



Published by the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docent Program

Distributed to Volunteers and Supporters of the Oklahoma Chapter of The Nature Conservancy

### STEWARDSHIP NEWS

—Bob Hamilton

The preserve spring burn season began the first week of March and pretty well ran its course by the first week of April. We conducted fifteen prescribed burns on the preserve, totaling 11,000 acres. In addition, we assisted our ranch neighbors in burning at least three times that acreage. As usual for an Oklahoma spring, it was a challenge working around the showers and extremely blustery winds. Our ranch staff did an incredible job of making constant repairs to keep the fire trucks running.

The first spring 2005 bison calf was spotted by Dwight Christian, Ranch Manager, on March 21. We expect over 400 calves this spring.

Our ranch staff are scrambling to complete a mile of boundary fencing on the east side of the preserve before spring cattle arrive in mid-April. The consistent rains since last fall were great for our soil moisture, but it sure made it difficult to get into remote areas with our fencing equipment.

### BUTTERFLIES

—John Fisher

After last year's field work and reviewing lots of old records, we added a number of butterfly

species to the preserve lists and also dropped a very questionable record for the Edwards' Hairstreak from the Tallgrass Prairie list. As near as I can tell, Boehler Seeps & Cucumber Creek have only been surveyed once prior to last year when John Nelson and I spent a day at Boehler Seeps in early September. Even though there were only a few flowers nectaring, because of the timing and dry conditions, we still added eighteen new butterflies to the preserve list. More visits to Boehler Seeps and Cucumber Creek are definitely on the agenda for this year.



*Eastern Tailed-Blue, Everes comyntas*  
J.T. Nickel Preserve, by John Fisher, Apr 8, 2005

So far this year I have found White M Hairstreaks, *Parrhasius m-album*, at Keystone and an Appalachian Silvery Blue, *Glaucopsyche*

*lygdamus nittanyensis*, at Nickel. I had considered the White M as a potential species at Keystone but the Silvery Blue was only on the ‘wish’ list for the Nickel Preserve. It has been recorded from the Ozarks & Ouachitas in Arkansas, but never in Oklahoma before. There is also a good possibility a western subspecies, Jack’s Silvery Blue, *G. l. jacki*, could be found at Four Canyon since it has been recorded from several nearby counties.



*When Butterflies Attack!*  
*Eastern Tailed-Blue, Everes comyntas*  
*Spring Azure, Celastrina ladon*  
*J.T. Nickel Preserve, by John Fisher, Apr 8, 2005*

**Current Preserve Species Count**

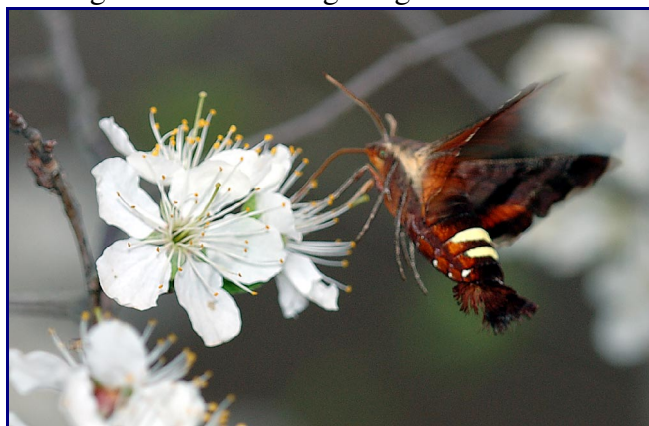
- Pontotoc Ridge – 95
- Keystone Ancient Forest – 94
- J.T. Nickel – 91
- Tallgrass Prairie – 86

- Four Canyon – 54
- Cucumber Creek – 50
- Boehler Seeps - 41

**DOCENT EVENTS CALENDER**

—[www.oklanature.com/prod/docents.html](http://www.oklanature.com/prod/docents.html)

- 2005 - Spring Oilfield Cleanup  
 Saturday, April 16, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
 Meet at headquarters. Bring your own lunch. Spring Oilfield Cleanup coincides with the second day of New Docent Training, so hopefully the new folks will get to see just how down and dirty we can get, and how much good we can do for the landscape. We will break for lunch at the same time as the new class, so we’ll have an opportunity to chat with them and congratulate them on getting involved.



*Nessus Sphinx (moth), Amphion floridensis*  
*J.T. Nickel Preserve, by John Fisher, Apr 8, 2005*

- Nickel Preserve Volunteer Workday  
 Saturday, April 23rd, 2005 at 9:00 a.m.  
 At the Nickel Preserve Headquarters.

Contact Chris Wilson (918) 456 7601 or George Pierson (918) 232 1904.

Activities will include old fence removal (the elk can get tangled up in them), cleaning up the bathtub rocks area, trash pickup on the pumpkin flats road, gate painting, etc.

Meet at the preserve headquarters at 9:00a.m. We will meet back at the headquarters for lunch (bring your own ) and finish work by 4:00p.m.

