forward the docent program will continue to flourish.



Docent Roundup Day

***This year's Docent Roundup
Day is scheduled for
Saturday, November 16.***

We will meet the gift shop at 2:00 p.m. Groups will be taken up to the corral to see the roundup up close and personal! Come early with a sack lunch if you'd like. Docents may reserve a spot for one guest. Remember that the roundup is not open to the general public. **Please RSVP Kay Krebbs by Wednesday, November 13th via email if possible at kkrebbs@tnc.org, otherwise by phone at (918) 287-4803 between 8:30-12:30.**

Docent Contacts

Thanks to everyone who expressed interest in assisting with the docent program. The committee leader will contact you if you indicated an area of interest in your survey. To get involved, here's who to call!

Program Coordinator

Jerry Wagener
(918) 742-2566 - home
(918) 592-3023 - work
(918) 697-6240 - cell
Jerry@Wagener.com

Tour Coordinator

Dick Baker
(918) 747-2495
Dbakertul@aol.com

Docent Scheduler

Kara Morgan
(918) 272-9433
morgan1477@aol.com

Newsletter Coordinator

Kim Hagan
(918) 494-8892
kimhagan@sbcglobal.net

New Docent Recruitment

June Endres
(405) 356-9645
Ridgetree@worldnet.att.net

New Docent Training

David Turner
(918) 333-7864 - home
(918) 661-4287 - work
drenrut@aol.com

Reorientation and Kickoff

Don Bruner
(580) 237-4199 - home
(580) 213-9217 - work
dbruner@groendyke.com

Docent Awards

Monica Murray
(918) 587-3701 - home
(918) 556-5327 - work
monica.murray@oden-ins.com

Tracks in the Tallgrass

- Jerry Wagener, Docent Program Coordinator

The Nature Conservancy has asked me to be program coordinator for the Tallgrass Prairie docent program. Assured of the Preserve's continuing commitment, I agreed. This is my first communication with you in that capacity – let's see if I can answer your questions:

Will there be major changes?
Only one, if you don't count the fact that the program is now managed by volunteers, not TNC staff. I see no reason to make any change unless we can improve things further. The one change is discontinuance of the special-event trail guiding (e.g., a busload of students); the regular trail guide signposts continue.

Why the management change?

As I understand it, a new TNC policy eliminated all staff positions dedicated to outreach; all TNC docent programs world-wide will be volunteer managed. This was a TNC management decision, not a TGP decision.

Will there be a docent fee?

Absolutely not! I know you have heard that this was a possibility. I want to put that notion to rest, in no uncertain terms.

Will the Docent News survive?

You bet. Kim Hagan agreed to be newsletter coordinator and this is her team's first

issue. We hope to publish each month, February through November.

Will the awards/recognition tradition continue?

Absolutely. See the preliminary details on page 4. The docent reorientation tradition will also continue, as well as annual new docent recruitment and training.

Who pays for all this?

All expenses will be paid from the TGP budget, as in the past. This includes printing, postage, awards, meeting rooms, and meals. In addition, TNC will make their Tulsa meeting room available to us and will continue to provide some clerical support.

Meeting room? What meetings?

In the recent questionnaire, 28 of us indicated a willingness to help with various aspects of the docent program. I hope to involve as many of those as possible, as well as anyone else that might be interested. To coordinate the program, I expect to hold periodic meetings of those having responsibility for the various pieces, in order to attend to any problems that might arise, to make mid-course corrections, and to discuss ideas for improvements. *All docents will be invited to participate in these coordination meetings.*

What about the Nickel Preserve docent program?

That is being dropped for now, until the Nickel visitors center, under construction,

is completed. Any successor Nickel docent program will be docent managed and supported by the Nickel Preserve, just as the Tallgrass docent program is supported by the TGP.

Is the Adopt-a-Bison program affected?

No. That is completely separate from the docent program, despite the fact that in recent years the Adopt-a-Bison coordinator has been a TGP volunteer.

Unfortunately I do not yet know all of you, and therefore it may take me awhile to get all the ducks in a row. Initially I'll be working from the lists of interested individuals identified in the questionnaires, but I'm also happy to hear from anyone else who would like to help out with the newsletter, scheduling, award dinners, returning docent reorientation, new docent recruiting and training, docent handbook revisions, etc.

But most important, by far, is the reason we became docents in the first place - spending time at the preserve, helping others enjoy it as well, and deriving satisfaction from participating in this noble conservation effort. It's a wonderful, unique opportunity.

See you at the visitors center or on the trail.

