



nature notes

Journal of Webster Groves Nature Study Society

May 2002 Vol. 74, No. 5



Spring Banquet Thursday, May 9
Hawken House
1155 S. Rock Hill Rd.
just south of Big Bend in Webster

Spring has finally arrived and with it the wildflowers, birds, insects, and herps on the awakening land we love. Please come celebrate the season with us at the Spring Banquet. Dr. Robert Criss from the Dept of Earth and Planetary Science, Washington University, will present a slide program entitled, "Rivers and Floods of the St. Louis Confluence." Dr. Criss is a stable isotopes geochemist whose research at the University of California engendered his interest in ground water and the study of rivers. His slides will include the Mississippi, Missouri, and Meramec Rivers, their historical changes and flooding. Dr. Criss arrived at Washington University in 1994 just in time to witness the 1995 flood. His talk is sure to deepen our understanding of the St. Louis landscape. Butterfly and hummingbird plants go on sale at 5:45 PM! Question? Pat: 636-225-0264

for hummers

Agastache 'Tutti-frutti'
Wild columbine *Aquilegia*
Cardinal Flower *Lobelia c*
Blue Lobelia *Lobelia s*
Penstemon coccineus
Penstemon grandiflorus
Pineapple Sage *Salvia elegans*
Anise Sage *Salvia guaranitica*
Brazilian Verbena *Verbena b*
Mexican Sage *Salvia leucantha*
(limit 1 Mex Sage/person)

for butterflies

pipevine *Aristolochia*
Purple Ironweed *Vernonia*
Butterflyweed *Asclepias t*
Butterfly Bush *Buddleia* (hummers too)
Coreopsis lanceolata
Purple Coneflower *Echinacea*
Blazing Star *Liatris*
Bee Balm *Monarda* (hummers too)
Wingstem *Verbesina*
Bk-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia*
Scabiosa 'Butterfly Blue'
Rose Verbena

for us

5:45 PM plant sale and social
6:45 dinner buffet
8:00 Dr. Robert Criss, speaker

Tear off the slip & send with check payable to WGNSS, by May 1 to:

Pat McCormick 1338 Eaglebrooke Ct. Ballwin, MO 63021

Spring Banquet reservation for _____ persons @ \$20 per person = _____

Name _____

Name _____

Scholarships Awarded by WGNSS

Randy Korotev

The WGNSS scholarship committee has selected a winner of the Menke Scholarship for Wildlife Habitat: Corey Anderson from Washington University for "Factors influencing genetic variation and gene flow in a western timber rattlesnake population." Corey does radio monitoring of rattlesnakes at the University's Tyson Research Center as well as genetic testing of the rattlesnakes. There is actually a description of Corey's work on the Tyson web site: www.biology.wustl.edu/tyson/projectsand.html

The Scudder Scholarship was won by Kevin Matson of UMSL for "Maintenance of Immune System Function in Hawaii's Introduced Birds."

2002 Audubon Camp Scholarship

Betty Kellerman

The recipient for the Audubon Camp Scholarship for the summer is Jeanne Boland, middle School teacher at the College School of Webster Groves. Ms. Boland is a third-year teacher, teaching a variety of courses including an experientially-based Wilderness Experience class. She has worked in a variety of setting that have combined environmental and adventure education for school age students, has taught Elderhostel Programs, and worked at an organic farm in Tuscany, Italy.

She feels that the Audubon Camp in Maine workshop for Educators will have direct application to the courses she teaches and that her students will be enriched by her summer experience. In addition, she knows that this type of program provides valuable opportunities for networking with others who share similar interests and careers. ~

WGNSS Spring Banquet

May 9

Crème Brûlée Meets ETS

Randy Korotev

Paul and Anita Guris of Green Lane, Pennsylvania, were leaving the country on business for 3 months. In mid-February they flew to El Paso to leave their cat, Crème Brûlée, with Paul's brother and sister-in-law. Both are serious birders, and Anita had not yet seen a Eurasian Tree Sparrow—ETS. So, on their way back home from Texas, they succeeded in getting a three-and-a-quarter hour layover in St. Louis. Before the trip, Paul had found the WGNSS Internet web site, where one can obtain all kinds of information on where to find Eurasian Tree Sparrows in the St. Louis area. They arrived in St. Louis at 4:03 PM, ran to the terminal entrance, hired a taxi, and took off to Little Creve Coeur Lake-LCCL. They had to explain the whole ETS story to Tony, their Nigerian cab driver. With Tony's help, they found a small flock of ETS at LCCL within 20 minutes and were back at the entrance to the terminal at 5:10. The total cab fare was \$67 plus tip, but that's OK because it was Anita's 675 life bird. "When it comes to getting life birds, Anita's sort of, well, excitable," Paul says. They recommended allowing more time and maybe not timing the layover to occur at dusk.

This kind of thing happens more often than one might expect. If anyone knows of other reliable locations for finding ETS near the airport, please inform Randy Korotev: 314-993-0055. ~

Monkeys and Toucans at MOBot

St Louis Rainforest Advocates invites everyone to a free talk at the Missouri Botanical Garden on Saturday May 4 at 7:30 PM. The speakers will be Beth Congdon and Kimberly Holbrook, Ph.D. candidates from International Center for Tropical Ecology at UMSL. They both received grants from SLRA to do field work last year. Their talk will be a "report from the field" about howler monkeys in Belize and toucans as seed dispersers in Ecuadorian Amazon. ~



Alternative to Big Day Birding

Paul Bauer

Recently I looked through the new WGNSS membership list—many thanks to Randy Korotev—and counted at least 80 members as birders. Then I recalled that in recent years, only 15 to 20 birders took part in the annual Big Day to see how many bird species could be seen in the defined St. Louis area. The number of Big Day players has dropped to about half of those involved years ago. Many some of us are just getting too old!

