

THE DOCENT NEWS

Published by the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docent Program



Distributed to Volunteers and Supporters of the Oklahoma Chapter of The Nature Conservancy

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STATE CHAPTER NEWS

—Jay Pruett

We are delighted to welcome a new staff member to the Tulsa office.



Andrea Navesky by The Nature Conservancy

Andrea Navesky has begun work as an aquatic planning research assistant, helping Ellen

Tejan with several watershed-related projects.

Anndrea's position is a temporary one, funded by a grant from the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.



Anndrea working on the Blue River

Her primary responsibility will be to help complete an evaluation of and to prioritize all the aquatic portfolio sites in the state, which will complete a list of our most important aquatic resource sites for conservation work. This list will be used by The Nature Conservancy to direct our efforts in the future, as well as by other

conservation organizations in the state.

Anndrea obtained her B.S. degree from the University of Central Oklahoma, with a major in biology and a minor in chemistry. She has worked previously as a fisheries technician and intern with the Southeast Fisheries Division of Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and at a fish hatchery.

We are pleased that Anndrea joined our team.

PRAIRIE PESTS

—Betty B. Turner

The Tallgrass Prairie Preserve hiking trails provide delightful experiences as one listens to the sounds and observes the sky, terrain, streams, plants, insects and any wildlife that might be in view. I especially enjoy the beauty seen from the big rock at the top of the hill on the two-mile trail. This beauty outweighs the detriment of chiggers and ticks.

If you've ever experienced several chigger bites at one time and the intense itching that follows, you will usually be eager to take preventive measures to avoid another siege. Chiggers have always enjoyed feeding on me and do, when I forget my prevention strategy. I thought my preventive measures would be worth sharing with you.

Growing up on a wooded, Kansas farm provided many opportunities for exposure to chiggers, but my mother, who was born in 1910, had a simple home remedy that worked well then and still works quite well today. Before going outside, we were always instructed to lather our hands with hand-soap, apply the soap to our ankles and legs and let it dry. Before going to bed, we

took our baths, dried off, lathered with hand soap, and applied the soap to all of those areas where chiggers like to feed—anywhere that clothes fit tightly, such as ankles and waists. Again, we let the soap dry on our skin. These days, I spray with an insect repellent before exposure but always follow the hand soap routine before going to bed. When I follow the soap procedure, I do not get chigger bites; the insect spray alone is not enough to prevent bites on me. On the rare occasion that I forget about being exposed and have chigger bites the next morning, I have found that lathering with hand soap, rubbing it over the bite and letting it air dry seems to stop the itch.

People often ask me if the soap doesn't feel too sticky. I don't notice the dried soap, as it seems to disappear. It is much more comfortable than itchy bites. I also appreciate not needing to use medicine or stronger chemicals than those found in a product that I use daily.

I have not found an easy remedy for preventing ticks and tick bites but do follow the advice of a Boy Scout leader. In addition to using an insect spray, he told me to wear light-colored clothes, wear long pants and long sleeves and tuck pant legs inside my socks. If a tick crawls up your shoe, it will continue crawling on the outside of your clothes until you feel it crawling on your neck where you can knock it off. Ticks are easier to observe when crawling on light-colored fabric. Some ticks are so small they can crawl through your socks. You should always check yourself for ticks after being exposed.

You should also avoid wearing products containing perfume as the scent will attract unwanted pests. When I discover an attached tick,

I like to keep it in a small, closed container for several days, in case we become ill and need to have the tick analyzed. Websites suggest putting a tick into an alcohol bath to kill while preserving it.

The websites listed below provide pictures of these pests and suggestions about how to deal with them. I'm beginning to itch after researching and writing this article but I hope this information helps you to prevent chigger and tick bites.

