

The Docent News



For Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docents

May 1999

Gift Shop News

from Sue Wheeler

Since opening on Tuesday, March 17, through March 30 the gift shop has had sales totaling \$2,360.75. With winter catalog sales and a few special group sales prior to opening day, our sales for the year total \$3,667.05, two hundred dollars more than at March 30 last year.

Calendar

May

tba Work Days prior to opening of new shop (see article in this issue)

15 Intern starts work at the Preserve

June

tba Inventory Moving Day - New Visitors Center

4,5 Annual Meeting, Beavers Bend State Park

19 Heritage Day, Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

October

16 Appreciation Dinner

27 Tenth Anniversary Event!

Visitation

from George Meyers

"We had 628 sign-in visitors in March, up 3.1% from March 1998. 24 were visitors from other countries, Canada, England, Germany, Holland and Japan. 213 were from 31 other states with Texas (34) and Kansas (33) leading and followed by Arkansas (22), Colorado (14) and Wisconsin (13). 391 Oklahomans took advantage of the breaks in March weather and drove up to the Prairie. There were 4 days with no sign ins.

"To date we have had 1260 sign-ins, down just .5% from last year."

Annual Membership Meeting Reminder:

Those of you who are members of the Nature Conservancy are reminded to send in your registration form for the Annual Membership Meeting, set for June 4 and 5 at Beavers Bend State Park. Great field trip opportunities! Deadline for Registration was May 1 - so send the form in, with payment, TODAY!

Welcome New Docents!

The 1999 training is complete, and twenty new docents have joined our program. Welcome! These new docents and home towns are:

Marla Bender - Tulsa; Molly Bivin - Shidler; John Boxall - Bartlesville; Diane Fell - Tulsa; Chris Holien - Bartlesville; Doris Husted - Shidler; Pat Jaynes, Stillwater; Jenk Jones, Jr. - Tulsa; Marilyn Joplin - Collinsville; Frank Lacey - Bartlesville; Rob and Sandy Lanoue - Catoosa; Bill and Pat Leonard - Ponca City; Maxine Manering - Ponca City; Alfred and Cheryl Smith - Ponca City; Manon Smith - Pawhuska; Clara Swan - Pawhuska; and Candy Thomas - Blackwell.

Most have served their training internship this past month, and are ready to get to work! Whenever you're needing a partner for a shift, remember to call these folks! These new docents are listed with phone numbers and email addresses in this Docent News issue.

Calendars Included -

This News contains shift calendars for May, June and July. **WE NEED HELP ON FRIDAYS & SUNDAYS!!** These are busy days, and most are open!! Remember to fill in your first and second choice of shifts and return the calendars to Barbara Bates, or contact her by phone or email (all numbers are listed on the calendar pages). Your shift reminder card will be sent about a week before.

Education Intern Set to Start Work 5/13

Eric Huerter, a senior in Rangeland Management at Oklahoma State University, will begin work as our summer education intern on May 13. Following two days of training in the Tulsa field office, Eric will be at the Preserve, living in one of the "little white houses."

His work will include public speaking in Pawhuska and other Osage County communities, school presentations, guiding hikes when trail guides aren't present, opening and closing the visitors center to greet early and late visitors, helping with nature room display development and assisting preserve staff with some stewardship work. His days off will be Tues/Wed each week. Take time to meet Eric!

Visitor Center Update!

By Mary Coley

Completion of the new Visitor Center is getting closer! Carpentry work should be finished April 30 - May 7. Then, before shifting inventory, we will need to clean up the construction mess inside the building, as well as clean up and move the new fixtures that have been purchased. The old shop and nature room will remain open for business during this process.

In early June, the shop will close for a few days while the current shop, nature room and office furnishings are shifted to the new building. Staff from the chapter office and preserve will assist any willing volunteers with this move. We will need lots of help to get the job done.

Please check your calendar for days that you will be available in late May and early June. Call the office at 585-1117, or email me at Mmcint2415@aol.com and let me know what days you can join us. I will be sending out post cards with work dates on them once we are able to finalize the schedule. Together, we can get the job done, have fun, and get to know each other better! Our new visitor center will be open in time for Heritage Day on June 19!!

The Docent News Prairie News

from Bob Hamilton

The bison are starting to shed their winter coats, and to pull together in somewhat larger groups. The first calf was seen on 3/27. During a count on 4/24, 78 bison calves were seen.

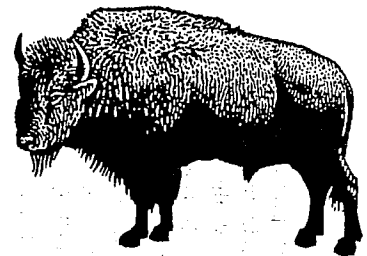
One spring burn remains to be done. There have been 18 so far, totalling about 16,000 acres.

