

Friends of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

Quarterly Newsletter
ISSUE 05 July 2018

From the Friends

In these times of tight budgets and small staffs at our National Wildlife Refuges, a Refuge Friends Group can make important contributions to the Refuge in their community. As an independent nonprofit, we can fundraise, apply for grants and accept donations. As volunteers, we can plan and work on special projects, or help with Refuge programs. As concerned citizens, we can voice our support of the Refuge and its vital contributions to both our local economy and our quality of life.

The Friends of Crab Orchard are working hard to fulfill these roles. In addition to our support of many ongoing programs (such as the Eagle Tours, the Photo Contest, the Kids Fishing Derby, many of the Becoming an Outdoor Family programs, and Hunting and Fishing Days- to name just a few) Friends have raised, or are raising, funds to support several special Refuge needs: additions to the recreational facilities at the Wolf Creek Recreation Area (Bogart Point), a new water control structure, to improve waterfowl habitat at the A-41 Moist Soil Unit (This project has been fully funded and will soon be installed), pollinator gardens and a prairie restoration on Pigeon Creek Road, and planned restoration of Harmony Trail. It's a lot to be working on! It's happening because we have a great group of people contributing their talents. But realize that each one of these initiatives started out with just one or two people saying "this is important and I'm willing to work on it," and a few more people volunteering to help them.

We appreciate your membership in the Friends of Crab Orchard. Dues help support many programs. If you would like to take a more active role, volunteers are needed to assist with many

projects. The secret to a successful volunteer experience is to pick something that interests you— and we have a lot to choose from! Our current urgent need is for volunteers to staff the Visitor Center gift shop, as proceeds fund many of our projects. It includes greeting Refuge visitors and helping them with purchases, for one morning or afternoon shift at least twice a month. Training is given in running the cash register. Volunteers are also needed for the pollinator project, and a trail and sign crew.

For more information, call the Visitors Center. Thanks for all you do!

*Judy Groskind,
president, Friends
of Crab Orchard
Refuge*

this issue

From the Friends P.1
Volunteer of the Quarter P.1
Crab Orchard Photography Group P.2
New Grant P.3
Nature Store P.4
Photo Contest P.4
Butterfly Monitoring Project P.5
Photo Club P.6
Upcoming Events P.7
Master Naturalists P.8
Refuge News P.9
Pollinator Project P.10
Recruitment Day P.11
Membership Form P.12

VOLUNTEER of the QUARTER

Our quarterly volunteer is:
Rick Whitecotten



Rick is a familiar face around the Refuge, serving as the volunteer in charge of volunteer coordination, as a gift shop worker, and as a presenter for several interpretive programs. He is also the current Friends Vice-president and is an active volunteer for the Pollinator Habitat Project and the Refuge Bluebird trail. We've probably left a few things out--- seems like he's everywhere if there's a task that needs doing!

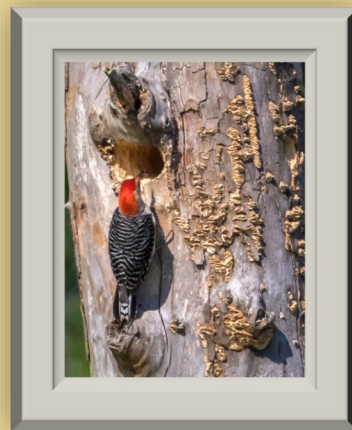
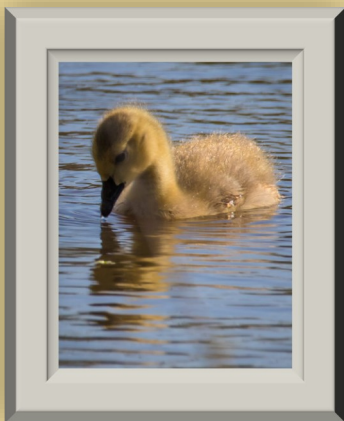
Submit your choice for Volunteer of the Quarter, along with photograph, by September 15th to:
admin@friendsofconwr.com