Jerry



Gift Shop Sales Summary

\$5,405.35 March 2001
4,845.78 March 2002
 <559.57> Decrease in sales

\$7,486.92 April 2001
4,552.81 April 2002
 <2,934.11> Decrease in sales

\$10,332.12 May 2001
8,774.83 May 2002
 <1,557.29> Decrease in sales

\$9,542.65 June 2001
10,696.31 June 2002
 1,153.66 Increase in sales

\$6,621.88 July 2001
7,107.98 July 2002
 486.10 Increase in sales

\$3,740.80 August 2001
4,055.73 August 2002
 314.93 Increase in sales

Year to Date

\$43,129.72 2001
40,033.44 2002
 <3,096.28> Decrease in sales



Gift Shop Closing Reminders

Please be sure to....

- 🔒 Lock the cash drawer and place the key in the cupboard.
- 🔒 Lock BOTH LOCKS on the front door.
- 🔒 Check to be sure that the Headquarters' door is locked, too!

Closing Checklists are posted in the gift shop for your convenience.

Book Recommendation
 - Andrew Donovan-Shead

Edward O. Wilson is a Science Adviser to The Nature Conservancy. His book, *Naturalist*, is an easily readable autobiographical account of how he traveled from studying jelly fish, specifically *Chrysaora quinquecirrha*, at Paradise Beach, Florida, to become one of the leading naturalists in the world. As a scientist he was able to propose the unity of knowledge in his seminal work of synthesis, *Consilience*, available at the gift shop.

I think you will enjoy Wilson's *Naturalist*. It gives clear insight into many issues important to conservation, and describes how he first took an active role in the conservation movement.



Docent Recognition Dinner Saturday, December 7, 2002

Mark this date on your calendars for the annual Docent Recognition Dinner! It will be held at the same location as last year, the Hampton Inn between Tulsa and Sand Springs. The evening's activities will include dinner and award presentations. For those interested, the hotel will offer a special rate to docents who wish to stay overnight. Amenities include an indoor pool, sauna, hot tub, complimentary breakfast, small refrigerator in each room, and cable TV.

If you are interested in helping with this event, contact Monica Murray at 587-3701 or email her at monica.murray@oden-ins.com

More information will be available in the next issue of The Docent News.



To Be or Not To Be - Van Vives

To be or not to be a thistle - that must be what the Leavenworth Eryngo (*eryngium leavenworthii*) often thinks. It looks like a thistle and most people call it that. In fact, it is not a thistle, but a member of the parsley family. Thistles are members of the sunflower family. A common name is the pineapple thistle because the "flower" looks very much like a small purple pineapple. The elegant name comes from:

eryngium - holly-shaped leaves

leavenworthii - honoring Colonel Melines Conkllin Leavenworth, a U. S. Army surgeon who collected plants in the South and West in the 1830s.

With the aid of a magnifying glass one sees dense inflorescences, purplish in color, at the ends of branches. The leaves are deeply divided into spiny-toothed parts.

This beautiful plant can now be seen on the Prairie alongside the road starting about one mile from the south entrance.



Something to Itch **About**

- Andrew Donovan-Shead

Bison are the largest and most visible creatures on the Tall Grass Prairie Preserve, when they happen to be

grazing nearby. But the bison are nothing compared to the creature that makes its presence felt with such keen emotional effect upon the amateur naturalist.

Trombicula alfreddugesi, of course, the common Chigger, Jigger, or Red Bug; it is an insect 1/20th of an inch long, barely visible to the naked eye.

Despite what you might think, Chiggers don't bite or suck blood. When in their larval stage they lurk near the tops of objects close to the soil. Chiggers snag any host that brushes by, then keep moving until they find tender wrinkled skin under tight-fitting clothing, in armpits, back of knees, or (worse) groins.

When in a good position on your body the Chigger will pierce your skin with its mouthparts. They inject a powerful digestive enzyme that simultaneously dissolves the skin cells so that they can be sucked up by the chigger, and harden the area around the breach to form a tube to aid its feeding.

After four days, the engorged Chigger will drop from your body leaving a red welt with a hard blister in the center that produces intense itching. As soon as you realize your misfortune, take a hot shower or bath and soap yourself repeatedly. Treat the welts with whatever commercial preparation works best for you: Chiga Rid is one, cortizone cream is another.

Launder your field clothing by soaking for at least 30 minutes in hot soapy water that is at a temperature above 125 degrees F. If you don't do this you risk another attack. When dealing with Chiggers, a scorched-earth policy is best.

I speak from experience gained when I last went out to act as docent and decided on a whim to go up the trail to take some pictures of the flowers blooming there early in the morning -- without taking precautions. I'll leave the pictures on the table when I go out again in October.

Next time I intend to apply Sawyer's controlled release Deet repellent to my skin and spray my boots, socks, and pants with Permanone repellent.

