

THE DOCENT NEWS



For Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docents

October 2002

Mark your calendar
with these
important dates!

Docent Round-Up
November 16th

Docent Recognition
Dinner
December 7th
(See page 6)

Gift Shop Sales Summary

\$4,562.16 September 2001
5,378.52 September 2002
\$816.36 Increase in
sales

Year to Date

\$47,691.88 2001
45,411.96 2002
<2,279.92> Decrease in
sales

Make your Reservation for 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.

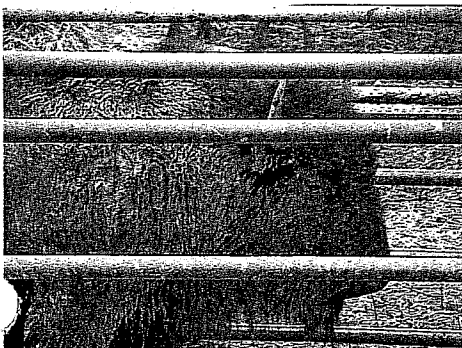
Docents may reserve a spot
for one guest. Remember
that the roundup is not open
to the general public. **If you
have not already done so,
please RSVP Kay Krebbs by
Wednesday, November 13th
via email if possible at
kkrebbs@tnc.org, otherwise
by phone at (918) 287-4803
between 8:30-12:30.**

Gift Shop Closing Reminders

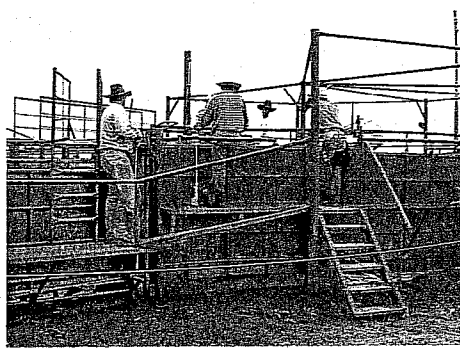
Please be sure to....

- 🔒 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.



Bison at roundup



Cowboys work the roundup 2000
Photographs by Phil Hagan



Heading towards squeeze shoot

Visitation Notes

- *George Meyers*

Summary - September 2002

A total of 951 sign-in visitors came to the Prairie Preserve in September, 9.3% less than September 2001, and 6.4% less for the year-to-date.

72 came from 17 foreign countries, including France (26), with 20 from Pawhuska's sister city, Montauban, Germany (13), England (7), Czech Republic (5), and Venezuela (4). This was 112% more than September 2001 and 24% ahead for the year-to-date.

We had 290 visitors from 31 other states, up 7.4% from September 2001 and down 8.5% for the year. The top states represented were Texas (44), Kansas (22), Missouri (20), California (19), Virginia (18) and New York (17). 589 Oklahomans signed in during the month.

69.4% of the foreign visitors were first-timers, along with 61% of other state visitors and 47.9% of Oklahomans, for a total of 53.2% first-timers overall.

September visitation was heaviest on Monday, Saturday and Sunday, averaging 37 to 46 visitors per day. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday averaged 17 to 22 per day. Wednesday averaged 34 visitors per day. 64% came between 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., and 14.5% came between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Another 16.1% visited between 3:30

and 5:30 p.m. Peak days saw 99, 74, 73, 58 and 50 visitors. 11 days had more than 30 visitors during the month.

Some of the visitor comments were: "Very scenic", "The big bluestem looks gorgeous", "Quiet. Very interesting", "LOVED IT!!", "Nice page on outdoor photographer", "It's time to practice good stewardship of God's creation", "Here yesterday for sunset hike. Missed sunrise here but fine time on trail. A 'cloud' of monarch butterflies near creek", "It's good to see our donations at work", A German visitor wrote, "Not yet seen bisons". An Englishman commented, "We saw many", and a French lady noted, "I should have been a cowgirl". "Great" outnumbered "Wonderful" and "Beautiful" two to one.



A Fowl Mystery

- *Van Vives*

One Saturday, about a month ago, I was working as a trail guide. A couple, from out of state came into the gift shop wide-eyed with the enthusiasm that avid birders have when they have observed a new species to add to their list. They immediately went to the bird identification books and thumbed through every page. Then enthusiasm turned into frustration. They asked me about the bird they saw and wanted to know what I thought it was.

According to them it was a large bird, larger than the average songbird, and had quite a bit of yellow and a long beak. It had long legs and was sitting on a fence post when they saw it. The woman took a picture of it, but it was so far away that she had little hope that the picture would help.