So what are the other 60 or more doing on Big Day? There are alternate birding challenges that may be appealing and valuable for detecting changes in bird populations.

In 1992, the North American Migratory Count (NAMC) was established. On the 2nd Saturday in May throughout the country, a snapshot census is taken of each county. As more counties are covered, the data will have lasting value, since bird population trends can be studied over a span of years.

In Mo. 2001, birders surveyed 31 counties plus the City of St. Louis, and recorded 230 species and 72,023 individuals. But Mo. has 114 counties. So that means that 83 counties were not covered—that includes many near St. Louis. Ill. has had this type of census many years prior to NAMC, and each county is covered. Now there is a challenge!

Boone Co. had top honors last year with 175 species. Holt was second with 145. St. Charles, St. Louis, and City had 111, 82, and 51 respectively. Some counties are covered with only one birding party. If we could get more helpers we could cover more prime birding spots, and have more accurate records of the migrant population. My best record for St. Charles was 143, with only one party of 4 spending part of their big day there! What could 3 full-time parties find?

A new compiler is needed to replace Blaine Ulmer for St. L. Co., and I need help to create at least 2 parties for St. Charles. To take part, contact Jim Gast, 3009 Lynnwood Dr., Columbia, MO 65203, 573-442-1481. ~



Cuivre River State Park

Bruce Schuette / Park Naturalist

Tucked away in the northwestern portion of the Greater St. Louis Metro Area is one of the St. Louis region's most important natural resource sites. At 6,400 acres, Cuivre River State Park is Missouri's 6th largest state park. Even though the park was established in the mid-1930's, it often seems to be overlooked by nature enthusiasts in the St. Louis region. This is unfortunate because of the wealth of resources found within its boundaries.

Anyone who has visited the park has probably been surprised that a park located northwest of St. Louis appears so similar to the southern Missouri Ozarks. Although there are a great many similarities with the Ozarks, Cuivre River is actually located in northern Missouri's Glaciated Plains Natural Division. In the southeastern portion of the glaciated plains is a region known as the Lincoln Hills, which is distinctively Ozark-like. Cuivre River is the only state park Missouri has within the Lincoln Hills.

Geologically the park is located within the glaciated plains, and so it was covered by an early advance of the continental glacier that stretched across northern Missouri during the Pleistocene. Remnants of the glaciation can be seen in the form of numerous glacial erratics (rocks out of place because of glacial movement) scattered throughout. These glacial erratics consist of small to large pieces of igneous rocks like granite, and metamorphic rocks such as quartzite. One characteristic of the Lincoln Hills though, is that most of the glacial drift was subsequently weathered away, re-exposing much of the preglacial landform. The result is a landscape that is rather Ozark-like in appearance, with rough terrain, numerous rock outcrops and Karst topography. This interesting geology provides the base for a variety of natural habitats that support a rich and unique diversity of native flora and fauna, many at the northern periphery of their range.

Actually the park's principal aquatic habitat is not Cuivre River (which only borders the park below Frenchman's Bluff), but rather Big Sugar Creek. Big Sugar Creek is a beautiful stream that in places makes you think you're in the Ozarks. The stream has a mostly rock

and gravel bottom, crystal clear water, and is partially spring fed. Portions of the stream are "losing," meaning that the surface flow disappears underground, and in one place (when there is great enough flow in the creek) the water reemerges in the form of a good size spring. Even though surface flow in much of the creek is intermittent, it still supports more than 20 species of fish. Included among them are a few typical Ozark species like the Banded Sculpin and Northern Studfish, that are known from only a few streams in all of northern Missouri. Big Sugar Creek is listed as a "state outstanding resource water," and most of its eight-mile length in the park is contained within designated Missouri Natural Areas.

Altogether there are three Missouri Natural Areas within the park. The Big Sugar Creek and Hamilton Forest Natural Areas cover 56 and 40 acres respectively. The Lincoln Hills Natural Area is much larger, covering 1,872 acres, and is currently the second largest natural area within the entire state park system and the largest Missouri Natural Area north of the Missouri River.

Over 3,500 acres of the park have been designated as Ecological Stewardship Areas. Prescribed burns and other projects have been conducted on nearly 2000 acres to restore and preserve prairie and savanna remnants, limestone glades, and oak woodlands.

A dozen terrestrial natural communities are found in the park. Included among them are notable occurrences of limestone glades, dry limestone woodlands, caves, sinkhole ponds, extensive dry-mesic woodlands, upland prairie and savanna. The glades, caves and sinkhole ponds support many characteristic and some rare species, with many of them at, or near, the northernmost edge of their range. Cuivre River's prairie and savanna remnants are some of the very last ones left in all of northeast Missouri. The large acreage of oak woods ranks the park among the very largest blocks of contiguous woodland remaining anywhere in the northern part of the state.

These diverse natural habitats support a wide variety of species. Over 670 native species of vascular plants have been collected in the park (that is 34% of the total for the state), including several rare ones and many that are restricted to high quality natural habitats. An additional 90 species of nonvascular plants and

lichens are known, with a few state listed mosses and some notable lichens.

Within the 6,400 acres of Cuivre River State Park are numerous opportunities to see many of the Neotropical migrant birds that pass through the region. But even more important than being a temporary stopover for migrants, the park provides nesting habitat for 42% of the state's nesting species of birds. Seventy-six bird species are confirmed or probable nesters, including almost all the region's nesting woodland birds and such notables as Cerulean Warblers and Red-shouldered Hawks.

