

## Eaglet Survives Nest Tree Disaster

The much-watched eagle triplets near the Noxubee Visitor Center were thrown to the ground when their nest tree fell in the powerful storm April 27. Two of the three eaglets were killed and the third roughed up.

The good news is that the surviving eaglet is still alive with both parents feeding it. FoNR volunteer Margaret Copeland recently observed the eaglet, dubbed “Lucky” by some, up in the current nest tree eating. She said the eaglet was unsteady on the branch but flapping its wings for exercise, a necessary activity in preparation for flying.

Refuge Biologist Dave Richardson expects the eaglet to continue developing normally and fledge, saying “The absence of competition from the other siblings should allow the remaining bird a better chance of surviving now that all food resources are allocated to it.”

According to Richardson, eagles nest in the winter with incubation taking more than 30 days. After hatching, eaglets stay in the nest 10-12 weeks prior to flying on their own. The triplets hatched in late January or early February, making them 7-9 weeks old when disaster struck.



*Lucky in his immature plumage*

The eagle nest tree had been dead for at least five years, and fearing the inevitable, FoNR volunteers had fabricated an artificial nest in an adjacent tree. While there had been recent building activity in the artificial nest, the eagles continued use of the old nest to hatch triplets in two of the last four seasons.

A second nesting pair was discovered on the Refuge this year, and each winter additional migrants arrive. This past winter, Noxubee Refuge hosted at least 13 eagles. Seeing eagles is one of the most popular requests from Refuge visitors. There’s the good chance now that “Lucky” will be up there soon--flying over Bluff Lake for all to see. But don’t look for the distinctive white head and tail feathers; eagles don’t develop those until they are typically 4 to 5 years old.

*(Editorial Note: Just as the newsletter was about to go to press, Lucky was seen flying in the general area of the nest tree.)*

### General Membership Meeting

June 16, 2011, 6:30 p.m.

Tisdale Auditorium, Noxubee Visitor Center

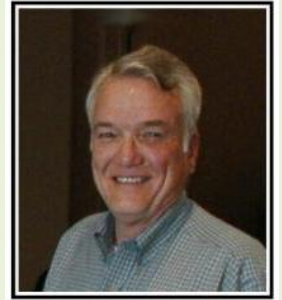
The June 16 general membership meeting of Friends of Noxubee Refuge will feature Bill Hamrick of MSU's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. He will speak on the feral hog problems that we are currently facing and the Department's programs to help landowners do something about them.

FoNR members and the public are invited to the program scheduled for 6:30 p.m. in the Tisdale Auditorium of the Noxubee Visitor Center. Refreshments and a social time will follow the meeting.

## From The President

Lawrence Croft

Late spring is a great time to visit the Refuge. Friends of Noxubee hope that you will take advantage of opportunities to enjoy your favorite activities such as hiking, bird watching, fishing, or just enjoying the late spring weather. We also encourage you to participate in some of the programs sponsored by NNWR and FoNR. The schedule and additional information about these upcoming events, including our June membership meeting, are provided in this newsletter.



While at Noxubee Refuge you will see evidence of the damage caused by several recent storms since the remains of downed trees are visible along the roads and even in the area near the Visitor Center. A recent storm blew down the dead nest tree that the eagles have been using for the past several years, and sadly, only one of the three eaglets in the nest survived. The eaglets were only a few weeks from fledging. The parents have been seen feeding the remaining eaglet. Everyone hopes it will continue to recover. The eagles appear to be adding material to the nearby new nest site which FoNR had constructed a couple of years ago in anticipation of the loss of the old tree.

Progress is being made on the demonstration prairie at Morgan Hill, and volunteers are working to improve the Noxubee Native Garden near the Visitor Center. There are many opportunities, including keeping the Visitor Center open on weekends and holidays, for additional volunteers. If you are interested in assisting, please contact Andrea Dunstan at the Visitor Center and fill out one of the new volunteer forms. We hope to see you at the Refuge soon.

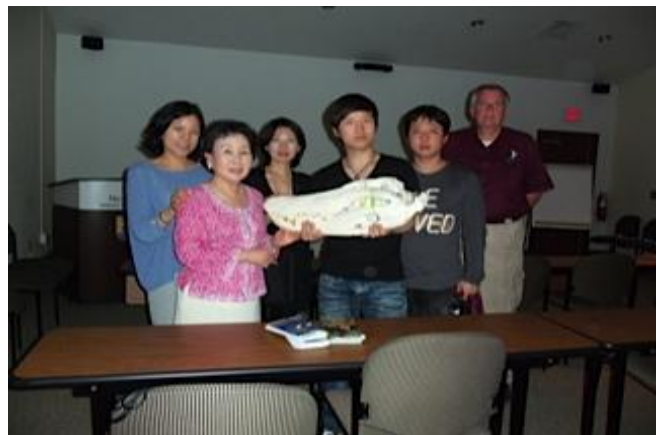
### Proposed By-Law Change

This is a reminder that a change to the by-laws regarding membership renewal will be presented for a vote at the June 16<sup>nd</sup> General Membership meeting. As reported in the April newsletter, the FoNR Board of Directors approved a recommendation to revise the by-laws regarding the renewal of membership. Currently, dues are payable on the anniversary date of the original membership. If the Board recommendation is approved, membership renewals will be payable in the month of October.