Unexpectedly, about an hour later another couple, also birders, came into the gift shop and went through the same exhilaration, then frustration.

Recently a docent saw what he described as the same bird of mystery. Again, no identification was made.

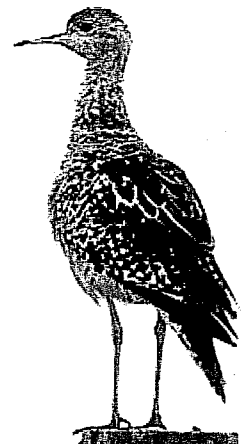
So you bird watching sleuths, get your books out and see if you can identify the bird of mystery from the following description.

It is about 12 inches long, has a small head and long, thin neck.

The legs and long beak are yellow.

The eyes are large, dark, and prominent. The color is blackish primaries contrasting with

mottled brown upper parts.



Wayne Nelson/CLO

Answer on page 6.



Musings

- Andrew Donovan-Shead

Change is always unsettling, more so as we grow older. Yet change can be a good thing because it stops us from getting stuck in a rut that can wear so deep we can't see over the sides. A little change can often freshen our lives; there is truth in the adage, "A change is as good as a rest."

It is a good thing that The Nature Conservancy has re-evaluated its priorities. Scientists are concerned about the loss of habitat around the world and consequent loss of biodiversity, which increases the fragility of our already fragile existence. We all depend, ultimately, on a healthy planet. In their realignment The Nature Conservancy has decided to concentrate its limited financial and organizational resources on its primary mission of nature conservancy.

Even though I work in a world of virtual reality about as far removed from nature as one can get, I too have sensed the peril of our planet. This might sound a trifle melodramatic, but it is what moved me to join The Nature Conservancy and to become a docent at the Tallgrass Prairie. I think that education and outreach is of vital importance, especially to the young who will be the future of the world.

As docents we are a team, a voluntary part of the team

that is The Nature Conservancy as a whole. The Tall Grass Prairie team includes scientists, cowboys working on the grounds, members of the administrative staff, and volunteer docents. Each of us is important to the success of the enterprise, which is to preserve and maintain the health of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem locally, our planetary biological systems globally.

Our job as docents is to interact with members of the public who visit the Tallgrass Prairie each day. In fact, our job is education and outreach. How we accomplish this is entirely in our hands. Change has brought us an opportunity to excel as a team of docents.

Each of us brings a different set of skills and areas of interest to the team. We have an excellent medium of communication in *The Docent News*. It is a means by which we can share information that may help each of us be more effective in our contact with those who actually reach the Visitors' Center and stop for a few minutes to talk with whomever is on duty.

So, if you have some information or an anecdote you would like to share with the docent team, please write it down and send it to Kim Hagan for publication. Don't be bashful, talk about what you know and let the editor take care of making your prose look and sound good in print.

Here are some ideas for subject matter:

- Oil production in Osage County
- Ranching in Osage County
- Life and times of the Osage people
- Plant life on the preserve
- Insect life on the preserve
- Animal life on the preserve
- Anecdotes of your experiences with the public

As a team we have the opportunity to achieve synergy, to become greater than the sum of our parts.



Wedding News

Congratulations to The Nature Conservancy's Tulsa Office Receptionist, Wendy Ogle, on her marriage to Bill Anasti. The couple was wed on Saturday, October 12th and honeymooned in beautiful Jamaica. Wendy returned to the office on Monday, October 21st. So next time you talk to her, please congratulate her and her new husband!

The newsletter team would like to thank Wendy for her support gathering preserve information for publication and getting the newsletter mailed out each month.



Sightings on the Prairie

- Van Vives

Anyone walking on the trail along the creek during the last half of September had a wonderful sight to behold. There was a profusion of plants with small white puff flowers. It was the White Snakeroot plant, *Eupatorium Rugosum*. What makes the sight special is the large congregation of monarch butterflies feasting on the nectar of the snakeroot.

Eupatorium - named after the ancient Greek healer, Eupater Mithridates.
Rugosum - Latin for wrinkled, possibly referring to the leaves.



White Snakeroot

I contacted Michael Palmer of OSU to confirm my identification. He said that I was correct and he said that the modern name for White Snakeroot seems to be *Ageratina Altissima*.

The plant is upright, highly branched, with smooth stems. Flowerheads are in loose, terminal flat-topped

clusters. Flowers point upward and are white and tuftlike. Leaves are opposite, with large teeth. It thrives in rich or rocky woody areas.