- Websites with chigger information—

Oklahoma University:

<http://www.oklahomapoison.org/general/chiggers.asp>

University of Missouri Cooperative Extension:

<http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/pests/q07398.htm>

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension:

<http://lanaster.unl.edu/enviro/pest/factsheets/008-96.htm>

Texas Agricultural Extension Service:

<http://insects.tamu.edu/extension/bulletins/L-1223.html>

- Websites with tick information—

Prevention and removal:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/ticktips2005/>

Removal of ticks:

http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/body/tick_removal.html

Life Cycle:

<http://www.fda.gov/fdac/graphics/1996graphics/fleatick.pdf>

Tick tactics:

http://www.bam.gov/sub_yoursafety/yoursafety_ticktactics.html

Tick pictures:

<http://www.ent.iastate.edu/imagegal/ticks/>

or

<http://entomology.unl.edu/images/ticks/ticks.htm>

An easy way to access the Universal Resource Locators (URL) provided by Betty is to use the text-select tool of Adobe Reader. When active, the

cursor changes to an I-beam. Select then copy the URL-text to the clipboard then paste it into the address window of your Internet browser—Editor.

BUTTERFLY COUNTS

—John Fisher

The 4th of July butterfly counts at the Four Canyon & Black Mesa Nature Preserves went quite well this past Memorial Day weekend. It was hot as blazes, in the upper 90s, on Saturday for the Four Canyon count with constant southerly winds blowing at between 30-45 mph. Monday was much nicer for the Black Mesa count with temperatures in the low 80s while we were counting. The wind was only around 15-30 mph but it was from the north and naturally we were on the north side of the mesa. Neither location has had any measurable rain since last September so things were a bit parched and there weren't that many nectar sources. Still, we got to see some great butterflies including several lifers for most of us.

The best spots at Four Canyon were the hilltops where the most common comment heard was, Oh, it's just another Fulvia. It's hard to imagine finding something as beautiful as a fresh Fulvia Checkerspot would be disappointing but after a while it was. We didn't see as many species as we did last year but every ripe coneflower had at least one skipper or checkerspot on it. It was especially good to see the Arogos, Dotted, & Ottoo Skippers since these are all species of concern.

At Black Mesa the most productive spots were halfway up the mesa to just below the cliffs at the top. Here it comes! & There it goes! could be heard frequently as we spotted another of the big

yellow swallowtails that were patrolling up and down the canyons. Typically, most counts are held at the same time each year in order to provide trend data that can be compared from year to year. Because local conditions have strong effect on butterflies, that trend data takes a long time to develop. After talking with Jay Pruett, he thinks the Black Mesa count can provide better information to The Nature Conservancy by moving the date around in order to provide a better understanding about what species are there. We will still get the trend data but it will have to be filtered to account for the changing count dates. With that in mind, next years count will be in early May, so mark your calendars.



Fulvia Checkerspot, Thessalia fulvia
 Major County WMA: May 30, 2006 – by John Fisher

Count Results:

CR - new county record

PR - new preserve record



Siva Juniper Hairstreak, Callophrys gryneus siva
 Black Mesa Nature Preserve: May 29, 2006
 by John Fisher

Four Canyon Preserve, May 27, 2006:

- Cloudless Sulphur – 1
- Olive Juniper Hairstreak – 4
- Eastern Tailed-Blue – 1
- Acmon Blue – 4
- Variiegated Fritillary – 2
- Fulvia Checkerspot – 99
- Question Mark – 1
- Goatweed Leafwing – 4
- Red Satyr – 2
- Monarch – 1
- Silver-spotted Skipper - 1 PR
- Southern Cloudywing – 1
- unidentified grass-skipper – 3
- Ottoo Skipper – 9
- Green Skipper – 10

Dotted Skipper – 16
 Sachem – 1
 Arogos Skipper – 9
 Nysa Roadside-Skipper - 1 CR