An interesting new project - ground penetrating radar was used during a fly-over on April 15 and 16 for the purpose of detecting pipelines and underground oil spills. More later on the results.

The cowboys are at work pulling out the old cattle fence which is no longer needed due to the addition of the 107 Pasture to the bison unit.

Due to good precipitation all winter, the grass is coming on fast. Spring wildflowers are popping up everywhere.

Special thanks to those who helped spruce the place up on the April 17 litter pickup!!



Largest Conservation Purchase in Kansas Makes History (and Pre-History)

The Kansas Chapter recently completed the largest private conservation land acquisition in the state's history, with the purchase of the 16,480-acre Smoky Valley Ranch. The ranch, located in the western Kansas region that lies within the transition between the Great Plains mixed-grass and shortgrass prairie regions, will function as a working model and catalyst for conservation of shortgrass prairie.

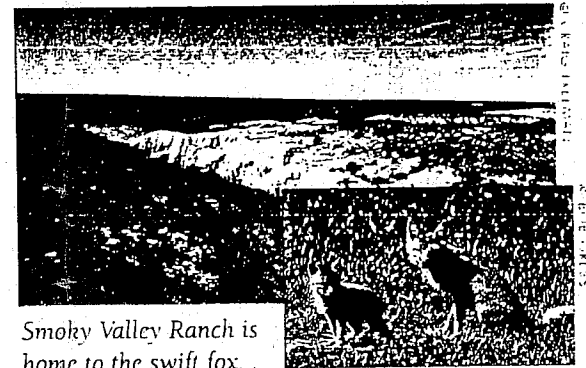
The magnitude of the purchase was underscored by the fact that it was announced at the state capitol by Governor Bill Graves. "I should mention that Linda and I have been longtime members of The Nature Conservancy," said Graves. "We have always appreciated their business-like approach, their reliance on sound science and their commitment to

results by action rather than rhetoric." Kansas State Director Alan Pollom said that in addition to using the ranch for conservation, the organization intends "to continue cattle ranching [on the ranch] with an eye toward searching out management techniques that are both ecologically and economically viable." To this end, the Conservancy has hired Randy and Michelle Martin to take care of the ranch. The Martins and their children will live in the turn-of-the-century stone headquarters of the Smoky Valley Ranch.

Characterized by dramatic chalk bluffs overlooking the Smoky Hill River, large grassland areas and rocky ravines, the ranch provides habitat for pronghorn antelope, mule deer, coachwhips, ferruginous hawks

burrowing owls, golden eagles and other creatures dependent on the short-grass prairie for sustenance. The ranch is also home to the green toad, a species that is listed as threatened in the state, and the swift fox, an animal proposed for federal protection.

Pollom also noted that the ranch is worth conserving for its rich history and pre-history. A dozen miles south of the ranch lie the El Cuartelejo ruins, the structural remnants of a former Pueblo Indian culture. More recently, the Smoky Hill River valley area was a prime summer buffalo hunting territory shared or contested variously by the semi-nomadic Cheyenne, Arapaho, Pawnee, Comanche and Kiowa Tribes. In the last century, Wild Bill Hickok visited the ranch while employed as a U.S. Army scout. William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody hunted there and John Fremont crossed the property during his mapping expedition to the Rocky Mountain West. Between 1885 and 1905, a number of African-American settlers—nearly



Smoky Valley Ranch is home to the swift fox.

100 families—settled on and around the ranch.

The area is also prized by geologists, paleontologists and archaeologists for its fine specimens of ancient marine life and flying reptiles. Additionally, 104 years ago researchers from the University of Kansas unearthed the 10,000-year-old remains of a Pleistocene bison that had been hunted down and killed with a stone spear point by humans at the end of the last Ice Age. This discovery, although less well known than the similar but later find made in Folsom, New Mexico, provided modern scientists with the first physical evidence of Paleo-Indians in the Americas.

Governor
Whitman
Speech,
Highlight of
Government
Relations
Conference

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Cooperative
Chapter
Appeal
Program —
An Experiment
that's Working

The Neversink
River—
A Bold
Vision and
the Power of
Collaboration

Eastern
Conservation
Science Office
completes a
sophisticated
analysis of
Connecticut
River watershed.

Viva Zapata! Colorado Chapter to Purchase Major Ranch Property

© VIVIAN SHAPIRO, BOB ROYCE



© CHARLIE OLI



American bitterns inhabit wetland areas, while bison graze the grasslands.