Park habitats support important populations of other animal groups too. Sinkhole ponds provide breeding sites for a number of salamanders, like the Spotted, Ringed, Marbled, Small-mouthed and the Central Newt. Eighty-three of the state's approximately 162 butterfly species have been reported here in the last ten years. Annual butterfly surveys of several prairies and glades average 56 species per year. Some of the notable butterflies that regularly show up in the park are the Swamp Metalmark, Edward's Hairstreak, and especially the Golden Byssus Skipper. A high diversity of other invertebrates are present in the various ecosystems, but a great deal of inventory work is still needed.

Among Missouri's state parks, Cuivre River is at the top of the list for the number of rare species. More than 20 plants and animals that are listed as species of conservation concern have been found here.

Unfortunately, even in a park like Cuivre River there are threats to the wealth of natural resources. Although it is one of Missouri's largest state parks, very little natural habitat is left outside its borders, making the park very much of an "island" for many of the species the natural communities support. Invasive exotic species are a great danger to the native biodiversity, as are illegal activities in the park and the effects of development going on around the park. Only through diligence, hard work, and public concern will we be able to preserve the natural resources for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.

To help everyone experience what the park has to offer there are nearly 30 miles of hiking trails and a visitor center, as well as a 100 site campground, 3 group camps, 2 picnic shelters and 2 additional picnic areas. Cuivre River

State Park is less than 50 miles from the Gateway Arch, and can easily be reached by taking either I-70, or Highway 40/61 to Wentzville. At Wentzville go north on Hwy. 61 to Troy, and go east on Hwy. 47 for three miles to the park entrance. You can call the visitor center (636-528-7247) for any additional information.

Spring is a great time to come to the park; birds are returning, insects are becoming active again and plants are breaking their winter dormancy. If you like the opportunity to see native flora and fauna in natural habitats, walk on a trail through woods and prairies, and perhaps even help with the inventory and research of the natural resources of one of the St. Louis area's largest parcels of public land – please visit Cuivre River State Park. ~

ASM's Spring Meeting in Columbia

The Audubon Society of Missouri will hold the spring field trips and meetings in Columbia on April 26–28. Visit www.mobirds.org or call Paul Bauer to get registration information. ~

Canaries

The song of canaries
Never varies,
And when they're moulting
They're pretty revolting.



Ogden Nash

February 2002 Bird Report

Jim Ziebol & Yvonne Homeyer

BCA = Busch Wildlife Area

CL = Carlyle Lake

FP = Forest Park

HL = Horseshoe Lake

LVT = Lost Valley Trail

MTC = Marais Temps Clair

REDA = Riverlands Env. Demonstration Area

TGP = Tower Grove Park

First observation dates:

3/24 Common Loon, HL, J&CM

3/17 Eared Grebe, HL, J&CM

3/17 Great Egret, HL, J&CM

3/25 Black-crowned Night Heron, Peabody
River Wildlife Area, MT

3/29 Yellow-crowned Night Heron & Little
Blue Heron, HL, FH

3/9 Blue-winged Teal, HL, JC, RAB, KL

3/16 Solitary Sandpiper, Mark Twain NWR,
HW

3/27 Am. Golden Plover, Smart Field/Airport,
J&CM

3/29 Lesser Yellowlegs, Portage Road, SM

3/30 Greater Yellowlegs, St. Charles Co.,
J&CM and P&BJ

3/24 Long-billed Dowitcher, Hwy. 143, J&CM

3/27 Pectoral Sandpiper, St. Charles Co., P&BJ

3/11 Tree Swallow, Busch CA, CM

3/30 Purple Martin, HL, FH

3/29 Northern Rough-winged Swallow, St.
Charles Co., J&CM

3/24 Barn Swallow, HL, JZ

3/9 Bewick's Wren, Creve Coeur, John &
Maury McCormack

3/25 Sedge Wren, REDA, DZ

3/30 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Castlewood, MB

3/27 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, TGP, SM

3/25 Loggerhead Shrike, REDA, DZ

3/25 Am. Pipit, CL, DK

3/3 Pine Warbler, Hawn SP, MB

3/30 Black-and-White Warbler, SIU-E, FH

3/31 Yellow-thr Warbler, Emmenegger, MR

3/24 Louisiana Waterthrush, Castelwd, MB

3/17 Vesper Sparrow, CL, DK

3/3 E. Towhee, Ste. Genevieve Co, Nancy
Havicon.

Sightings: Four Common Loons were found at HL on 3/26 (FH). One hundred White Pelicans were seen in flight at Jefferson & Gravois on 3/11 (SM) and 125 were reported near HL on 3/25 (T Be). Greater White-fronted Geese sightings included 6 near HL on 3/1 (SM), 300 on Bend Road on 3/2 (T Bo), and 50 near HL on 3/18 (T Be). By 3/1, good numbers of all the mergansers had been seen at REDA (J Mo, PB, Shawn Clubb). Sherry McCowan found a Bufflehead in FP on 3/13. The Barkers reported a Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw) at REDA on 3/21. Jackie Chain found 4 Wood Ducks in the Jack Van pool in TGP on 3/9. On 3/24, there were 500+ Ruddy Ducks, 300 Red-breasted Mergansers, 60 Buffleheads and 1,000 Coots at HL and 400 N. Shovelers at Canteen Lake (FH, YH). Torrey Berger estimated 200+ Ring-necked Ducks and 100+ Lesser Scaup at HL on 3/13 and 150 Green-winged Teal at REDA on 3/27. Woodcocks were reported from TGP on 3/3 (T Bo) and 3/8 (Mary Huber). Snipe were seen at the Pump Station Road/Mark Twain NWR on 3/2 (Lou Hanes) and one was a good find in TGP on 3/14 (SM). By 3/30, 30 Greater Yellowlegs, 40 Lesser Yellowlegs, Pipits, Brewer's & Rusty Blackbirds, thousands of ducks and 100 Bonaparte's Gulls were reported at CL and surrounding areas (KL, T Bo, CA). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was observed at REDA on 3/16 (G&TB).