All changes to the by-laws must be approved by the membership, with changes presented in the newsletter at least fourteen days before the meeting at which the vote is to take place. This proposal does not mean, however, that new memberships will not be accepted during the remainder of the year. We welcome new members at any time.

### Visitors from South Korea

During April 15-18, the Starkville Rotary Club hosted a Rotary Group Study Exchange Team from South Korea. As part of their visit to Starkville, the group enjoyed several hours touring Noxubee Refuge. Team members were especially excited to see the alligators and eagles.



Larry Box with South Korean Team

## Saturdays at the Refuge

*The Friends assist with educational programs each first and third Saturday in the month. Check back often to see upcoming events. Programs are open to the general public and are free of charge unless noted otherwise. Call 662-323-5548 for more information or reservations.*

**June 4 - Ninth Annual Fishing Derby 8-10 a.m. - Registration Required -** The 9th annual fishing derby for children ages four through fifteen will be held at two fishing ponds stocked with catfish. Prizes will be awarded in two age categories but each registered child will receive a goody bag and a prize.

**June 18 - Craig Pond Trail Walk - Dr. Ray Iglay** will lead a walk on this recently established trail.

**July 2 - Canoeing -** Canoes will be available to use on Bluff Lake at no charge. Life jackets and paddles will be provided as well. This is a great opportunity to explore the rookery and cypress stands. The canoes will be available 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**July 16 - Butterfly Walk/Count at Morgan Hill Prairie Trail -** Summer is a great time to see butterflies at Morgan Hill Prairie. Join Jim and Dianne Patterson on a walk looking for and identifying butterflies. Meet at 10 a.m. at Morgan Hill parking lot. Bring a friend, your binoculars, sun screen and bug spray.



## Ladies Bait Your Hook Report

Twenty-six women, ages 4 to 81, attended the May 7<sup>th</sup> Ladies Bait Your Hook event. Kris Godwin instructed the ladies in fishing techniques before they adjourned to a morning of fishing assisted by Noxubee Refuge staff.



## Satisfied Customer

Nancy J. Conner from DeKalb read about the last canoeing event in a newspaper. She had never canoed but got a friend to bring her to Noxubee Refuge to give it a try. Her enthusiastic parting words were that she wanted to come back and do it again!



# Morgan Hill Prairie Demonstration Update

The original plan to plant a portion of Morgan Hill with native grasses and wildflowers has been delayed until next year. However, don't think the project to restore/establish a prairie demonstration plot is on hold. After a tour of the site by Jim Taylor, chair of the demonstration project, Dr. Jeanne Jones, MSU Professor, Wildlife Ecology and Management, and David Richardson, Refuge Biologist, a revised plan of work evolved for the area. Some of the project activities by FoNR members and Refuge staff are as follows:

- A controlled burn by Refuge staff was successful.
- A selective herbicide approach is limiting the nonnative plants, such as Johnson grass, sericea lespedeza, fescue, and brush.
- The voucher garden is being reworked.
- Water is now available to the site.
- Native plants are being transplanted into the area.

The Morgan Hill Prairie Demonstration area shows evidence of plants returning from earlier efforts, some

dating several years past. One can see the Ratibida (gray cone flower), Sylphium (Rosinweed), big bluestem, Indiangrass, little bluestem and switchgrass. The native legume and forb communities are very diverse, and include many native lespedezas and desmodiums typical of prairie remnants. Dr. Richard Brown, MSU Professor of Entomology, reports that a very rich insect community is present, including many species of butterflies.

Dr. Jones has "volunteered" her Wildlife Food and Cover Plant class to collect seeds from prairie remnants within Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Chickasaw and Clay counties. The locally collected seeds will be a helpful addition to seeding the demonstration area, now planned for this fall and spring 2012.

Plenty of work is still to be done. It will take years for the area to be fully developed, but the Friends group and Noxubee Refuge staff are fully dedicated to the project. If you want to be a part of this project and volunteer your time, contact Jim Taylor at [JTaylor@pss.msstate.edu](mailto:JTaylor@pss.msstate.edu).



is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization,  
dedicated to conserving our natural resources through volunteer work and fund raising.

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For a membership form  
or information  
about the Refuge, call  
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### 2011 GENERAL MEETING DATES

June 16 and September 22

[www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org](http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org)

Contributions to this newsletter were made by Frank Bonner, Florence Box,  
Larry Box, Janis Bryant, Lawrence Croft, Andrea Dunstan, Jim Taylor and Jacque Tisdale.