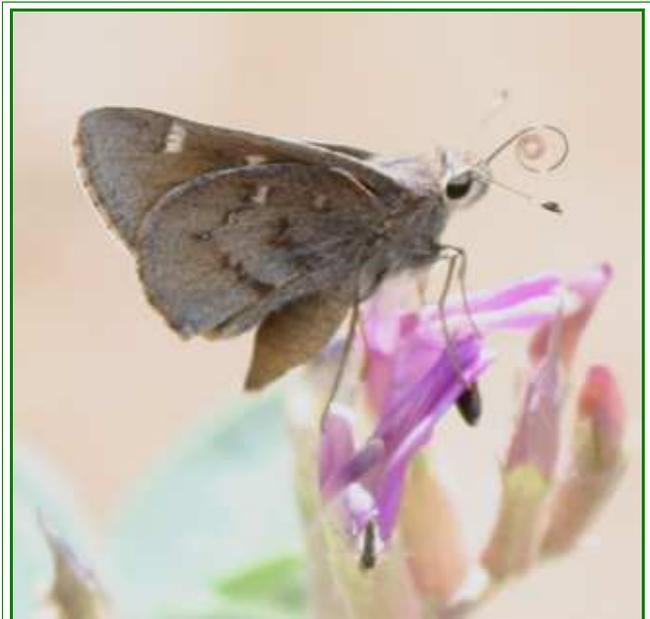


Oslars Roadside-Skipper, Amblyscirtes oslari
 Black Mesa Nature Preserve: May 29, 2006
 by John Fisher

Black Mesa Nature Preserve & along road to
 Kenton, May 29, 2006:

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail – 1
 Two-tailed Swallowtail – 4
 unidentified yellow swallowtail – 12
 Orange Sulphur – 1
 Siva Juniper Hairstreak – 6
 Reakirts Blue - 35 PR
 Variegated Fritillary – 5
 Edwards Fritillary - 2 PR
 Hackberry Emperor - 3 PR
 Canyonland Satyr – 3
 Funereal Duskywing - 1 PR

Common Checkered-Skipper – 2
 Common Sootywing – 1
 unidentified grass skipper – 11
 Green Skipper – 17
 Vierecks Skipper – 15
 Bronze Roadside-Skipper - 35 PR
 Oslars Roadside-Skipper - 3 PR
 Dotted Roadside-Skipper – 4
 unidentified roadside skipper – 2
 Streckers Giant-Skipper - 3



Vierecks Skipper, Atrytonopsis vierecki
 Black Mesa area: May 20-21, 2006 - by Paul Ribitzki

JUNE BISON BEHAVIOR

—Betty B. Turner

When David and I spend our volunteer day at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, we enjoy observing the birds and flowers as well as the bison. We always drive the bison loop in order to suggest to visitors what they could see on that route. Our whole day was delightful in early June 2005. Not only did we see many baby bison, and nighthawks

perched along the road, we also caught the coneflowers and the butterfly milkweed at the peak of their beauty.



Butterfly Milkweed by Betty B. Turner

After we closed the Visitor's Center and began our way home, David and I were privileged to witness bison behavior that we had never before observed in our ten years of visiting the Preserve.

About a quarter of a mile before reaching the Sellers' corrals, we spotted a long, narrow line of bison walking southerly as they came up out of the valley from the north. We parked fairly close to the west side of the corral, watching as the bison passed within a few feet of the west fence and crossed the road. Around 200 bison, including new calves were in the line that ranged from two to four bison wide as they were led by a female and her baby.

Very few of the bison grabbed a bite to eat as they maintained their quick, steady pace. They all crossed the road and continued moving, basically traveling a few yards off the roadway as they marched to the southeast. Sometimes the bison spread out into a wider line but most remained in the narrow arrangement. We slowly followed, wondering how far they would go before stopping.



*Female and her baby led the herd
by Betty B. Turner*

For nearly forty-five, uninterrupted minutes we delighted in taking both still and video pictures of this unusual sight. Finally, a fast-moving vehicle came from the south and moved as quickly as possible through the animals that were walking across the road. That ended the bison's trip and they began grazing. The bison had marched nearly two miles.



*Bison following the road south of the Sellers' corral
by Betty B. Turner*

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