On 3/24, Torrey Berger found Sharp-shinned Hawk at Cahokia Mounds. This is definitely a species in decline. Red-shouldered Hawks were reported throughout the area: two in courtship flight, Lost Valley Trail, 3/14 (J Mo); one at her home in St. Charles Co. on 3/17 & 3/18 (KT); on 3/24 at the Watershed, SIU-Edwardsville (J Mo); and nesting pairs at Castlewood (MB), Shaw Nature Reserve (G&TB) and at their home in Franklin County (D&CD). An early Broad-winged Hawk was seen at Busch on 3/14 (G&TB) and the Delashmits observed a kettle along I-44 on 3/23. A Harlan's Hawk was sighted at the Mel Price Dam on 3/5 (FH) and another at Sand Prairie Lane/HL on 3/30 (MR). Cheryl Delashmit observed a dark-phase Rough-legged Hawk near her home in Franklin County on 3/22. A Prairie Falcon was a good find near Winfield Dam on 3/26 (Scott Schuette). A Merlin was seen on Walker Island/HL on 3/30 (MR). Short-eared Owl was hotlined from REDA on 3/14 (RAB,

JC) and one was found there on 3/27 (P&B). A Long-eared Owl was seen at Shaw Nature Reserve on 3/8 (MB). By 3/14, many Phoebes, Towhees, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Fox Sparrows and Brown Creepers were reported from TGP (SM, JC, RAB, T Be). The Johnsons reported Ring-necked Pheasant on 3/16 at HL and REDA and on 3/30 at MTC. Four Fish Crows were found at HL on 3/18 (T Be). High counts of Winter Wren included 6 at Castlewood on 3 / 4 (MB), 3 at his home in Jefferson County on 3/24 (MP), and numerous other reports throughout the area. Loggerhead Shrikes were seen on Dwiggins Road on 3/39 (J&CM) and on 3/27 at REDA (T Be).

Warblers basically arrived on time, with good reports of Pine Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush. Torrey Berger estimated 100 Am. Tree Sparrows on 3/15 at REDA. Vesper Sparrows were reported on 3/25 on Bruns Road (T Be) and on 3/29 on Island Road (SM). On 3/11, Frank Holmes found a Junco with obvious white wing bars near Alton and Ron Goetz reported a male Oregon Junco at Castlewood on 3/30. Torrey Berger birded the Levee Road on 3/20 and counted 28 E. Meadowlarks, 2 Western Meadowlarks, and 50 Horned Larks. A Western Meadowlark and Pectoral Sandpipers were found at Smart Field/St. Charles Co. on 3/28 (Thursday Group). Blackbird sightings included Rusties at Mark Twain NWR on 3/2 (Lou Hanes), 20 at HL on 3/23 (FH, YH), 35-40 at MTC on 3/29 (SM), and 2 Brewer's were seen at REDA on 3/27 (T Be). The Thursday Group found Pine Siskins at Rockwoods on 3/7 and 6 were seen there on 3/10 (MT). On 3/10, a typical day at Rockwoods included Phoebes, Pine Siskins, Golden-crowned Kinglets, E. Towhees, Turkey Vultures, and Pileated Woodpeckers and at Little Creve Coeur Marsh, N. Bobwhite, E. Meadowlark, 50 Ring-billed Gulls, and 6 sparrow species (MT). A good day at Mark Twain NWR on 3/25 included many Snipe, Pipits, and dozens of Purple Martins flying at binocular range (T Bo, KL, CA).

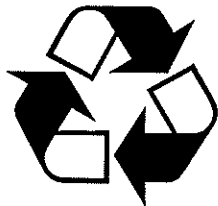
Comments: Anne McCormack observed a Carolina Chickadee excavating a cavity in a dead limb in early March. The bird chased a Downey Woodpecker and a House Sparrow from its new home. By the end of March, a pair of chickadees were making visits to the nest site every few minutes. The Red-shouldered



Hawk in Kathy Thiele's yard was seen eating worms. Mike Thelen had a wonderful "bird's eye view" looking down on a Pine Warbler. Josh Uffman and the Solodars had Screech Owls in nesting boxes at their homes. A Cooper's Hawk has been watching Wilma Kennell's feeder. Randy Korotev reported a Red-tailed Hawk nest in FP. Cooper's Hawks now in adult plumage have returned to Wilson Park in Granite City (FH). A male and female White-winged Crossbill have been seen on and off during March at the backyard feeder of Jean Ansell (fide HW). Another good backyard bird was a Eurasian Collared Dove seen in Lou Hane's yard. A report received late from December, from Paul Bauer, was a Goshawk in his yard - a terrific yard bird.

Contributors: Connie Alwood, George & Terry Barker, Paul Bauer, Torrey Berger, David Becher, Rose Ann Bodman, Tom Bormann, Mike Brady, Jackie Chain, Don & Cheryl Delashmit, Nancy Havicon, Frank Holmes, Yvonne Homeyer, Paul & Barbara Johnson, Dan Kassebaum, Kent Lannert, Randy Korotev, Jim & Charlene Malone, Sherry McCowan, Jeannie Moe, Mark Peters, Mary Regan, Marge Richardson, John & Nancy Solodar, Mike Thelen, Kathy Thiele, Josh Uffman, Helen Wuestenfeld, Jim Ziebol, Dave Ziolkowski, many observers. An asterisk means "documented."