In writing this article I referred to the Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet that can be found on the Internet at address <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/2000/2100.html>. Or just enter "chiggers" as the search term to the Google search engine.

In conclusion, I think I prefer to face an enraged bison; it is something you can see and hear coming. One can stand one's ground then die like a man as it goes one to death; which, surely, must be better than being reduced to a hissing, vituperative lunatic by an invisible army of *Trombicula alfreddugesi*.



Visitation Notes

- George Meyers

July 2002 Summary

A total of 1,057 sign-in visitors came to the TGP in July, 3.9% less than July 2001. 48 came from other countries, including England (16), Switzerland (8), Norway (6) Brazil, China and Mexico (4 each), Germany (3), Canada (2), and Ireland (1). This was 20% ahead of July 2001. We had 408 visitors from 40 other states, down 9.9% from July 2001. The top states represented were Texas (52), Florida (37), California and Mississippi (22 each), Ohio (21), Illinois (20), and Kansas (18). 601 Oklahomans signed in during the month. 63% of the foreign visitors were first-timers, along with 74% of other state visitors and 52% of the Oklahomans, for a total of 61% overall.

July visitation was relatively even through the week, averaging 18 to 36 visitors each day except Saturdays, which averaged 75 visitors. 77% came between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. 19% came between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. Peak days saw 72 - 89 visitors and 7 days had more than 40 visitors.

Visitor comments included: "Just moved to the area and playing tourist", "The bison are awesome!", "Amazing", "One of God's gift's", "Bodacious Tah! Tah!", "Plenty of bison, birds, deer and dust - we had a FINE visit", "I'll move in any time". The bison stayed out of sight. Many commented "Where

are the bison?" and "No bison".

August 2002 Summary

A total of 685 sign-in visitors came to the TGP in August, 7.1% more than August 2001, but 6.1% less for the year-to-date. 21 came from seven other countries, including Italy (6), Belgium (5), Switzerland (4), New Zealand and Scotland (2 each), and Canada and Russia (1 each). This was 47.5% less than August 2001, but 21% ahead for the year-to-date. We had 245 visitors from 29 other states, down 9.3% from August 2001 and down 10.3% for the year-to-date. The top states represented were Louisiana (37), Kansas (27), Texas (24), California (21) and Mississippi (19). 418 Oklahomans signed in during the month. 47.6% of the foreign visitors were first-timers, along with 70.2% of other state visitors and 52.8% of the Oklahomans, for a total of 59.5% first-timers overall.

August visitation was heaviest on Saturday and Sunday, averaging 39 visitors each day. Monday and Tuesday averaged 20.5 each day and Wednesday through Friday averaged 12 visitors. 78% came between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., and 14% between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. Peak days had between 40 and 60 visitors, and 9 days had 30 visitors.

Some of the comments were: "We 'herd' it would be great", "Nice isolation!", "Beautiful wild flowers", "Wonderful big sky, grass and buffalo", "Our

40th anniversary tour", and "Thanks for the talk". A Scotsman "Saw lots of bison. Binoculars very handy!".

During the last eight years we had visitors from 112 foreign countries, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 4 U.S. possessions. We had a total of 95,838 sign-in visitors, 29,074 from other states, 23 from U.S. possessions, 2,825 from other countries and 63,739 Oklahomans!



Sightings on the Prairie

- Van Vives

Some of the big bluestem at the trailhead is now over ten feet tall. One new specimen displayed in the gift shop is 10 feet, 2 inches tall.

Other plant sightings: beautiful Indian grass, gaura, snow-on-the-mountain, blue sage, sunflowers, partridge pea, broomweed, gum plant, rough blazing star, boneset, tall thistle, wild petunia, bind weed, and golden rod.

Other than plants, the following were sighted: tarantulas crossing the road, a doe with twin fawns along the creek, wild turkeys running, then flying into the woods on the north trail, and a coyote walking along the fence south of the gift shop.



Fun Facts from the Visitors Log

- **Kim Hagan**

George Meyers provides us with a wonderful summary of visitor statistics and comments each month, but you can look at the visitor's logbook, too. Why? Well, here are three examples of what you might unearth simply by taking a peek!

Any time you're at the preserve, look at the log's last seven days. I bet you'll see visitors from foreign countries listed! I have done this nearly every time I'm on-site and it never fails. I've even encouraged visitors to do the same. Seeing first hand how many folks come to the preserve from other countries is a sure-fire way to impress them with just how special the TGP is.

One day this summer I saw two visitor names listed the day before from my hometown. I didn't know them, but it still was neat to see that people from Bay Shore, NY made it all the way out to the TGP!

