

September 26, 1995

PRAIRIE NEWS

Hello, Docents!

As the new Education and Outreach Coordinator, I want to thank all of you for "carrying on" over the past several months. Dick Baker and Sue Wheeler have done a terrific job coordinating your program, and have made me feel at ease during this introductory period. Many, many thank you's to them!! I have met a few of you, and hope to meet many more at the Docent Appreciation Dinner and upcoming workdays. Meanwhile, I am learning much about how the program has operated in the past, and am considering suggestions for changes. An evaluation will be available at the Appreciation Dinner, and will be mailed to those of you who can't attend. When you receive this form, please take a minute to fill it out and return it. Now is a great time to let me know what you like, don't like, want added or deleted. The Docent program is tremendously important to The Nature Conservancy, and is obviously important to you as well. Your donated time and energy are an impressive indication of this!

Please contact me at the office whenever you like! Stop in to introduce yourself. I want to get to know you and what you value and enjoy about life in Oklahoma! I am a native Oklahoman, born and raised in Enid, lived in Stillwater, Norman, Oklahoma City, Ponca City and ---now--- Broken Arrow. Somewhere in there I briefly lived in Washington D.C. I am happy to be where I am now, and looking forward to the challenges and pleasures of work with The Nature Conservancy. See you soon!

Mary McIntyre

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Enclosed are your Docent Duty Schedules for the remainder of this Docent year - thru November 12. With the return of Fall weather and several tours scheduled, visitations should remain strong.
- Remember the Docent Appreciation Dinner at 5:00 p.m., on Saturday, October 7, at 1800 Leahy Street, Pawhuska. With noted speakers Jim & Jeanne Ronda and an authentic Tribal Feast, we will have a fun and informative evening. We have made reservations for all who have confirmed with us. It might be helpful to bring lawn chairs. NOTE: The dinner is scheduled to be outside, but in case of inclement weather, will be held indoors.
- There are two remaining volunteer workdays this fall, October 14 and November 11. It should be great weather, so come join in painting the new Bison corral. We are turning this art into a science and now have 10% of the project complete. However, Kenny Shieldknight advises that he has many more pens to build!

- The Sutton Avian Research Center is co-hosting the 1995 annual meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists, October 26 through 28 at the DoubleTree Hotel, downtown Tulsa. The conference concludes with a fieldtrip to the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve on Saturday, October 28, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Guides will be leading walks throughout the day. Docents scheduled to work in the gift shop for that day are Faye Andrews, Karen Harris and Sue Wheeler. For more information about the conference (registration, workshops, presentations) call the Sutton Center in Bartlesville (918) 336-7778.

MISCELLANEOUS

- The gas stove in the Docents' office is again in operation. Turn the thermostat to your desired setting when you arrive, and be sure to turn it back down prior to leaving. Use one of the electric fans to blow some heat into the gift shop. Insure that all combustible materials are kept a safe distance from the stove.
- The new women's restroom door has a keyed lock. We have found that it can be (accidentally) locked from the inside... with ensuing "turmoil". As a result, a key to that door lock is now on the Docents' key ring.
- You do a good job of keeping our brochures (trail guides, TGP brochures, Adopt-a-Bison forms, etc...) out for the visitors. We intend to keep a stock of these for you to put out in the north bookshelf in the Docents' office. A larger stock is kept in the storage shed behind the bunkhouse.
- Our staff burn team burned several plots in early September that are now, after some good rains, turning green. The Bison should be finding these newly greened plots. The Fall burning/greening/grazing gives you a new topic to discuss with the visitors.
- *THANK YOU* to Anne Johnson, who donated the bird bath which is now in place in the courtyard. Prairie birds and their watchers are enjoying the activity!

An Important Request - if you are on duty and in the office, PLEASE answer the phone. Someone may be trying to get in touch with you! Also, do not take messages off the answering machine after listening to them. They will be erased in due time!

- *A NOTE ON SARA WILSON AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OFFICE*

As of September 19th, phone communication with the Virgin Islands was still impossible. However, we have received fragmentary news on the status of Conservancy people and facilities. On St. Thomas, the island hardest hit, Sara Wilson and the rest of the staff are physically alright. The Conservancy office was severely damaged by the storm leaving the island completely without power and water. One out of every four houses was destroyed, approximately 80 percent lost their roofs, and nearly all suffered some damage. The Federal Emergency Management Agency hopes to activate a cellular phone network

soon. The Home Office is in direct contact with FEMA and The Red Cross and are supporting their relief activities. Please contact Acting Director Gina Green, at the Home Office (703) 841-4865, if you wish to offer any assistance or suggestions.

OFFICE STAFFING

The Tulsa Field Office is in need of volunteers to answer the phone and perform clerical duties. We are now scheduling volunteers for October through March. Volunteers should sign up for a regular time slot -- that is, a certain day of the week for a regular period of either morning, afternoon or all day. We will be putting together Prairie Information Packets and working on various projects concerning the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve - so even though you aren't there, you are still assisting the program. If you can assist with this during the cooler months of the year, please call Mary McIntyre or Lori Loud at the Field Office, (918) 585-1117.

1996 ANNUAL MEETING

This may seem a long way off, but it will be here before we know it! The 1996 Annual Meeting is set for June 1 and 2, 1996 at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve! Camping will be allowed in the field across from the bunkhouse. Make plans now to attend, and think about the many volunteering opportunities which will be available. These will include but are not limited to:

- Tent set-up (Friday)
- Registration assistance (Saturday a.m.)
- Soda pop/water sellers (Saturday afternoon)
- Bartenders (Saturday evening)
- Parking assistants (Saturday a.m./p.m.)
- Gift shop attendants (Saturday and Sunday)
- Site clean-up (Sunday p.m.)
- Tent take-down (Sunday p.m.)

More about this later!

-Dick Baker
-Mary McIntyre