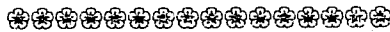
White Snakeroot flowers

White Snakeroot is poisonous to cattle and is the cause of *milk sickness*. Drinking milk from infected cattle killed many early settlers. The mother of Abraham Lincoln died from drinking the poisonous milk.

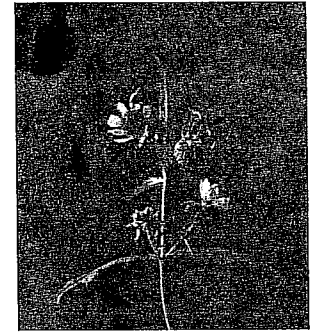
Editors note: For further information on White Snakeroot, go to:

www.voyageur.drake.edu/Wacha/white_snakeroot.html

www.library.uiuc.edu/vex/toxic/snkrout/wksroot0.htm



"What's the yellow plant?" This is a frequent question from visitors, especially those walking the trail. It could be Partridge Pea (a few plants still blooming) or broom weed (still a few blooms). But probably it is the Bur Marigold, *Bidens Arisosa*, which is a member of the aster family. And this is aster time! Asters of all shades of white, pink, purple, and lavender are abundant now.



Bur Marigold

Editors note: For more information on Bur Marigolds, try the following site:

www.rook.org/earl/bwca/nature/aquatics/bidenscer.html



Another beautiful sighting was that of a tarantula crossing the 4220 county road. It had a velvety tan body and black legs. If anyone knows the name of this species of tarantula, please contact me.



Attention All Docents!

Do you have a favorite anecdote about working at the preserve? Monica Murray is collecting any funny or strange stories that happened to you or are about a fellow docent.

Also, if anyone has any pictures of the preserve in digital format, she would like them to contact her at (918) 712-5516 or e-mail her at Monica.Murray@oden-ins.com.

(There is a clue in the newsletter as to why she is asking for this information. See if you can figure it out!)

Prairie News

- **Bob Hamilton,**
Assistant Director TGP

- Continued sericea lespedeza spot-spraying program. Since June, devoted over 900 man-hours to the effort.
- Established 66 sericea lespedeza monitoring points (small and large patches) consisting of a GPS location, patch-size measurement, and digital photo.
- Completed 1.5 miles of bison fence on east side of Mary L. pasture, now starting on north side (preparation for fall bison unit expansion).
- Conducted four prescribed burns (2 in OSU patch-burn pastures, 2 in bison unit) totaling 1160 acres. Summer burns are now completed (8 burns totaling 1685 acres).
- Hosted Tallgrass Legacy Alliance meeting of about 40 ranchers, with the focus being a patch-burn talk and tour led by OSU.
- Assisted in organization of Multi-State Sericea Working Group annual meeting held in Bartlesville. Field tour to the TGP with the focus on our spot-spraying program.



A Gayfeather Feast?

- **Van Vives**

So you are lost on the prairie for days and are starving to death. What can you do? Well, there is food all around you if you know what is edible. Now, I'm not saying

that it is all a gourmet's delight, but it can be sustaining. There are several books in the gift shop on edible plants, but you have to realize that terms like tasty, delicious, and palatable are relative. Let's look at a few plants.

Gayfeather: The roots, especially those in spring, are sweet and can be baked over a fire. A little seasoning doesn't hurt. Roots can be harvested in the fall and stored for winter. The stored roots actually become sweeter during storage due to conversion of starches.

White and Purple Prairie Clover: The roots have a pleasant, sweet taste. Dried leaves are used to make tea.

Wild Hyacinth: The roots can be eaten, but because the plant resembles the Death Camas so closely one must be very, very careful.

New Jersey Tea: As the name suggests, it is a very good substitute for black tea.

Spiderwort: The young stems and leaves can be used in salads or cooked as a potherb. The fresh flowers can be used to garnish salads and other dishes. If eaten raw in a salad, one must be willing to ignore the gooey, slimy sap that exudes from it. On the other hand, it probably eases swallowing.

Spring Beauty: Early leaves can be eaten in a salad. Later leaves can be boiled and served with butter or lemon juice. The roots, potato-like, are good fried in oil with salt and pepper.

Plantain: Use raw in salads with oil-vinegar dressing. And all this time we considered it just a pest in our gardens and flowerbeds.

Prairie Parsley: The leaves in grass have a parsley flavor and can be used in salads. The roots are slightly sweet, but have a bitter aftertaste. So have something else ready at hand to eat to take the bitter aftertaste away. Dried roots can be made into flour.

Leadplant: The dried leaves can be used to make a tea.

