

Banding Red-cockaded Woodpeckers on Noxubee Refuge

Early on the morning of May 4, six members of Friends of Noxubee accepted Dr. Steve Reagan's invitation to join him and the banding team of Steven Lewis, Caroline Causey and Sam Sousa at the red-cockaded woodpecker cluster on Dorman Lake Road.



Some of the Friends who joined the banding team

After a short hike into the woods, with the banding team carrying their tools and two approximately 20 foot long sections of an aluminum ladder, the group reached the nest cavity tree. With one section of the ladder secured to the trunk of the tree, the RCW expert and contractor, Caroline, began climbing.



As she neared the top of that section of the ladder, the assistants passed the second extension to her to secure to the tree, enabling her to reach the nest cavity.

With the ladder secure and a safety belt attached, Caroline checked the cavity for babies, snakes or squirrels with a small mirror. Finding only nestlings, Caroline made a loop of a thin plastic string, inserting it into the cavity, carefully lassoing one of the nestlings. She retrieved each nestling from the cavity with the lasso, placing it in a small soft bag. Holding the handle of the bag with her teeth, she climbed down the ladder.



Nestling with bands.

With the nestlings on the ground, each one was weighed in a small mesh bag, its weight recorded, and then banded with five tiny color coded bands. Each cluster is assigned its own sequence of colored bands which assist in identifying the woodpeckers as they mature and move around the area. The banding complete, Caroline returned the tiny birds to the nesting cavity to the delight of the parents who had been moving about the area with food for the babies.

From The FONR President- James Taylor



I just have to tell you that you “missed out.” At least most of you have. There have been a lot of activities sponsored by the Friends of Noxubee Refuge and programs conducted by the Refuge staff for

Members Only that were wonderful missed opportunities for members to enjoy the Refuge and learn about activities going on there.

We have had some excellent speakers at the quarterly general meetings. Ricky Flint gave an excellent talk on alligators at the January meeting, and Steven Lewis brought us up to date on the population of red-cockaded woodpeckers at the Refuge. He filled us in on some of their research techniques at the April meeting, and we will have another excellent speaker on June 20, when Dr. Jerome Goddard will be discussing “Insects and other arthropods affecting people outdoors.” I hope that we can fill up the auditorium, and remember, you can always bring someone along who is not a member.

My thanks go to Steve Reagan and the rest of the Refuge staff who put together the recent members'-only events. The first was a red-cockaded banding event where members were able to see how Steven Lewis and his crew banded RCW chicks. The second was the behind-the-scenes tour where Steve Reagan gave us a history of the Refuge. Then he and Andrea Dunstan took us on a tour of the facilities, and we traveled to areas that are normally closed to vehicle traffic. I think that everyone who went thoroughly enjoyed it. You also missed out on a great pot luck luncheon.

So be on the lookout for upcoming events such as more Canoe Days, and don't forget the Refuge Celebration Family Fun Day in October. We may also have to have a few work days here and there and hope you will participate in those as well. Thanks again to all of the volunteers who make all of the programs sponsored by the Friends of Noxubee Refuge possible. I also want to thank other groups as well for their volunteer efforts: The Maroon Volunteers from MSU, The Student Chapter of the American Fisheries Society from MSU, and the Multicultural Lions Club from Starkville, and a special thanks to Suzie Howard from Louisville Wal-Mart who for many years has made our Youth Fishing Rodeo possible.

Refuge Manager Steve Reagan's Reflections



Spring is a time of renewal and restoration. Flowers of many forms have erupted on the trees, shrubs and grasses and each provides resources for the butterflies, bees and many other forms of wildlife found on the Refuge. The insects

produced with the help of these plants, feed the fish that have already begun to spawn with the start of the spring rains and the turkeys that strut and call as they compete for their mates. This renewal and restoration is passed down through the wildlife to the many Refuge visitors that continue to come to the Refuge to reestablish their connection with nature. No matter where you live, spring is magical. Spring is also a busy time for creatures of the Refuge not always seen, the Refuge staff. The staff biologist, Steve Lewis, and his crew of interns are busy monitoring nesting red-cockaded woodpeckers; fire staff, Paul Reynolds, Chad Fondren, and Justin Boysen have been busy conducting prescribed fire as a tool to control hardwood growth within the pine habitats and grasslands; and Tom Jackson, the Refuge's maintenance worker, works hard to keep roads, buildings and other facilities throughout the Refuge safe and functioning smoothly. There are other employees but like the bees, their work goes mainly unseen. So, next time you visit the Refuge take a moment, look around, take a deep breath and then hold that breath, listen to the wildlife around you. When you let that breath out, I hope you too feel the renewal and restoration made possible by this very special place.



Photo by Lawrence Croft

One Youth Fishing Rodeo participant and her mother were enjoying their fishing experience.

General Membership Meeting
June 20, 6:30 p.m.

