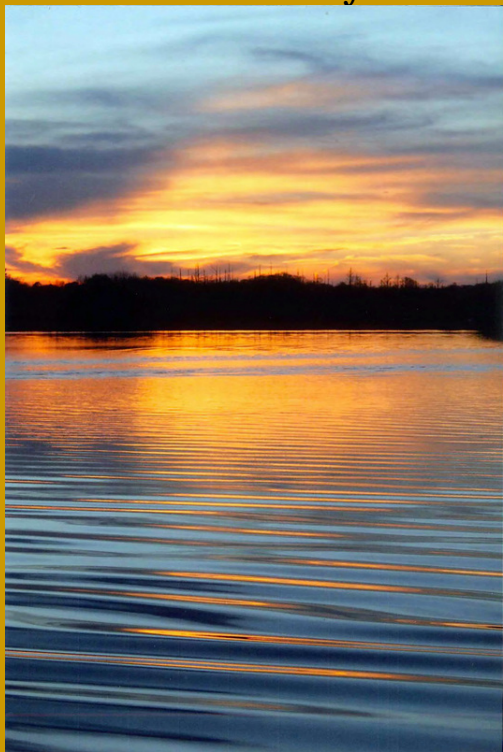


**"Sunset Ripples," Darlene Bane  
Adult Scenery**



The Photo Contest results were announced at the Family Fun Day event held in October 2012. Here are the four **First Place** pictures. For a full list of the winners and their pictures, check

<http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org/2012-photo-contest-winners.html>.

**"Nature's Submarine," Susan Hamilton  
Adult Wildlife**



**"Signs of Spring," Kylee McMullen  
Youth Scenery**



**"Cleared for Take-Off," Warren Smith,  
Youth Wildlife**



## From The President– James Taylor



Happy New Year. I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays and I look forward to 2013. It may be cold outside but there and is still plenty of nature to enjoy at the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. Waterfowl are abundant this time of year at the Refuge, so it is a good time to visit and enjoy some wildlife that we do not see most of the year. Take advantage of the trails as well and enjoy a different perspective than you might see during the warmer months. With less foliage on the trees you can see further and there may be less obstruction for viewing birds and other wildlife. I was glad to see that a good many people enjoyed our guided Trail Walks which was a new addition to the Saturdays on the Refuge Program. We hope to make that a permanent activity. We also increased the number of Canoe Days as this has become a popular event. Right now we are working on the budget for next year and are forming the various committees to accomplish all the tasks for this year. Please let me or any board member know if you would like to get more involved and as always we appreciate your support of the Friends of Noxubee Refuge. Also, don't forget about our first general meeting which will be January 17 at the Tisdale Auditorium, Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

### General Membership Meeting January 17, 6:30 p.m.

#### Tisdale Auditorium Noxubee Visitor Center

The speaker at the January 17<sup>th</sup> general membership meeting of Friends of Noxubee Refuge will be Ricky Flynt, Alligator Program Coordinator with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. Mr. Flynt's presentation should be informative and interesting especially since Noxubee Refuge and the Noxubee River system have sizable alligator populations.

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.

## Refuge Manager Steve Reagan's Reflections



With the beginning of the New Year and the opportunity to look back at the last 12 months, I can definitely say, this has been a year of change. The refuge has experienced change both in the staff members and in name itself. Certainly it has been a year of change for me personally, as I have moved here to Mississippi and taken on a great new role with the National Wildlife Refuge System. Getting to work at Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge has been nothing but exciting and rewarding each and every day I have been here. Whether at my desk or in the field, each and every time I look up and around me I experience something new and exciting. Every time I talk to a visitor or to a community member, I learn a little more and see the Refuge from a new perspective. With every volunteer hour donated, I have seen improvements to our facilities, an increase in the amount of biological information and often the simple but invaluable look of satisfaction from someone who knows they are making a real difference in many people's lives. All of these are immensely exciting. In this New Year I have great hopes and plans to take the refuge still further in being everything it can be for wildlife while sharing this adventure with Refuge visitors and supporters. This year will be marked by the initiation of the new Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Refuge and I am pleased that one of the very first planned events for this year will be hosting public scoping to hear public input on the future of the Refuge. Once complete, this 15-year plan will lay out where the Refuge will be going long-term and what steps we take together to get there. The plan will address habitat management for wildlife and management of the Refuge's infrastructure and public use programs. As we all know, change never stops. Like time itself, life, growth, nature and people move ever forward. The secret to positive change is to establish a well-considered and positive direction, hold well to the tiller, and enjoy the ride. I enter the New Year with these words in mind:

"If nothing ever changed, there'd be no butterflies."  
- Author Unknown

## Nature Crafts



It was a great day for making holiday decorations from natural items and several Friends helped the group of children and adults. A wide variety of items were made including wreaths, reindeer pins, pinecone reindeer, bird feeders and more.

## Retirements



Elvis "Billy" Gillespie retired after 36 years at the Refuge.



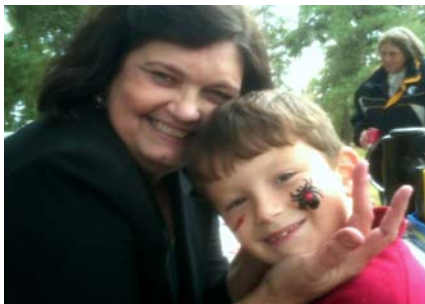
Richard Smith was with USFWS for 23 years, 17 of which were at Noxubee.

Winter is the coldest season of the year, the days are short and the nights are long. It is also during this time of year that those employees who are eligible for retirement retire. This year we have said our goodbyes to two longtime employees, Richard Smith and Billy Gillespie.

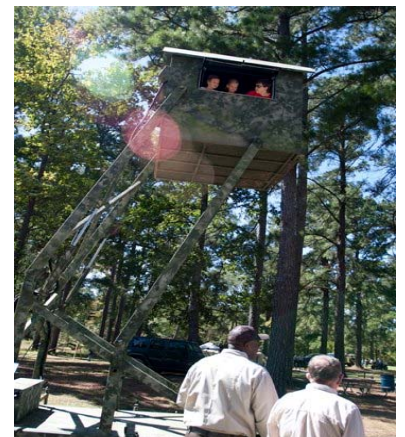
Richard, literally and figuratively, leaves big shoes to fill in our forestry program. As the Refuge's Administrative Forester it was his job to manage the habitats on which many wildlife species depend. Wildlife will benefit from Richard's influence on the forest for generations to come. Billy is simply one of those employees that can't be replaced. Although he served as an Engineering Equipment Operator, his skills as a carpenter, equipment operator, and project planner surpass those of most people. The visiting public has Billy to thank for many of the features which they enjoy each and every day.

Submitted by Steve Reagan

## Family Fun Day in October



**Family Fun Day** is an annual event commemorating National Wildlife Refuge Week. About 500 people enjoyed this October's event in various venues, such as face painting, hands-on alligator demonstration, archery, a buggy ride around the Refuge, and a handicap-hunting-blind lift.



## Insect Rearing Workshop



Photo by Katherine Lawrence

In early October, members of the MSU sponsored Insect Rearing Workshop visited Noxubee Wildlife Refuge. They toured the visitor center and enjoyed a fish fry at the EE Center. Participants were from all over the world- Panama, Canada, British Columbia, Belgium, Australia, England, Netherlands, as well as the US- Louisiana, Iowa, Illinois, Alabama, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina and Mississippi.



## Christmas Party for Employees, Friends, Family and Guests

A large group of current and retired Refuge employees, Friends, family, and guests enjoyed a wide variety of food during the "pot luck" Christmas party held recently at the Box building. After the meal, Refuge Manager Steve Reagan welcomed the group and explained the "complicated" rules to be followed during the gift exchange. Everyone seemed to enjoy the give-and-take aspects of the activity!

## New Board Members

We thank the outgoing FoNR's board members Bob Fuller and Joe Mulrooney for their service and dedication. Also, we welcome the new board members, Ray Iglay, Margaret McMullen, and Tom Gregory. Board member Jacque Tisdale changes from an at-large elected member to Webmaster member of the board



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

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### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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### 2013 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

January 17, 2013

Contributions to this newsletter were made by  
J. Taylor, F. Box, A. Dunstan, G. Hagood, G. Cotton, J. Tisdale and S. Reagan