

The Docent News



Sept. 1998

For Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docents

Visitation

from George Meyers

Only 1182 visitors signed in during the month of July, the lowest July visitation recorded in the past five years. This number is down 9 percent from last July. (We wonder what part the weather played, and also if repeat visitors are actually signing in.)

28 visitors came from other countries, 496 came from other states and 658 came from Oklahoma.

Year-to-date figures show that we have had 6,340 visitors- 2150 from 48 other states and the District of Columbia, 3968 from Oklahoma, 4 from Puerto Rico, and 218 from 37 other countries.

45 percent of our visitors from other states come from six states: Texas, California, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Arkansas.

60 percent are first time visitors, according to the registration sheet.

Gift Shop News

from Sue Wheeler

Gift Shop sales for the month of July totaled \$4,657.52, slightly more than last year's total of \$4,566.56. This brings our total sales to date to \$27,379.50. At this time last year, sales totaled \$28,255.17.

FALL WILDFLOWER TRAINING

Kim Shannon, of the Oklahoma Field Office in Tulsa, has agreed to return this fall to offer information about those autumn species which will soon be in bloom. Join us on Sept. 19 at 10 a.m. at the HQ for this special training. Please RSVP your plans to attend by calling 585-1117, talk to Mary or Rita.

WISH LIST --

We still need a lockable display case for the gift shop. Too many items are disappearing... Any ideas?

Calendar

September

19 Wildflower ID Training

12,19,26 Guided trail walks

October

3,10,24 Guided trail walks

3 Docent Appreciation Picnic

28 Trail Dedication, 9 a.m.

Docent Round-up Day

New Gift Shop/Nature Room In The Works!

With the help of Docent Bill Dinger, also an OKC Architect, plans for the renovation of the old shop barn into our new gift shop and nature room are progressing well! Dinger has designed three phases for the shop, and work on Phase I may begin as soon as October. It is projected that the new facility will be ready when we open for the 1999 season next March! Moneys for the project will come from Jenk Jones Jr. and Sr., and Conoco Inc. , also from the 1998 gift shop proceeds.

FALL GUIDED WALKS SET -

Trail Guides will be offered to the public on Sept. 12, 19 and 26, and again on Oct. 3, 10 and 24.

Don Bruner, Docent and Trail Guide, regularly provides this service on the second Saturday of each month, and will be available on Sept. 12 and Oct. 10. Van Vives, Docent and Trail Guide, regularly provides this service on the fourth Saturday, and will be available on Sept. 26 and Oct. 24.

Additional trail guides are needed to assist staff with the other days. We will advertise this opportunity on NPR, with reservations suggested. If you can help, please call the office, 585-1117 or check with Marilyn Keefer, Trail Guide coordinator, 333-7761. Please help us with these special fall opportunities. Thanks!

Docent Picnic/ Awards

If you have worked the required two shifts at the Preserve this docent season, you will be receiving an invitation to the upcoming Docent Appreciation Dinner. Don't forget to RSVP!

Prairie News

from Bob Hamilton, Director of Science and Stewardship, TGP.

- Estimates are that 200 calves were born this year. We'll know exactly after the roundup.
- There have been three control burns in the fire-bison unit during the past month, 120-acres and 150-acre plots were burned on Aug. 6, then a 300 acre plot was burned on Aug. 17. It was a hot day all around, as it was 102 degrees!
- Several of the older bulls are now staying out of the herd. The rest of the bison can be found in one or two large groups.
- Most of the calves born in 1998 have changed to their dark brown adult color.
- The May and July '98 issues of the Journal of Range Management have articles in them written by Bryan Coppedge regarding his bison research (conducted at the TGP for his Ph.D.)
- The new shop is complete. Renovation will soon begin on the old shop, turning it into the new gift shop and nature room.

The Docent News

- The cowboys have been replacing wire gates with steel gates on the west side of the Spring Trap. This is the area north of the Headquarters (720 acres) where the herd is held during round up. Steel gates will ensure that the herd does not escape back into the "wilderness".
- The prairie is very dry. There are lots of partridge pea and other legumes blooming, but not much is flowering now.
- Volunteer assistance is needed with trash pickup along the roads.

ROUNDUP NEWS

The designated docent day for the annual bison roundup is Wednesday, Oct. 28. You may come by 9 a.m. for the dedication of the new Prairie Earth Trail, visit the corral, and then join the cowboys for lunch (provided).

The only catch is you MUST RSVP to the Field office no later than Oct. 23rd so food can be prepared. Please RSVP to Mary or Rita at the Tulsa Field Office, 918/585-1117.

Remember to dress for the weather!

This 'N That

by Mary McIntyre
Education and Outreach Coord

Fall is finally almost here. Seems like it's been a long, hot summer.

This past month, I met with Harvey, Brita and Ruth (state development director) to discuss long-range educational planning for the Preserve.

A large bit of our meeting time was spent discussing the new gift shop and nature room - an exciting change which will become a reality in the next six months!

We also discussed the drop in visitation which we have seen this summer, and whether this is a natural leveling out of visitation, or something we should address. We certainly see an increase in visitors when the Preserve has had state or national publicity. However, interest among Oklahomans due to speakers bureau and community events is constant.