Tisdale Auditorium
Noxubee Visitor Center

FoNR June 20, Program Announced

Dr. Jerome Goddard will present the program at the June general membership meeting of Friends of Noxubee Refuge. Goddard is Associate Professor of Medical and Veterinary Entomology in the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology and Plant Pathology at Mississippi State University. He will give an illustrated presentation about how insects and other arthropods affect people outdoors.

The quarterly membership meeting will be June 19 at 6:30 p.m. in the Tisdale Auditorium of the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. The meeting is open to the public, and there is no charge. Light refreshments and a social time will follow the presentation.



Photo by Margaret McMullen, board member

A couple of families enjoying one of the recent canoe days on Bluff Lake. Canoes, life jackets and oars are provided free of charge to participants.

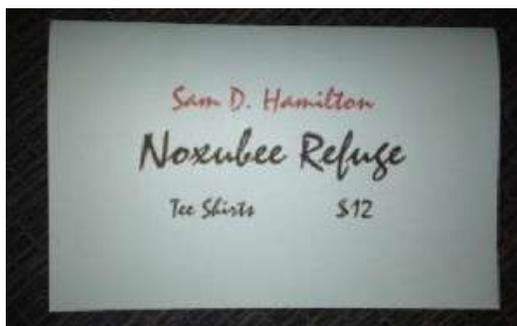
Manager Gives Friends Exclusive Refuge Program

In a members-only potluck luncheon and behind-the-scenes tour, Refuge Manager Dr. Steve Reagan recently gave an informative and interesting talk to members of Friends of Noxubee Refuge. He then took the group on a narrated tour of selected Refuge facilities and areas.

In what he called the first of many meetings, Reagan gave a brief history and overview of Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee Refuge. The manager noted that signs, roads, personnel, buildings and budgets may change, but the Refuge is a place where wildlife comes first. That is in contrast to national parks which highlight scenic places with a focus on people enjoying those places. With approximately 150,000 visits a year, that is not to say people do not visit and enjoy the Refuge, it just means we are not the primary users!

During the driving tour, participants saw pieces of large equipment used to maintain the 48,000 acres, a Refuge house, the maintenance area and a portion of the Refuge not normally open to the public. Reagan gave extensive commentary and answered many questions during the half-day event. While mentioning current planning activities that will establish goals and objectives for 15 years, the manager said a habitat management plan will be attached that gives specifics for each species and area of the Refuge.

Budget cuts have left positions unfilled and limited funds above salaries, but Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee Refuge remains a vital and functioning Refuge where wildlife does come first. Refuge personnel are to be commended for that!



T-shirts now available at the Nature Store in the Visitor Center.

Minn of the Mississippi
by Holling Clancy Holling (text and illustrations)
appropriate for ages 8-aged

There aren't too many books out there that appeal to both adult readers and the young. Remember being bored to death reading some books to your kids? This book not only appeals to many ages but also covers several subjects—biology, geography, history, geology, and traverses the country from the headquarters of the Mississippi River to its eventual end in Cajun land.

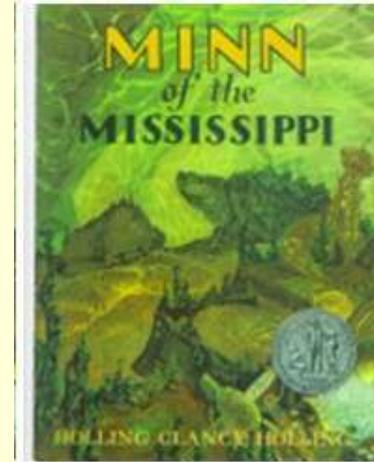
I bought my copy for my son in 1951 from that charming old bookstore, the Chimneys in Columbus, now long gone. It follows a snapping turtle's hatching in the frozen north (giving details of embryology) to its eventual happy ending down in the land of gumbo. The book is still available on Amazon in its 1978 reprinting. It carries a good story line but the real charm, and much of the knowledge, is carried in the marginal drawings. My oldest granddaughter is ready for my old worn-out copy and since she is a herpetologist (or vet) in training, it will appeal to her. But you do not need to be interested in biology to enjoy it.

Holling also wrote other books: *Tree in the Trail*, about a cottonwood sapling that travels the Santa Fe Trail as an ox

yoke; *Seabird*, about a carved ivory gull that goes to the sea, and *Paddle-to-the-Sea*, about a hand-carved figure that travels the Great Lakes and follows the St. Lawrence River to the Atlantic Ocean. His stories usually feature a Native American protagonist as carver, initiator of the turtle's voyage, or in other guises.

Find a copy of it to enjoy. It may be available for e-readers but I think it would lose a lot if you didn't have the entire page with full-size drawings.

Sherrie Wiygul



For up-to-date information, please visit these websites.

Friends Web Page: <http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org/index.html>

Friends Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/FriendsofNoxubeeRefuge/>



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

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2013 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP DATES

June 20, September 19

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