Please note this temporary change: To submit a report, call Jim Ziebol at 314-963-7750 or email Yvonne at homeyer@earthlink.net by the last day of the month, until further notice. Thank you for your cooperation. ∞



Nature Notes is printed on recycled paper.

Conservation Report May 2002

Yvonne Homeyer

WGNSS Wins Appeal: On March 19, the Clean Water Commission (CWC) threw out the 401 certification granted by the Mo. Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) last summer to Holcim (formerly Holnam) in connection with that company's proposed harbor, 1600 acre quarry and cement plant along the Mississippi River in Ste. Genevieve County. The CWC's action was in response to an administrative appeal filed by WGNSS and other groups. Work at the site has been shut down for months since the access road was completed. Holcim has said that it intends to reapply and start the 401 process again. The Corps of Engineers cannot grant the 404 permit unless Holcim has the 401 certification from DNR. The CWC also told the DNR that DNR must hold a public hearing the next time around. Meanwhile, the Land Reclamation Commission will discuss Holcim's quarry application at its May 30 meeting. The Environmental Law Clinic of Washington University is representing WGNSS on this matter. We extend our sincere thanks to each and every student and staff member of the Clinic Team for their outstanding efforts on our behalf.

Equilon Pipeline at Carlyle Lake: Equilon (based in Houston), WGNSS, and other groups held a conference call on March 14 to discuss the status of Equilon's 52-mile pipeline extension project, part of which comes close to the area of Carlyle Lake known as Parking Lot 3. Mitigation for this project consists of Equilon's purchase of 25 acres of farmland adjoining the Wildlife Management Area of Carlyle Lake. Equilon intends to plant 109 trees per acre (all native species), which will be very beneficial to birds and other wildlife. This mitigation area will then become part of the Wildlife Management Area and will be open to the public. Equilon has demonstrated a sincere effort to listen to our concerns about shorebird migration and other wildlife issues and we thank them for their cooperation. Work will be underway this spring or early summer. If you see any activities that concern you, please let Yvonne Homeyer know so we can discuss them with Equilon.

Chouteau Island Master Plan: A large-scale effort to determine Chouteau Island's future is underway, now that the landfill on the island is about to close. The Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources, Corps of Engineers and Trailnet are some of the groups involved. Some commercial development is under consideration, as well as recreational uses and habitat restoration and enhancement. WGNSS recently attended a public workshop in Madison, Illinois. We will keep you updated on developments. If you are interested in getting involved on this issue, call Yvonne Homeyer.

Audubon seeks pledges for REDA

John Solodar

St. Louis Audubon Society (SLAS) has been approached about buying the land on the right side at the end of Orton Rd. near Riverlands. Ownership might give us the opportunity to establish a bird observation blind on the top of the mound that occupies a good portion of the land. It would prevent the land from falling into the hands of a shooting club or home-builder whose activities would disrupt the refuge. The SLAS Board has initiated discussions with the Army Corps and MDC about acquiring this parcel of land. The Corps turned down buying the land on its own, but may be willing to get involved if we can show strong local interest.

We are asking people who are willing to pledge money which that would be used to purchase the land. If you can help, please inform John Solodar. Contact John: 314-862-5294, 8135 Cornell Ct. St. Louis, MO 63130 e-mail solodar1@mindspring.com



Missouri's Forests: Selective Cuts vs. Clear Cuts

Mike Thelen

Industrial, mechanized forestry, representing the third epoch of logging in Missouri, has arrived and is now well established. It is methodically grinding up Ozark forests.

Six of us pull away from the entrance of Clayton High School in a two-car caravan shortly after 8 AM March 12, heading for Annapolis, Missouri. Our leader is Dana Barhard of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment. In Annapolis we rendezvous in a school parking lot with Katie Auman of the Dogwood Alliance, Clint Tramell of Pioneer Forest, and 3 members of Columbia-based Missouri Heartwood Coalition. The upcoming events of the day are foreshown as we view the mountain-top that dominates the topography of Annapolis. It has been stripped away by mining for stone that is crushed into grit and used for the manufacture of shingles.

Katie is the Ozarks Regional Coordinator for the Dogwood Alliance, an organization created by conservationists in 1996 to preserve and protect Southern forests. She leads us to our first stop, the Funk Branch Road clear-cut, and tells us that this is the poster child of Missouri chip mills. 300 acres were cut here in 1997 and the trees given up as grist for a high-capacity chip mill. This ridge top looks as if a nuclear bomb was exploded. There is a sharp demarcation where the cut adjoins the surrounding healthy forest, itself about 80 years old.

We don't linger at Funk Branch and move on to the second stop of the day, known as the Long Road cut. When we get out of the cars there is no shade because the trees have been wiped out. The Long Road cut looks bleak and we stand in this open space and hear no bird sounds. One solitary junco pops out of a waste pile and flies away. I see two vultures pass high overhead and in this context they evoke an eerie feeling, as if they have found the dead on which to feed.

Bud Middleton, a sage local whose family has owned land near here for three generations, joins the group. He is eloquent in his opposition to unrestricted clearcutting, and explains that many of the other landowners



are not happy about it either, but are afraid that they will lose property rights if government controls are imposed. Visitors to Bud's place, who must pass by this cut, often ask him incredulously, "What happened?"