Crab Orchard Photography Group

As of this writing, the newly organized Crab Orchard Photography Group has had two meetings. The organizational meeting held in April at the Visitor Center had 30 people in attendance while the May meeting had 25. A survey was done with the attendees which indicated that Wednesday mornings were the preferred meeting time for a vast majority of the participants. The group was very interested in car-caravanning to different locations in the refuge to take photos. In May, the group did drive to several locations and captured images of migrating birds as well as Canada Geese with their young. After returning to the refuge Visitor Center, Jim Osborn presented a short program that covered the liabilities of submitting your original work for various magazine or online publications and contests, as well as copyright protection of your images. Jim also showed some of his pictures taken on the refuge.

Because of the success of the first two get-togethers the refuge has allowed the group to schedule monthly meetings through the rest of 2018. Except for November and December, meetings will be on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 8am to 11am. The November and December meetings will be on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Weather permitting, the group will continue to visit different locations within the refuge by car-pooling. Participants are encouraged to bring some of their pictures to share, either digital jpegs or prints. There is no fee to participate in the meetings and the agenda will vary from meeting to meeting depending on the interests of the group. If you like to photograph the beauty of the refuge with all of its various critters, why not join us?

James Osborn



New Grant to help Restore Harmony Trail



Thanks to a new grant award, donations to the Pollinator Habitat Project are now eligible for a 3 to 1 match, and restoration of Harmony Trail has been selected as one of the primary goals for use of the new funding! An Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) Community Stewardship grant has been awarded to the Friends of Crab Orchard for their Pollinator Habitat Project. The ICECF grant program encourages increased local support and participation in the care of the habitat, by providing grant funds as a match to local dollars raised and labor donated. It will provide a 3 to 1 match of cash received from donors (up to a grant total of \$21,000) and will add an additional payment of up to \$6000 for donated volunteer hours.

ALL funds received (grant and donations) will be used to directly benefit the Refuge and improve Pollinator Habitat. The pollinator gardens and prairie restoration will be maintained and expanded, and two new site improvements will be targeted: tree plantings at the Prairie Creek Recreational Area and restoration of Harmony Trail. Much of Harmony Trail has been closed to the public for over a year, due to wash out of a levee and a section of the eastern side of the trail loop. Invasive species have also overgrown much of the area. With donation/grant funding, the Friends of Crab Orchard will work collaboratively with US Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge Staff for full restoration and improvement of the site. Structural repair is targeted for this fall. Next, clearing and invasive control will be undertaken using a combination of controlled burns, volunteer work days, and herbicidal treatment. Then the fun begins! Plantings of native bushes, trees and wildflowers!

Please consider a donation to this project. \$25 becomes \$100! \$100 becomes \$400— you get the idea. Donations can be mailed to the Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge, 8588 Route 148, Marion, IL 62959. Include a note indicating it is for the Pollinator Habitat Project so we can receive the match. The Friends of Crab Orchard Inc. is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit and monetary donations are tax deductible.

For additional information, contact the Friends at: pollinator@friendsofconwr.com

Judy Groskind

Help Wanted: Visitor's Center Nature Store

This is not likely the last article on our bookstore. First a few notes on the store are in order. The Woodland Nature Store is one of the best nature stores in Southern Illinois. The merchandise committee consists of Anne Johnson (Chair), Linda May and Ron Hamberg. They review and select pertinent items for sale. They seek local authors, and wish to ensure the offerings reflect the flora and fauna of the refuge itself.

Volunteers staff the bookstore, this is one of the positions volunteers tend to gravitate to at the beginning of their volunteer time here at Crab Orchard. All volunteers are trained on aspects of the job, we all have a uniform shirt and badge to identify us as volunteers. As Neil Vincent told me, the main job of the volunteer at the desk (which includes the bookstore) is to be the face of the refuge for our visitors. The main prerequisite to becoming a volunteer at the bookstore is a willingness to help visitors.

