

The Docent News



For Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docents

April 1998

Gift Shop News

The Gift Shop is officially open! Many new items have been added, as well as more super books which are sure to be good sellers.

At Reorientation, it was announced that we DO accept VISA and Mastercard now. Please follow the posted procedures carefully when processing these credit card purchases. We're hoping that the additional sales will more than make up for the extra expense of adding this convenience for our visitors.

Visitation

from George Meyers
February saw 340 visitors sign the register at the Preserve! Forty-four came from 16 other states, four from two foreign countries and 292 from Oklahoma. 63.5% were first time visitors. This was the second highest number of visitors we have had in February. 9 days had no sign-ins.

So far in 1998, we have had visitors from 28 states and four foreign countries, Australia, Canada, England and Israel.

Calendar

April

- 4 New Docent Training - 2
- 5 Trail Guide Training
- 11 Workday - litter pickup

May

- 9 Spring Wildflower ID at Preserve, 1 p.m.
- 16 Gift Shop Hours Extend to 5 p.m.
- 29/30 Conservancy Annual membership meeting and field trips, Woodward, OK
- 30 Third Shift (Sat/Sun) starts

June

- 20 Heritage Day at TGP!

October

- 3 Docent Appreciation Picnic

New Docents!

New Docent training is March 28 and April 4. During April and May you may find a new docent working with you as a third shift person. Take time to show them the ropes and help them feel welcome into our special group. About twenty new docents will join us in Spring 1998!

This 'N That

by Mary McIntyre
Education and Outreach Coord.

Eighty-four of you have re-committed for another year as docents! Combined with our new docents, we will once again have around 100 docents. If everyone is active, we are able to continue offering gift shop hours seven days a week, and to extend the hours we are open. We need your help and your commitment to do this! I know that some of you can only work weekends, and these shifts fill quickly. Note that after Memorial Day, we will need a **third** shift person on Saturday and Sundays through Labor Day. This third person will work from 12 noon until 6 p.m., enabling us to stay open later, and offering extra help on busy days. If there is enough interest, this option may be extended into the fall, or added to additional days of the week. Let me or Barbara Bates know what your preferences are.

(Continued on page 2)

This 'N That continued

Check the calendar and note that Spring Wildflower ID training is May 9. Kim Shannon, TNC OK staff person and botanist, will be our instructor. If you are interested in knowing names of plants and flowers, join us that afternoon at 1 p.m.

Plan to Attend Spring 1998 Work Day

It's Here! Spring Work Day! This is your chance to make a real difference in the appearance of the Preserve for all those Spring visitors! Miles of road have been untended for the long winter months, and the cans and bottles have been piling up!

Bring your gloves, trash bags and garbage pails, as well as your lunch, sunscreen and/or hat, and come join us for a day of litter pickup.

Meet at the Preserve Headquarters at 9:30 a.m. We'll divide into groups, and cover the major roads into and through the Preserve.

For more information, call the Tulsa office at 585-1117, or Jan Holsomback, workday crew leader, at 669-7089.

A special Thank You to Frederick Drummond, our guest speaker at reorientation!

Prairie News

(notes from Harvey Payne's talk on March 14, 1998, Docent Reorientation)

Many of you heard the news about Kenneth Adams. He was accidentally gored by a bison at his ranch near Bartlesville while feeding the bison an apple. He has returned home and is expected to recover fully.

Kenny Shieldknight, Preserve foreman for many years, has resigned his position at the Preserve to accept another job. He and his wife, Royce, and daughter, Billie Jean, will be moving to Shidler. His resignation is effective 4/3.

The new Prairie Earth Hiking Trail is being constructed at the Preserve in an area to the north of the current long trail. It will be two miles or so in length. This area (including the north half of the older long trail) is no longer part of the bison range. During roundup, these sections of trail will be closed because they are a part of the "trap" area for the bison corrals. Short cuts along the fence have been cut for use by trail guides and by the public during those two "roundup" weeks in late October.

Trail brochures and signage are being revamped to change the focus to landforms and away from seasonal events.

The Docent News

New steps and gravel have repaired eroded areas of lower trails.

The old barn and shed, just north of the parking lot, may become the new gift shop and nature room! Plans are under way to make this structure inhabitable. Materials stored here will be moved to the new shop building being built just north east of this barn. The new gift shop/nature room building will more than triple our current space!

We overwintered 626 bison on 8600 acres at the Preserve. Another 2500 acres will be added to the bison unit this year. This area includes the "107" pasture, which surrounds the south scenic turnout. Twenty percent of the entire bison unit is burned each year, 40 percent in spring, 20 in late summer and 40 in fall.

In another six years we should reach our target herd size of 2200 animals. This will be a mostly female herd. Females will be sold at age 13, and males at age six.

Cattle still provide a grazing influence on parts of the preserve, but the number is steadily shrinking as bison numbers increase. About 8000 will graze on the preserve during the spring/early summer season. Eventually, 1000 head or less will graze within the Preserve.

A Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Almanac

Spring Events

Ranchers burn their pastures. The fires, like those caused by lightning, turn the matted dead grasses into fertile ashes and delectable, celery-green growth; open the sod to sunlight; promote lateral shoots; kill non-native species and clear space for annual plants, bird nests and rodents.

Spring azure butterflies appear even before plum buds open.

Lovestruck greater prairie chickens, one of the Preserve's most common birds, gather at hilltop leks to dance and boom at dawn from April to mid-May.

Coyotes, foxes and bobcats patrol prairie chicken leks.

Spring rains percolate through limestone, dam up above layers of impermeable shale, and flow out in seeps and springs.

Cinnamon-colored bison babies frolic. Adults are shedding.

Owls, hawks and snakes search for new-born evening bats.