Logged three years ago, about 1,000 acres were cut at Long Road. Only a few small diameter trees are left standing; the ones the loggers did not want. An absentee landowner bought this ridge solely for the purpose of exploiting the timber and he contracted with professional loggers to harvest the trees. The chip mill that bought the logs, at about \$4 a ton, has no interest in the land. Usually this land has been worth about \$150 to \$200 an acre in the local real estate market, but now that it is useless to the landowner he has put it up for sale at \$999 an acre. He has taken his profits and moved on to buy other land, other ridge tops, and more trees. The cycle will be repeated. Nearly all of the big clear-cuts are the responsibility of absentee landowners. We are disheartened to hear that the practice is common.

80% of the nutrients in a tree are contained in its limbs and leaves, and in a clear-cut the loggers are interested only in tree trunks, so the limbs are sliced off and pushed into massive waste piles, left to rot in collected heaps. The result is that a critical element needed to feed the forest floor, under natural conditions spread uniformly across the surface, is concentrated in small areas. The topsoil is subsequently lost and the ground, baked desert-like by the sun, turns hard and rocky. Nothing will be replanted. In the vast Southern tree plantations, pines are commonly planted because the seedlings are inexpensive and pine is fast growing. Hardwood seedlings cost more.

Men from the state of Mississippi came here to cut Long Road, bringing with them a half million dollars in heavy, sophisticated logging equipment to do the job. Bud Middleton talked to them and they told him that they did not want to be here, away from their homes and families, but need to make a living and relieve the massive debt that they assumed. They take logging work wherever they can find it. The logs they harvested were bought by Canal chip mill, a Japanese company, and the chips that it produced were exported. Few Missourians benefited from this process. The

Canal mill has since gone out of business, but the barren ridge top remains.

It will take ten to fifteen years for this land to regenerate itself and yield new trees. It will take 50 years before trees are mature enough to be cut for chip wood. It will take 80 to 140 years for the land to yield large diameter trees, what Clint calls saw logs.

After lunch we drive south to see the chip mill at Mill Spring, currently the one large-scale chip mill operation in Missouri. This big industrial plant, sitting right next to the Black River, employs only six people. In the yard, logs are neatly arranged in a stack 30 feet high by 100 feet long. We are told this is a small stack. They will be grabbed by a crane and dumped into the debarker, after which the logs move to the grinder and get chewed up into chips the size of postage stamps. Fifteen rail hopper cars have been spotted on the mill siding, set to receive their cargo. The chips will be transported to a production plant in Kentucky where they will be turned into paper for copiers, fax machines and magazine stock.

By mid-afternoon we are ready for some good news. Our guides know this and take us to our final stop of the day, a small parcel of the model Pioneer Forest, called simply the 80-acre site. The contrast with what we saw earlier is astounding. We walk on land where trees have been harvested three times in the last 50 years, yet the aggregate yield in board feet was more than the clear-cut on Long Road. We hear birds all around us: titmice, chickadees, cardinals and woodpeckers. This forest is still alive.

St. Louis businessman Leo Drey began Pioneer Forest in 1951, and its various divisions now total over 154,000 acres. He wanted to demonstrate that careful and thoughtful management of Missouri's forests would achieve important conservation goals, as well as economic benefits. Pioneer Forest has evidently found the solution in the practice of selective cutting, or single tree selecting. Clint and his foresters do not manage the forest, they manage tree species. Their goal is to grow high quality hardwoods, and when they go in to cut trees the first thing they look for is not what to cut, but what to leave. The Pioneer Forest method prescribes that they start with the poorest quality trees.

Each of the three cuts on the 80-acre site has yielded 2,500 to 3,000 board feet. Clint's loggers have taken one half the standing volume of this parcel, yet 2,500 board feet are left. By comparison, the Long Road cut, logged only once, yielded about 6,000 board feet. Selective cutting produced more usable fiber than the clear-cut, yet left an intact forest with trees, a healthy soil and habitat. Augmenting these accomplishments is the fact that the last cut was made by the third generation of loggers that have worked in the Pioneer Forest. Sustainable forestry here embraces both the land and the people.

Clint tells us that he has escorted students, environmentalists and professional foresters through Pioneer Forest. He is still dumbfounded that students and environmentalists see immediately the differences between the clear-cuts and the Pioneer Forest cuts, but that many of the professional foresters do not seem to understand.

The ground of this managed cut is covered with the leaves of oak and hickory. While clear-cut land was moribund, with poor to no topsoil, the cuts here preserved leaf litter and good topsoil. Clint brushes away the leaves and shows us the richness beneath: decaying organic material that will feed the forest floor and regenerate life. The regeneration potential is vital to restoration.

For those of us with an interest in wild birds we are amazed once again to hear that Pioneer Forest supports a Neotropical bird population equivalent to a population found in an undisturbed forest. We ask the obvious rhetorical question, "Why doesn't everyone practice this kind of forestry?" but understand when told that the mills maintain the standard industry focus on maximizing fiber and dollars earned.

The current moratorium on new chip mills in Missouri is set to expire soon. If it is lifted there could easily be four high-capacity chip mills operating in this state in a relatively short time.

I encourage the reader to take a few minutes and look through the web sites below for more about chip mills. After that, do what you can to conserve and protect one of our precious natural resources, the Ozark forests.