Purple Poppy Mallow: The root is sweet and starchy. The Osage dug the roots and stored them to eat during the winter.

Common Milkweed: All parts of the plant contain poisonous toxins; the plant parts must be boiled for four minutes, with one change of water to remove the toxins. The tender shoots in spring can be cooked like asparagus. A common name for the milkweed is *Wild Asparagus*. The flowers and young fruit can also be eaten.

I guess the thing that concerns me is that if you look in the books for medicinal plants, some of the same plants are used for emetics.

So how about all of us docents getting together once a year for a wild plant banquet accompanied by various teas? Let me know in advance just in case I have to send my regrets.



Answer to A Fowl Mystery:

The Upland Sandpiper. This is the southernmost area of its usual territory.

Thanks to David Turner for providing me with the identification.

Editors note: The following sites contain more information on upland sandpipers, including sound files.

www.nenature.com/UplandSandpiper.htm

www.gpnc.org/upland.htm

www.i-bird.com/LowGraphic/LGUplandSndppr.htm

www.birds.cornell.edu/BOW/UPSAND/



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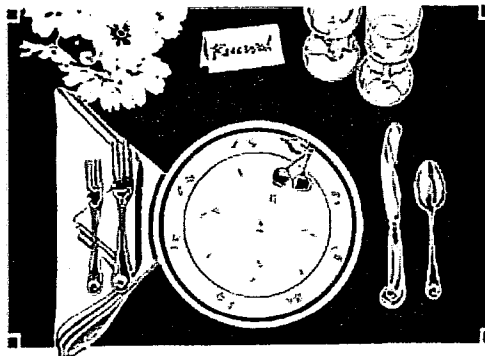
Docent Recognition Dinner Saturday, December 7, 2002

Mark this date on your calendar 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.

Please RSVP to Monica Murray at (918) 712-5516 or email her at monica.murray@oden-ins.com by November 22nd.

If you are interested in helping with this event, please contact Monica.



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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 <i>Stu Marshall</i>	5 <i>Irene Ward</i>
6 <i>Irene Ward</i>	7 <i>Phyllis Connally Kim Hagan Pat Jaynes</i>	8 <i>Jenk Jones</i>	9 <i>Bob Hawks Jan Hawks</i>	10	11 <i>Don Baird</i>	12 <i>TG Van Vives Betty Turner David Turner</i>
13 <i>Jim Deming Dorothy Buck</i>	14 <i>Dean Johnston Mary Ellen Johnston Iris McPherson</i>	15 <i>Iris McPherson</i>	16 <i>Beverly Atteberry</i>	17 <i>Charlotte Evans Elinor Hill</i>	18 <i>Stu Marshall Charlotte Evans</i>	19 <i>TG John Fisher Kara Morgan</i>
20 <i>TG John Boxall Charlotte Evans</i>	21 <i>Loretta Vives Van Vives Pat Jaynes</i>	22 <i>Steve Welter</i>	23 <i>Dave Dolcater Marilyn Keefer Iris McPherson</i>	24 <i>Bill Rinehart</i>	25 <i>June Endres</i>	26 <i>TG Don Bruner Bob Hawks Jan Hawks</i>
27	28 <i>Pat Jaynes Jim Walker</i>	29 <i>Larry Hicks</i>	30 <i>Beverly Atteberry</i>	31 <i>John Boxall</i>		

RETURN THIS TO: Kara Morgan
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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)

NOVEMBER 2002

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2 Carol Redford Mary Cumming
3	4	5 Andrew Donovan- Shead	6 Jenk Jones	7 Bill Rinehart	8	9 TG Don Bruner
10	11 Pat Jaynes	12	13 Beverly Atteberry Stu Marshall	14	15 Jerry Wagener Jean Wagener	16 TG John Fisher Jerry Wagener Jean Wagener
17 Nicholas DelGrosso	18	19	20 Dave Dolcater Marilyn Keefer	21	22	23 Irene Ward TG Van Vives
24 Irene Ward	25 Jim Walker	26	27	28	29 June Endres	30

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DECEMBER 2002

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 <i>Carol Redford Mary Cumming</i>
8	9 <i>Pat Jaynes</i>	10	11 <i>Clara Swan Smith</i>	12	13 <i>Irene Ward</i>	14 <i>TG Don Bruner Irene Ward</i>
15 <i>Nicholas DelGrosso</i>	16	17	18	19	20 <i>June Endres</i>	21 <i>TG John Fisher</i>
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 <i>TG Van Vives</i>
29	30	31				

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