To get to the preserve headquarters, go to Eagle Bluff, about 10 miles north of Tahlequah on Highway 10. Go east on the gravel road. Within a few hundred yards, you will cross the Comb's Bridge. After crossing Comb's Bridge go ¼ mile and stay right at the split. Go ¼ mile and turn left at the brick house on the hill, and follow the gravel road through the preserve 6 miles to the Headquarters.

With luck we will see the recently released elk. By that time they will have been roaming free for about a month.

- 2005 - Prairie Road Crew, Cookout, and Hike Saturday, May 14, 10:00 a.m. to about 4:30 p.m.

We will do a quick cleanup of the county roads from 10:00 till noon, then break for a cookout near Preserve Headquarters. At 1:00, we'll drive to the southeast corner of the Preserve for a hike along Wild Hog Creek, an area of dramatic topographic relief. Bring hiking shoes—the area is rugged, and there is no trail.

- Bird Identification Workshop Saturday, May 21, 10:00 a.m.

Jim Thayer will lead a bird identification workshop at the Tallgrass Prairie. It is directed at beginners, so no background is necessary. Experienced naturalists will enjoy it as well.

We will meet at the Visitors Center at 10:00 a.m. Bring binoculars and guidebooks if you have them.

If you plan to attend, please call Jim Thayer at 918-494-3784 or the Pawhuska office 918-287-4803 so that Jim will be able to prepare for the turnout.



*White M Hairstreak, Parrhasius m-album*  
Keystone Ancient Forest Preserve,  
by John Fisher, Mar 19, 2005

- Nickel Preserve Spring Bird Count. Saturday, May 28th, 2005 at 8:00 a.m. at Eagle Bluff parking lot. Contact Mia Revels (918) 456-5511 x3824

Mia hopes that many of you will be able to attend the fourth annual J.T. Nickel Family Nature and Wildlife Preserve Spring Bird Count on Saturday, May 28th from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. We should get lots of warblers, vireos, tanagers and other exciting birds!



*Bellwort at J. T. Nickel Preserve,  
by George Pierson*

We will be meeting at the Eagle Bluff resort parking lot on Hwy 10 just a few miles northeast of Tahlequah (on the map Eagle Bluff is just west of the Comb's Bridge on Hwy 10). Newcomers are very welcome and can contact

me for more specific directions via email at [revels@nsuok.edu](mailto:revels@nsuok.edu), or via telephone at 918-456-5511 x3824. Mia will pass out checklists and we will organize into groups with assigned areas. Folks can lunch on their own, and we will meet back at the Visitors Center/Preserve Headquarters at 3:00 for Spaghetti and whatever potluck dishes people feel like contributing. At that time we will compile a species list for the day with numbers to be tabulated later. We look forward to seeing you all there!



*Bird's Foot Violet at J. T. Nickel Preserve,  
by George Pierson*

➤ 2005 Annual Butterfly Counts

June and July, 2005

Butterfly counts will be held at the following Oklahoma preserves in 2005.

→ Pontotoc Ridge

June 11th - 10:00 A.M.

Meet at the preserve office. Contact Walter Gerard at 918-747-4771.

→ Keystone Ancient Forest

June 14th - 9:00 A.M.

Meet at convenience store parking lot at 209th W Ave exit from US 412 west of Sand Springs. Contact John Fisher at telephone 918-245-8662 or by email at [jfisher@tnc.org](mailto:jfisher@tnc.org)



*Sassafras at J. T. Nickel Preserve,  
by George Pierson*

→ Four Canyon Preserve

June 18th - 10:00 A.M.

Meet at the preserve entrance 13 mi west of Vici on Hwy 51 & 8 mi south. Contact John Fisher at telephone 918-245-8662 or via email at [jfisher@tnc.org](mailto:jfisher@tnc.org).

→ J.T. Nickel Preserve

June 25th - 9:30 A.M.

Meet at Preserve Headquarters in Sawmill Hollow. Contact Walter Gerard at telephone 918-747-4771.

→ Tallgrass Prairie

July 2nd - 9:30 A.M.

Meet at the Visitors Center. Contact Walter Gerard at telephone 918-747-4771

➤ Butterfly Identification Workshop

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*Serviceberry at J. T. Nickel Preserve,  
by George Pierson*

**NATURE'S KEEPERS**

—Andrew Donovan-Shead

Bill Birchard's book "Nature's Keepers" is the "remarkable story of how The Nature Conservancy became the largest environmental

organization in the world.” Birchard traces the evolution of the Conservancy from its inception fifty years ago until now by revealing “the work of nine [persons] who exemplify what made the Conservancy excel.” On many occasions during its lifetime, the Conservancy has had to reorganize and re-dedicate itself to its core mission. Most recently we have seen yet another sharpening of focus under Steve McCormick, needed to cope with the “crisis in accountability triggered by the Washington Post” articles that examined “the Conservancy’s list of errors and indiscretions,” and concentrate on the science needed to identify what should be conserved.