On September 24th, two visitors from Stillwater had a bit more luck. They were just about to sign the log when they noticed the last entry. It was their cousins from St. Petersburg, FL who Pat Jaynes and I just sent out on the trail for their "daily 2 mile walk". The Oakies raced for the trailhead, and were later seen sitting near the information kiosk visiting with their kin!

Wild Spirits 2002

October 18, 2002

5:30 - 9:00 p.m.

A tasting of fine beers, wines, and culinary delights, to benefit the conservation work of the Oklahoma Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

Coles Garden

1415 NE 63rd St.

Oklahoma City, OK

(Coles Garden is across from the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.)

Contact Kevin Virgilio for more information @ (405) 858-8557.

Osage County officers search for suspect in cattle shooting

Suspect described as white male, 18-25 years old, with short brown hair and goatee
Special to the E-E

The Osage County Sheriff's office is investigating the shooting of 13 cattle and one horse that occurred Aug. 26 on the Batdorf Ranch located north of Pawhuska along the Kansas state line. Seven of the cows died.

Deputies investigating the case found numerous .22 caliber casings on the roadway.

A witness saw a red Jeep Cherokee parked in the road-

way around the time of the shooting. The individual in the Jeep was described as a white male believed to be 18 to 25 years of age.

Another witness in the area said on the same day, a red Jeep Cherokee pulled into his driveway. He said the vehicle was occupied by a white male driver between the age of 18 to 25 weighing between 135 and 150 pounds and having short brown hair. The person had a thin goatee on his chin. The

witness said the person was wanting to know where the nearest Wal-Mart was located so he could buy some .22 caliber ammunition because he had been hunting and had run out of bullets. The subject is believed to live in the Bartlesville area having a first name of either Eric or Derrick.

Anyone with information is asked to call Osage County Sheriff's Department Deputy Rick Harper at 1-888-287-3450.

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OCTOBER 2002

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 <i>Larry Hicks</i>	2 <i>Beverly Atteberry</i>	3 <i>Andrew Donovan-Shead</i>	4	5
6	7	8 <i>Jenk Jones</i>	9 <i>Bob Hawks Jan Hawks</i>	10 <i>Pat Jaynes</i>	11	12 <i>TG Van Vives Betty Turner David Turner</i>
13 <i>Irene Ward</i>	14 <i>Dean Johnston Mary Ellen Johnston Iris McPherson</i>	15 <i>Gene Harrison Iris McPherson</i>	16 <i>Beverly Atteberry</i>	17	18	19 <i>TG John Fisher Mary Cumming Carol Redford Larry Hicks</i>
20	21 <i>Loretta Vives Van Vives Pat Jaynes</i>	22	23 <i>Dave Dolcater Marilyn Keefer Iris McPherson</i>	24 <i>Bill Rinehart</i>	25	26 <i>TG Don Bruner Bob Hawks Jan Hawks</i>
27 <i>Nicholas DelGrosso</i>	28 <i>Pat Jaynes</i>	29	30 <i>Beverly Atteberry</i>	31		

To schedule, contact: Kara Morgan
9203 N. 161st E. Ave.
Owasso OK 74055

Phone: 918-272-9433
(Leave your name and phone number on the answering machine)
E-Mail: morgan1477@aol.com

Weekends call - Ann Whitehorn 918-287-4238
Shift Hours: 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.
(Stay until 5 if you can)

Or use the on-line scheduler on the web site at http://oklahomanature.org/OK/tallgrass_volunteers.html

NOVEMBER 2002

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 <i>Barbara Strahm</i>	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 <i>Jean Wagener</i> <i>Jerry Wagener</i>	9 <i>TG Don Bruner</i> <i>Jean Wagener</i> <i>Jerry Wagener</i>
10 <i>Jenk Jones</i>	11	12 <i>Gene Harrison</i>	13 <i>Clara Swan Smith</i>	14	15	16 <i>TG John Fisher</i>
17	18 <i>Loretta Vives</i> <i>Van Vives</i>	19 <i>Jim Vester</i>	20 <i>Dave Dolcater</i> <i>Marilyn Keefer</i> <i>Iris McPherson</i>	21	22	23 <i>Irene Ward</i> <i>TG Van Vives</i>
24	25	26	27	28 <i>Bill Rinehart</i>	29	30

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DECEMBER 2002

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6 <i>Barbara Strahm</i>	7
8 <i>Irene Ward</i>	9	10	11 <i>Clara Swan Smith</i>	12	13	14 <i>TG Don Bruner</i>
15	16 <i>Loretta Vives Van Vives</i>	17 <i>Jim Vester</i>	18	19	20	21 <i>TG John Fisher</i>
22	23	24	25 <i>Marilyn Keefer Iris McPherson</i>	26 <i>Bill Rinehart</i>	27	28
29	30	31				

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