

TALLGRASS PRAIRIE

Docent Newsletter - - - -



December 1996

This N' That from Mary McIntyre, Education and Outreach Coordinator

Congratulations on a great year at the Tallgrass Prairie Gift Shop! Our docent program was able to accomplish many great things in the past year, and I am thankful for the commitment that each of you has made to the program. Like previous years, our third year was a learning experience, and as planning continues for next year, we will be building on what we have learned! We are accumulating a list of needs and concerns. These will be addressed before we reopen in the spring for the 1997 season.

'Planning' officially begins with the first Docent Council meeting, set for Dec. 14, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the office in Tulsa. All with an interest in contributing ideas to the program are encouraged to attend, as well as those of you who indicated an interest in a council position. Please call the office to RSVP. The building will be locked that morning, but we'll have someone stationed at the door to meet you if we know that you are coming!

Thank you for taking the time to fill out your evaluations. These provide meaningful input as we begin planning, and also let us know your commitment for next year. Please return your evaluation if you have not done so, or call the office.

Happy Holidays!!

Docent Recruitment/Training 1997

One of the most successful ways to recruit new docents is through you! Your friends realize the commitment you have made to this program and to The Nature Conservancy. Do they share your enthusiasm for this project, and for the Oklahoma prairie landscape? If so, recruit them! Send us their names and addresses! We will hold some recruitment events in February, in Tulsa, Pawhuska and Bartlesville. Any interested persons may also inquire at the office, and will be added to our mailing list and receive pre-information about the program.

New Docent Training dates have been set for April 5 - in Pawhuska at the Senior Citizens Center, and April 19 at the Preserve. New docents should be willing to commit to both of these dates for training.

DOCENT COUNCIL MEETING - Saturday, December 14, 1996, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Tulsa Field Office, 23 W. 3rd St., Tulsa. Please call the office to RSVP (door is locked, we need to know if you're coming so we can open the door!). Last minute messages may be left at 585-1117, ext. 22.

Working Shifts

Thanks to all of you who worked through this fall to keep the gift shop open extra days! We were open 25 days in September, 26 days in October, and 19 days in November (officially closed at end of shift on Nov. 20).

This year we began "tracking" docent hours in July. This enables us to pull up on computer the number of hours which each of you has donated, and to tabulate the "worth" of your volunteer time. We realize the extent of your commitment, and that sometimes family, work and life in general can interfere with your volunteer time. We appreciate any time that you have been able to give to us! A big thanks to all of you!

Special thanks goes out to the following people, who worked at least three shifts in the past five months, from July through November!

Dick Baker (4)	Alan Beckert (4)	Lila Brierley (4)
Jo Brooks (4)	Dorothy Buck (4)	Liz Chandler (4)
Tom Clark (4)	Mary Cumming (3)	Dave Dolcater (5)
Sandy Frazier (4)	Joan Fuller (3)	Edith Haraughty (4)
Karen Harris (3)	Rod Harwood (5)	Dean Johnston (5)
Mary Ellen Johnston (5)	Marilyn Keefer (6)	Cheryl Kilpatrick (4)
Barbara Marashi (3)	Stuart Marshall (5)	Carolyn Mathews (3)
Doris Mayfield (5)	George McCourt (4)	Iris McPherson (6)
Al Medley (4)	Liz Medley (3)	Carol Mento (3)
George Meyers (6)	Vera Meyers (3)	Laban Miles (5)
Ken Miller (4)	Shirley Miller (4)	Charlie Moomaw (3)
William Mosier (3)	Harold Murnan (3)	Carol Redford (3)
Bob Reeves (4)	Mary Reeves (4)	Nune Richards (3)
Bill Rinehart (5)	Vada Robertson (3)	Kathy Spears (3)
Barbara Sweeney (5)	Don Sweeney (5)	Van Vives (5)
Sue Wheeler (6)	Randy Woody (3)	Nyla Woody (3)

Visitation

According to George Meyers' monthly report, 1416 visitors came to the Preserve in October, bringing our year to date total to 11366. October visitors came from 38 states and seven foreign countries. 985 were Oklahomans! Total visitation figures to date for the year are slightly under figures from 1995 (by only 136). It is impossible to speculate whether visitation is "topping out". We will need more data, and will need to begin tracking whether visitors are new or repeat visitors, and whether all repeat visitors actually sign the register. If you have other ideas for items which might be useful to track, please let George Meyers know. The "sign-in" form can be changed at any time to help us track the data needed.

Things to consider: (1) George's data shows that Tuesday and Thursdays are the slowest days of the week, except during May and June when it all seems to even out. (2) Many visitors have expressed a desire that the gift shop stay open later (say until 5 p.m. instead of 4 p.m.) Consider whether you would be willing to stay until 5 p.m. during the summer months, and also on Fridays and Saturdays year-round.

Gift Shop

WOW! Total gift shop sales in October were \$4, 158.07!! This great month brought our total sales for the year to \$33,622.82, about \$6200 higher than this time last year! After-expenses totals will be available in January, and will be passed on to you in the February newsletter and at Docent Reorientation (set for March 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Pawhuska Sr. Citizens Center)!

Prairie News from Harvey Payne, director, Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

Here are some bits and pieces to keep you updated on what's happening!

- * The third phase of the bison corral construction has been completed!!
- * Two controlled burns were successfully accomplished in November.
- * A new cowboy has joined the staff, replacing Jay Taylor. His name is Joe Bob Briggs. Joe Bob is married and has a daughter who is one-and-a-half years old!
- * The bald eagles have arrived on the Preserve!
- * During the third week of November, the Preserve received five inches of rain!
- * The bison are found all over the preserve in many small bands. Their wooly, winter coats are fully grown!
- * The bison roundup was completed. 162 baby bison were born on the Preserve this year! Of these, 90 were bulls and 72 were heifers.
- * Preserve staff attended auctions in Kansas during November, where they purchased seven bull calves and three yearling calves. According to Harvey, these animals "will really broaden the genetic diversity of the herd, strengthening it for years to come".

NOTE: Proceeds from the Gift Shop sales were used to purchase three of these animals, two bull calves and one yearling. This money allowed us to buy three more animals than planned, and will make a significant difference in the gene pool, allowing us to add three different genetic strains into our herd! A special thanks to you all from Harvey and Bob! Your work IS making a difference at the Preserve! You will be informed about additional projects for which the money has been used, enabling us to accomplish the Preserve's strategic plan!

CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

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| Dec. 14 | Docent Council Meeting |
| Jan. 18 or 25 | Docent Council Meeting (a.m.) |
| Jan. 25 | Speakers Bureau Training (p.m.) |
| Feb. 8 or 22 | Docent Council Meeting |
| Feb. | Recruitment Events |
| | Feb. 12? Tulsa event - details later |
| | Feb. 20 Bartlesville recruitment event, 7-8:30 p.m., Library |
| | Feb. 25? Pawhuska recruitment event - details later |
| March 8 | First spring workday |
| March 15 | DOCENT REORIENTATION, Pawhuska Sr. Citizens Center, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. |
| April 5 | New Docent Training in Pawhuska, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. |
| April 19 | New Docent Training at Preserve, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. |