*Serviceberry at J. T. Nickel Preserve,  
by George Pierson*

In feudal Europe, most right-thinking Lords saw themselves as caretakers of their lands who endeavored to leave it in better condition than they found it. Native Americans clearly understood their relationship to the land; one tribe is reported to have considered their actions in terms of the

effects expected seven generations into the future. Our lives are short. We come and go, but our culture lives on indefinitely. Today corporations are immortal. The Nature Conservancy has developed into a corporate culture for conserving the natural environment based upon scientific fact. Officers and employees of The Nature Conservancy are transitory, but their cultural heritage lives on to care for what is most precious to us all. This is Bill Birchard’s story.

You can order a copy of this book from your favorite bookseller. Tulsa library has three copies in the library system available for lending; go on-line and have a copy delivered to a branch library near you at [www.tulsalibrary.org](http://www.tulsalibrary.org).



*Spicebush SM at J. T. Nickel Preserve,  
by George Pierson*

## SCIENCE IN ACTION: NEON

—Andrew Donovan-Shead

You may remember in the February issue when I speculated on instrumenting the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. I thought I was thinking big. Dr. Michael Palmer sent me a note in which it was apparent that I wasn't thinking big enough. He directed my attention to NEON.



*Trillium at J. T. Nickel Preserve,  
by George Pierson*

According to the NEON Design Process document, “The National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) will be the first national ecological measurement and observation system designed both to answer regional- to continental-scale scientific questions and to have the interdisciplinary participation necessary to achieve credible ecological forecasting and prediction. As such, NEON will transform the way we conduct science by enabling the integration of research and education from natural to human systems, and from genomes to the biosphere. Social scientists and educators will join ecologists and physical scientists in NEON planning and design and participate as observatory users, recognizing that we live on landscapes that are, to varying degrees, human-dominated ecosystems.”

“NEON is envisioned as *‘a continental scale research instrument consisting of geographically distributed infrastructure, networked via state-of-the-art communications. Cutting-edge lab and field instrumentation, site-based experimental infrastructure, natural history archive facilities and/or computational, analytical and modeling capabilities, linked via a computational network will comprise NEON. NEON will transform ecological research by enabling studies on major environmental challenges at regional to continental scales. Scientists and engineers will use NEON to conduct real-time ecological studies spanning all levels of biological organization and temporal and geographical scales. NSF disciplinary and multi-disciplinary programs will*

support NEON research projects and educational activities. Data from standard measurements made using NEON will be publicly available.’ (NSF 04549, 2004).”

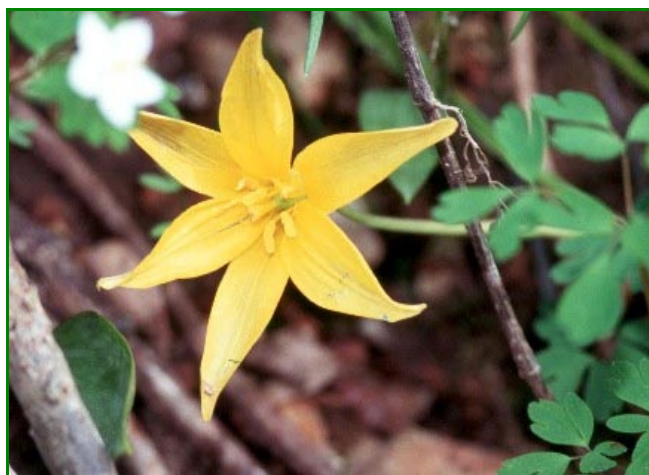


*Wild Ginger at J. T. Nickel Preserve,  
by George Pierson*

This measurement and observation system seems to complement The Nature Conservancy ecoregional plans. NEON is composed of several committees and sub-committees:

- Science and Human Dimension Committee.
  - Biodiversity subcommittee
  - Biogeochemical Cycles subcommittee
  - Climate Change subcommittee
  - Emerging Issues subcommittee
  - Hydroecology subcommittee
  - Infectious Diseases subcommittee

- Invasive Species subcommittee
- Land Use subcommittee
- Education Committee
  - Undergraduate, Graduate, and Post-graduate Training subcommittee
  - GK—12 Training subcommittee
  - Informal Education subcommittee



*Yellow Dogtooth at J. T. Nickel Preserve,  
by George Pierson*

- Facilities and Infrastructure Committee
  - Research Infrastructure subcommittee
  - Information Technology and Communication subcommittee
  - Sensor and Sensor Networking subcommittee
- National Network Design Committee
- Consortium Development Committee



You can find out more about this enormous project by going to the NEON web-site at [www.neoninc.org](http://www.neoninc.org).

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS**

Publication date is on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Deadline for submissions is the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. All docents are welcome to submit articles for publication, relating to your experiences at the Tallgrass Prairie and other preserves.

**Tallgrass Prairie Docent Coordinators**

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J.T. Nickel Family Nature & Wildlife Preserve	Preserve Director	Chris Wilson	918-456-7601
Pontotoc Ridge Preserve	Preserve Director	Jim Erwin	580-777-2224