Concern over our inability to get docent coverage of shifts in July and August was voiced. So was concern that we have lost some good gift shop coverage by using docents as trail guides for school groups.

My biggest concern continues to be that 25 percent of our docents have worked one or no shifts this season. All

have been contacted by mail, and many by phone or voice message as well. Yet, this percentage does not change.

Volunteering as a tallgrass docent is a commitment to The Nature Conservancy and to your fellow docents. Please honor your commitment, or let us know if you need a hiatus!

Those of you who have been working have done an excellent job! Visitors are always positive about their docent contact, and your willingness to be flexible and provide good information to our visitors is terrific!

Remember that if visitors are interested in the interior of the headquarters, you are encouraged to open the door, step in with them, and let them look. All visitors should stay in the dining room, and observe the chains across the kitchen door and living room entry. When tours are being given, one docent should remain in the gift shop, or the shop should be locked. Never leave the shop unattended, or leave customers alone in the shop while you spend time in the office!

Additional exhibit materials for the nature room are always welcome. Please identify anything you bring in, and let Doris Mayfield know that you have an addition. Thanks for your interest! This

The Docent News

room has received many compliments over the past year, and has been an important addition to our outreach.

With the completion of the new trail, new trail brochures have been created and are in place at the trail head. We are now working on a new sign for the trail head, and also signage for the south entry (to be placed at a new turnout area) and at the south scenic overlook. It is hoped that these signs will be in place in time for the Oct. 28 Dedication of the new trail.

I'm looking forward to Wildflower Training and the Docent Dinner. See you there!

Reason Five to Save the Diversity of Life - -

Man, The Curious Beast (The Education Factor)

We are driven by a desire for knowledge for its own sake. The millions of undiscovered species are a scientific frontier we will never conquer, but they must be preserved in order to be studied. Some scientists believe we know more about the surface of the moon than we do about the deep ocean floor on our own planet.

SEPTEMBER 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 <i>Carl Wilhite</i> *	2 <i>Dave Dolcater</i> *	3 <i>Linda Anderson</i> *	4 <i>Edith Haraughty</i> *	5 <i>Betty Turner</i> <i>David Turner</i> <i>Connie Murray</i>
6 ☺ FM <i>John Fisher</i> * *	7 Labor Day * *	8 <i>Marilyn Keefer</i> *	9 <i>Judy Barto</i> <i>Roberta Wherritt</i>	10 <i>Judy Kishner</i> *	11 <i>Jan Hawks</i> <i>Bob Hawks</i>	12 <i>Doris Mayfield</i> * *
13 Grandparent's Day * * *	14 <i>Nune Richards</i> *	15 <i>Barbara Bates</i> *	16 <i>Stu Marshall</i> *	17 <i>Randy Woody</i> <i>Nyla Woody</i>	18 * <i>Irma</i> *	19 Wildflower Training <i>Al Medley</i> <i>Liz Medley</i> <i>John Beasley</i>
20 Jewish New Year (begins at sunset) <i>Mary Cumming</i> <i>Carol Redford</i> <i>John Beasley</i>	21 <i>Loretta Vives</i> <i>Van Vives</i>	22 <i>Sue Wheeler</i> *	23 <i>Joanne Colbert</i> <i>John Colbert</i>	24 <i>Bill Rinehart</i> <i>Iris McPherson</i> <i>Christie Kennedy</i>	25 <i>Iris McPherson</i> *	26 <i>Doris Mayfield</i> <i>Vicky Carpenter</i> <i>Wayne Middleton</i>
27 <i>Linda Irwin</i> <i>Dennis Bires</i> <i>Marian Bires</i>	28 <i>Mary Ellen Johnston</i> <i>Dean Johnston</i>	29 Yom Kippur (begins at sunset) * *	30 * <i>Irma</i> *			

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: 10 am - 5 pm

OCTOBER 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Linda Anderson *	2 * *	3 Docent Dinner Mary Ellen Johnston Dean Johnston Edith Haraughty
4 * * *	5 * *	6 Carl Wilhite *	7 Dave Dolcater *	8 * *	9 * *	10 John Fisher * *
11 * * *	12 * *	13 * *	14 Robert Wherritt Judy Barto	15 * *	16 * *	17 Al Medley Liz Medley Connie Murray
18 * * *	19 Loretta Vives Van Vives	20 * *	21 Stu Marshall *	22 Bill Rinehart *	23 * *	24 * *
25 * * *	26 * Iris *	27 * Iris *	28 Trail Dedication Docent ROUND-UP Day Joanne Colbert John Colbert	29 * *	30 Barbara Bates Sue Wheeler *	31 Barbara Bates Sue Wheeler

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: 10 am - 5 pm

NOVEMBER 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 * *	2 * *	3 * *	4 Dave Dolcater *	5 Linda Anderson *	6 * *	7 * *
8 * *	9 * *	10 * *	11 Roberta Wherritt Judy Barto	12 * *	13 * *	14 Al Medley Liz Medley
15 Sue Wheeler Doris Mayfield *Reg. Season Ends* DO INVENTORY	16 X	17 X	18 X	19 X	20 X	21 SHOP OPEN * *
22 SHOP OPEN * *	23 X	24 X	25 X	26 THANKSGIVING	27 X	28 SHOP OPEN * *
29 SHOP OPEN * *	30 X					

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: 10 am - 5 pm