Common nighthawks lay mottled eggs on barren rocks. Mourning doves and upland sandpipers nest in grasses.

Nine-banded armadillo babies (quadruplicates!) are born.

Redbud trees and ground-level flowers bloom in blues, whites and yellows -- edible onions, strawberries and plums; bluets, anemones, field pussytoes, johnny jumpup, phlox and milk vetch.

Delicate white-tailed deer babies -- twins that weigh four to seven pounds each -- are born in May.

Butterfly and moth larva eat leaves, fruits and flowers, lichens, dry leaves and wood, or bore into plants and trees.

Henslow's sparrows call "tsi-lick" from unburned grass plots.

Bison hooves cut the banks of streams and ponds, trampling sedges, duckweeds and water ferns, and scattering frogs, garter snakes, dragonflies, butterflies, mosquitoes and the occasional opossum.

Cattle can get hit by lightning. Cowboys on horseback warily watch the clouds.

Eastern meadowlarks, dickcissels, grasshopper sparrows and other prairie songbirds teach their babies to fly during June.

Western massasauga rattlers, timber rattlers and copperheads sunbathe.

APRIL 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Dave Dolcater *	2 Dick Baker Sally Baker	3 * *	4 Dan Vinyard Wayne Middleton
5 Robyn Stroup Karin Armstrong	6 G. McCourt *	7 Phyllis Connally Doris Mayfield	8 Roberta Wherritt Judy Barto	9 Linda Anderson *	10 Liz Medley Al Medley	11 ☺ FM Carolyn Matthews George Meyers
12 Doris Mayfield John Fisher	13 Carol Redford Nune Richards	14 Bill Rinehart Herb Skidmore Perry Crampton	15 Joanne Colbert John Colbert	16 Stu Marshall *	17 Barbara Strahm Carol Eames	18 Dorothy Buck Jo Brooks
19 Sandy Frazier Laban Miles	20 Loretta Vives Van Vives	21 Barbara Bates *	22 Marilyn Keefer *	23 Bill Rinehart *	24 Loretta Vives Van Vives	25 Bill Dinger Edith Haraughty
26 Linda Irwin Judy Kishner William Mosier	27 Mary Reeves Bob Reeves	28 Mary Johnston Dean Johnston	29 Dave Dolcater Iris McPherson	30 Sue Wheeler Vera Meyers		

RETURN THIS TO: Barbara Bates
5642 E 113 St
Tulsa OK 74137

Phone: 918 - 298-7019
(Leave your name and phone number on the answering machine)
E-Mail: bbates@webzone.net

Shift Hours: 9:30am - 4:30 p.m.

MAY 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 * *	2 Dan Vinyard Wayne Middleton
3 John Fisher Robyn Stroup	4 Nune Richards Barbara Strahm	5 George McCourt Doris Mayfield	6 George McCourt *	7 Linda Anderson *	8 Liz Medley Al Medley	9 Carolyn Matthews Dorothy Buck
10 * *	11 FM Carol Redford *	12 Mary Johnston Dean Johnston	13 Roberta Wheritt Judy Barto	14 Stu Marshall Judy Kishner	15 * *	16 George Meyers * *
17 Sandy Frazier * *	18 Loretta Vives Van Vives	19 Barbara Bates Sue Wheeler	20 Joanne Colbert John Colbert	21 Nyla Woody Randy Woody	22 * *	23 Jo Brooks David Turner Betty Turner
24 Linda Irwin Edith Haraughty <u>31</u> William Mosier * *	25 Mary Reeves Bob Reeves	26 * *	27 Iris McPherson Marilyn Keefer	28 Bill Rinehart *	29 Carol Eames Phyllis Connally	30 Barbara Jean Marashi Terra Groh Perry Crampton

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JUNE 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 * *	2 * *	3 * *	4 <i>Linda Anderson</i> *	5 * *	6 * * *
7 * * *	8 * *	9 * *	10 <i>Dave Dolcater</i> *	11 * *	12 * *	13 * * *
14 * * <i>12-6 Cheryl Kilpatrick</i>	15 * *	16 <i>Barbara Bates</i> *	17 * *	18 * *	19 * *	20 * * *
21 <i>Laban Miles</i> * *	22 * *	23 * *	24 * *	25 * *	26 * *	27 <i>David Turner Betty Turner 12-6 Terra Groh Perry Crampton</i>
28 <i>William Mosier</i> * *	29 * *	30 * *				

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MARCH 1998

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Sandy Frazier Sue Wheeler Doris Mayfield	16 Loretta Vives *	17 Barbara Bates *	18 Joanne Colbert John Colbert	19 Nyla Woody Randy Woody	20 Nyla Woody Randy Woody	21 Carolyn Matthews *
22 Linda Irwin John Fisher	23 Mary Reeves Bob Reeves	24 George McCourt *	25 Iris McPherson Marilyn Keefer	26 Bill Rinehart George Meyers	27 Stu Marshall *	28 Carolyn Matthews *
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12 <i>Donald Sweeney</i> <i>Barbara Sweeney</i>	13 <i>Carol Redford</i> *	14 * *	15 <i>Joanne Colbert</i> <i>John Colbert</i>	16 <i>Stu Marshall</i> *	17 * *	18 * *
19 <i>Sandy Frazier</i> <i>John Fisher</i>	20 <i>Loretta Vives</i> *	21 <i>Barbara Bates</i> <i>Sue Wheeler</i>	22 <i>Iris McPherson</i> <i>Marilyn Keefer</i>	23 <i>Bill Rinehart</i> *	24 * *	25 * *
26 <i>Linda Irwin</i> *	27 <i>Mary Reeves</i> <i>Bob Reeves</i>	28 * *	29 * *	30 * *		

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