Mo. Chip Mill and Forestry Page of the Mo. Audubon Council and Audubon Missouri at

www.audubon.org/chapter/mo/mo/chipmill.htm. View the chip mill and forestry photos to see what a clear-cut looks like. See also pictures of the chip mill at Mill Springs. Take a virtual tour of a chip mill at Dogwood Alliance's www.dogwoodalliance.org I also recommend Pioneer Forest at www.pioneerforest.com and Mo. Heartwood Coalition: www.heartwood.org/MO/ ∞

Nature Days at Shaw Nature Preserve May 18 – 19

Cosponsored by: Mo. Botanical Garden, Mo. Dept. of Conservation, Mo. Mycological Society, Mo. Native Plant Society, & WGNSS May is Biodiversity Month in the US, and there are events going on all over the country—see <http://biodiversitymonth.org>. As our part of this celebration, the Garden and local natural history groups are sponsoring 2 days of walks and other activities aimed at cataloging and showing off the remarkable biodiversity of the Shaw Nature Reserve. Join the experts as we learn what's living out at the Reserve, from the smallest lichen to the tallest tree. Walks will focus on an inventory of plants, animals, and fungi. Other events will focus on ecology in both aquatic and terrestrial communities. The lists developed will help the staff with management and preservation of the property.

Activities on Sat. and Sun., May 18 and 19 are free and open to the public. Plan to attend as few as one activity or stay all day each day. Each event will depart from the Trail House at the Nature Reserve and will last about two hours. Note that because of the staggered starting times, it will not be possible to attend all of the walks scheduled during the day. Picnic lunches are welcome at the Trail House, which has water, tables, and restrooms, or lunch is available at nearby restaurants in Gray Summit.

Sturdy shoes, sun protection, tick spray, and a water bottle are suggested. The activities will require easy to moderate walking for a mile or more and are not be suitable for young children. Events in and around the wetlands and river may involve walking through mud or shallow water.

Tentative Schedule (note that activity times overlap, so participation in all activities each day isn't possible):



Schedule for Nature Days

Saturday, May 18

3:00 AM Bird walk
8:00 AM Mushroom foray
9:00 AM Pond life
10:00 AM Butterflies of the prairie
10:00 AM Wildflowers in the sun
1 PM Butterflies of the river bottom
2 PM Monitoring stream life
3 PM Ants in the forest
3 PM Stalking the lichens

Sunday, May 19

8:00 AM Bird walk
9:00 AM Dragonflies of the Reserve
10:00 AM Butterflies of the glades
10:00 AM Pollinators in action
1:00 AM Insects of forests and meadows
1:00 PM Butterflies of the wetlands
2:00 PM Trees of hills and bottoms
3:00 PM Wildflowers in the shade ☽

WGNSS Spring Banquet

May 9

Ben The poetry corner

The Eagle

Alfred Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Tree-Creeper

Anthony Rye

Bird delicate and brief,
The Creeper, upward going,
Spirals the trunks of these
Sea-weathered, bare elm tree,
Against the veiled blue winter sky,
In wintry sunlight showing:
As if a brown, decaying leaf
Back to the branch were blowing.



Jenny Wren

Walter De La Mare

Of all the birds that rove and sing,
Near dwellings made for men,
None is so nimble, feat, and trim
As Jenny Wren.

With pin-point bill, and a tail a-cock,
So wildly shrill she cries,
The echoes on their roof-tree knock
And fill the skies.

Never was sweeter seraph hid
Within so small a house—
A tiny, inch-long, eager, ardent
Feathered mouse.

International Migratory Bird Week Celebration May 5–12, 2002

The following is a list of the special events for International Migratory Bird Week. Some of the programs require reservations. All are free. Bring binoculars to bird walks, wear comfortable walking shoes, and dress for spring weather. Walks are geared at all experience levels. Beginning birders are especially encouraged to attend.

Spring Birding Festival

Powder Valley Nature Center, Sat., April 20
2–3:30 PM

Sponsored by MO Dept. of Conservation and St. Louis Audubon Society (SLAS)

Sunday, May 5

7:30 AM Birding Tower Grove WGNSS & SLAS
Meet at the Gaddy Bird Garden at the northwest corner of the park. Call Jim Malone at 636-536-1119 for more info.

Thursday, May 9

8:30 AM Bird Walk at the Green Center
Meet at Green Center in Kaufman Park, 8025 Blackberry Ave. 63130. Park in front of tennis courts. Register by e-mail at info@thegreencenter.org, or call Dianne Benjamin, Program Director, 314-725-8314. Ages 10 and older recommended.

Friday, May 10

8:30 AM Bird Walk at Tyson Research Center
Meet at the gatehouse entrance located at the northwest corner of the Beaumont-Antire exit off of I-44. For more information, contact Dave Larson, Field Station Manager, at 314-935-8433.

Saturday, May 11

Migratory Bird Discovery at Zoo's Living World
Sponsored by SLAS, St. Louis Zoo, and Wild Bird Rehabilitation 11 AM – 3 PM
No reservations required; stop by anytime.
For more details, call Vicki Flier 314-968-9166.

Saturday, May 11

7:30 AM Bird Walk at Tower Grove, Wild Bird
Meet at Wild Bird Marketplace at 477 Lafayette Center (Manchester & Baxter) to caravan to Tower Grove Park. For more information contact the store at 636-394-2239.

Sunday, May 12

8:00 AM Kennedy Woods WGNSS & SLAS
Contact Jim Malone at 636-636-1119 for more information. All ages welcome. ~

Next Deadline: May 10

Submissions—handwritten, typed, IBM or Mac to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122-5722 or mccormacka@earthlink.net

Wildlife and Birding Safari to South Africa Oct. 11–21

Paul Bauer

A wildlife safari is the most exciting adventure of a lifetime! Don't miss this one. Join us in "their" spring. We use expert local guides, small groups, a relaxed pace, and budget costs. All air fare from the US included at group rates.