The towering Sangre de Cristo and San Juan Mountain ranges of south-central Colorado overlook the San Luis Valley, one of the most beautiful and biologically rich regions in the Centennial State. Now the Conser-

vancy has a major foothold in the valley, thanks to a purchase agreement with Rocky Mountain Bison, Inc., the owner of the Zapata and Medano ranches, to acquire 30,000 deeded acres and control leases on an additional 70,000 acres of state and federal land.

"With these acquisitions, The Nature Conservancy will be protecting one of the most extensive natural landscapes left in Colorado," said the Conservancy's Colorado director, Mark Burget.

The combined 100,000-acre ranch, located adjacent to The Great Sand Dunes National Monument, supports

2,000 bison, one of the largest herds in the state, as well as large herds of elk and many other mammal species. Wetlands on the ranch provide habitat for numerous waterbird species, including rare American bitterns and white-faced ibis; sandhill cranes forage on the ranch during their spring and fall migrations. The ranch is also home to a number of rare animal and plant species, including the globally rare tiger beetle and slender spiderflower.

"I really love this place and want to make sure it's taken care of in perpetuity," said current owner Hisa Ota. "Selling on the open market was not acceptable. I had no guarantee it would be protected." Said Burget: "We are grateful to Hisa and Kris Ota

for the faith they have placed in us to protect the remarkable grasslands, streams and wetlands of the Zapata and Medano ranches for the benefit of future generations." The Colorado Chapter will now undertake a major campaign to raise the \$7 million required for the purchase.

The *Denver Post* praised the deal in an editorial, saying it was an example of the "quiet but effective work that has earned The Nature Conservancy worldwide praise." The *Post* added, "Coloradans should hope that the factors that made this deal possible—a thoughtful and willing landowner, an energetic conservation group, and laws favoring preservation—become even more common across the state."

MAY 1999

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Jan Hawks * * TG Jim Vester
2 Bill Dinger *	3 Larry Myers *	4 * *	5 Stu Marshall *	6 Dick Baker Sally Baker	7 * * TG Jenk Jones	8 George Meyers Nancy Bobsein *
9 Mary Cumming Carol Redford *	10 Judy Kishner *	11 Carle Wilhite Jr. Barbara Bates	12 Roberta Wherritt Judy Barto	13 Dan Vinyard *	14 Sandy Frazier *	15 Doris Mayfield Dorothy Buch * TG John Fisher
16 * * *	17 Van Vives Loretta Vives	18 Jim Vester *	19 Larry Myer *	20 Nyla Woody Randy Woody	21 Barbara Strahm *	22 * * *
23 * * *	24 * *	25 Liz Medley Al Medley	26 Iris McPherson Marilyn Keifer Pat Jaynes	27 Bill Rinehart Linda Anderson	28 * *	29 * * TG Phyllis Connally
30 * *	31 Dan Vinyard *					

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: 10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

JUNE 1999

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 * *	2 <i>Dave Dolcater</i> *	3 <i>Pat Bumpas</i> <i>Linda Anderson</i>	4 * *	5 * * * TG Jim Vester
6 * * *	7 * *	8 * *	9 <i>Roberta Wherritt</i> <i>Judy Barto</i>	10 <i>Judy Kishner</i> *	11 * * TG Jenk Jones	12 * * * TG Betty Turner
13 <i>Mary Cumming</i> <i>Carol Redford</i> *	14 * *	15 * *	16 * *	17 <i>Nyla Woody</i> <i>Randy Woody</i>	18 <i>Barbara Strahm</i> *	19 <i>Sue Wheeler</i> * <i>Doris Mayfield</i> * TG John Fisher
20 * * *	21 <i>Van Vives</i> <i>Loretta Vives</i>	22 <i>Jim Vester</i> *	23 <i>Iris McPherson</i> <i>Marilyn Keefer</i>	24 <i>Bill Rinehart</i> <i>Linda Anderson</i>	25 * *	26 * * * TG Van Vives
27 * * *	28 * *	29 * *	30 <i>Dave Dolcater</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

JULY 1999

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 * *	2 * * TG Jenk Jones	3 * * * TG Jim Vester
4 * *	5 * *	6 * <i>Jim</i> *	7 * *	8 Pat Bumpas Linda Anderson	9 Liz Medley Al Medley	10 * * * TG Don Bruner
11 Mary Cumming Carol Redford	12 * *	13 * *	14 Roberta Wherritt Judy Barto	15 Randy Woody Nyla Woody	16 Barbara Strahm *	17 * * * TG John Fisher
18 * *	19 Loretta Vives *	20 Jim Vester *	21 * *	22 Bill Rinehart *	23 * *	24 David Turner Betty Turner * TG Van Vives
25 * *	26 * *	27 * *	28 Dave Dolcater *	29 * *	30 * *	31 * * *

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

AFTER MAY 14
SHIFT HOURS: 9:30 am - 5 pm