Ken Newman, South African field guide artist and author, will guide us through 3 private game reserves: Mala Mala—adjacent to Kruger National Park—Ndumo; and Hluhluwe. Three internal flights are included to save travel time between reserves.

Southern Africa has a bird list that exceeds 900 species—over 100 endemic. Many of these are found around Cape Town. An optional four-day extension is offered to that region, including 2 boating trips to Robben Island and Dulkan Island.

On our last trip, we saw over 320 species of birds and about 45 mammals. For more information contact Paul Bauer at 314-921-3972. Also see www.stlouisaudubon.org ~

Tyson Nature Line

Call 314-935-8432 for a summary of the latest bird sightings in the St. Louis area. Please report any unusual birds to Connie Alwood, 314-524-8111. ~



Deadlines for Nature Notes '02

Marjorie Richardson

Mailing parties send out mail *Nature Notes* from 10 AM till noon at Oak Bend County Library. Your help is welcome!

Dates for NN in 2002

10 AM Oak Bend Library, 842 S. Holmes Kirkwood

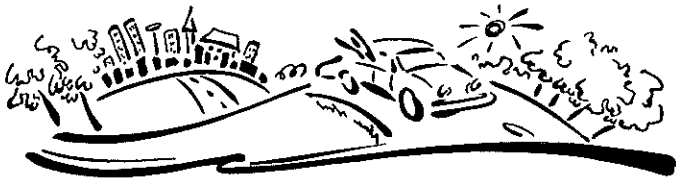
<i>mailing party</i>	<i>deadline</i>
May 20	May 10
Aug. 19	Aug. 9
Sept. 16	Sept. 6
Oct. 21	Oct. 11
Nov. 18	Nov. 8
Dec. 16	Dec. 6

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Webster Groves Nature Study Society

The objectives of the society are: To stimulate interest in nature study on the part of adults and children to cooperate with other organizations in nature study to encourage amateur research in the natural sciences to promote conservation of wildlife and natural beauty. Open to all with an interest in nature. ~



Key to WGNSS Calendar

birding field trip

each Thurs: call Dottie Herweg 314-966-2274
most Sat. (not June or July): call David Becher
314-576-1146

summary of the latest bird sightings

Call Tyson Nature Line: 314-935-8432

board meeting

1st Wed. 7 PM Sept.-May at Powder Valley
Nature Center: Doug Corbett 636-861-2829

botany field trip

each Thurs: call Fr. Sullivan 314-291-7885

conservation meeting

3rd Wed: call Yvonne Homeyer 314-963-7750

entomology meeting

last Sun: call Marshall Magner 314-961-4588

general meeting

2nd Fri. 7:30 PM: Doug Corbett 636-861-2829

mailing party for Nature Notes

3rd Mon. (not June/July) 10 AM:
call Margie Richardson 314-965-8974

spring banquet

May 9 at Hawken House, 1155 S. Rock Hill Rd.
(just south of Big Bend in Webster) reservation by May 1 to Pat McCormick 1338 Eaglebrooke Ct. Ballwin, MO 63021 for more info call 636-225-0264

Nature Notes deadlines

10 days prior to 3rd Mon: call Anne
McCormack 314-965-8091
mccormacka@earthlink.net

Big Day birding competition

Sat. May 11, 2002 (2nd Sat.)

membership expires/renewal due

Aug. 31

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5435 Lions Den Spur
Imperial, MO 63052
636-296-9159

WGNSS Spring Banquet

May 9





Webster Groves Nature Study Society

Meetings

Wednesday May 1

7 PM Board meeting at Powder Valley Nature Center. All members are welcome.

Thursday May 9

Spring Banquet at Hawken House, 1155 S. Rock Hill Rd. Plant sale 5:45 PM, buffet 6:45. Speaker, Dr. Robert Criss of Washington U., "Rivers of St. Louis Confluence." Make reservations by May 1 to Pat McCormick, see p. 1.

Botany

Thursdays April-May

Field trips usually meet 9:30 AM. Beginners welcome. Bring lunch, weather gear. Trip is usually 3-5 hr. plus travel time. Call Fr. Sullivan 291-7885 after 1 PM Wed for location. E-mail is sent every Wed. advising when and where the field trip is scheduled. To receive, send your e-mail address to Jack Harris jahar@mac.com

Entomology

Sunday April 28

7 PM at Magners'. Bill Brandhorst presents several short, historical films: "Ants Have Jobs!", "A Cost Rican Butterfly Farm," & "WGNSS Insect-Collecting Contest."

Nature Notes deadline May 10

Birding

Thursdays April

8:30 AM at Des Peres Park on Ballas, one block n. of Manchester. Questions: call Dottie Herweg, 314-966-2274.

Thursdays May-August

8:00 AM Des Peres Park; see above.

Saturday April 20

8 AM WGNSS Birding: Busch Wildlife Area, St. Charles Co. Meet at Hampton Lk. Bring lunch. For more info, call David Becher 314-576-1146.

Saturday April 27

8 AM WGNSS Birding: Tower Grove Pk. Meet just west of stables. Bring lunch. For more info, call David Becher, above.

Saturday May 4

8 AM WGNSS Birding Castlewood State Park. Meet near boat launch. From Manchester Rd., go south on New Ballwin to Kiefer Creek Rd, follow signs east to Park. Bring lunch (David B. above)

Saturday May 11

Big Day

Saturdays May 18 & 25

8 AM WGNSS "Where the Birds Are." Parking lot of HQ of Co. Library, Lindbergh, south of 40. Meet on N side. New meeting place because of construction at Olive and I-270. D. Becher 314-576-1146

Join WGNSS

Send \$15 to Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Ln., St. Louis MO 63132

www.wgnss.org