The tasks are fairly simple, assist visitors if they are choosing some goods, run the cash register, process any new goods received and maintain the store in good condition. We do ask that you work at least one 4 hour block per month, but there are many openings. I am seeking to double up volunteers to provide more coverage and relief opportunity across the schedule. The times are from 9 – 4 every day of the week, you may choose a morning or afternoon shift or perhaps all day.

We have a lot of movement in this area of volunteers, so we have frequent openings, there are several now.

All monies raised via the bookstore go into the Friends of Crab Orchard general account, this provides direct support for most of our projects throughout the year.

Please consider trying this volunteer opportunity out, everyone is welcome. You must be a Friends of Crab Orchard member to perform this needful work.

To sign up please send a note to me (Rick Whitecotton) at pneumatron53@gmail.com. Your support is greatly appreciated.

You Could Be a Photo Contest Winner!

We hope that many of you are already trying to decide which of your great photos you will be entering into the Wildlife and Wild Places Photography Contest this year. But even if you haven't, it is not too late to get out there and start shooting. We had some spectacular entries last year and can't wait to see this year's entries. For added support, check out the contest tips on the website or attend the new photography group at Crab Orchard Wildlife Refuge. For more information contact the Visitor's Center.

Any nature photos taken south of I-64 can be entered into one of these categories: Landscape /Scenic; Wildlife; Flowers/Plants/Trees/Fungi; Youth (17 and under); or Photos taken on Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. Photos should be submitted at the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Visitor's Center no later than Sunday, September 30, 2018. The Visitor's Center is located on Rte 148 south of Rte 13 and is open 8—4:30 daily. Cash and gift certificates are given for Best of Show and 1st, 2nd, 3rd for each category.

Each photographer may submit up to 5 entries. There is a \$5 charge for each entry for adults. Youth (up to age 17) may submit up to 5 photos for a total of \$5. Contest rules and entry forms are available at the NWR Visitor's Center and at the Friends of Crab Orchard website, www.friendsofconwr.com. For questions, call 618-998-5933. The Friends of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge is sponsoring the Wildlife & Wild Places Photography Contest.

Don Mullison

New Butterfly Monitoring Project

A new butterfly monitoring program has been established on the Refuge, that will gather data important to the Pollinator Habitat Project. The program is provided through the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network, which gathers data from all over the state. Refuge volunteers attended a training workshop, studied materials to learn species markings, and were assigned one of six monitoring sites on the Refuge. Early monitoring surveys have shown amazing results. In the last 6 weeks, 27 butterfly species and several skippers (they're more difficult to ID to species in the field) have been identified; and over 500 individuals have been counted. Species seen to date include:

8 Black Swallowtail
11 Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
26 Spicebush Swallowtail
5 Pipevine Swallowtail
23 Zebra Swallowtail
3 Cabbage White
206 Common/Orange Sulphur
4 Little Yellow
16 Cloudless Sulphur
44 Eastern Tailed Blue
11 Little Wood Satyr
1 Northern Pearly Eye
2 Appalachian Eyed Brown
23 Monarch
3 Viceroy
8 Red-spotted Purple
7 Question Mark
2 Eastern Comma
26 Red Admiral
3 Buckeye
36 Pearl Crescent
5 Hackberry
2 Tawny Emperor
18 Great Spangled Fritillary
2 Variegated Fritillary
1 Silvery Checkerspot
14 Silver-spotted skipper
3 Zebulon skipper
16 other skipper

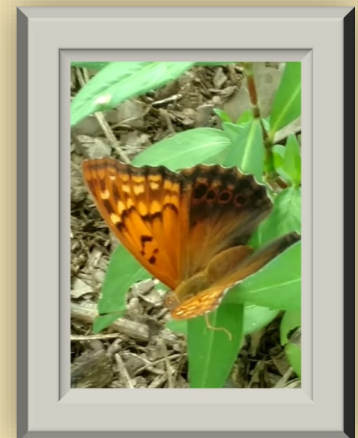
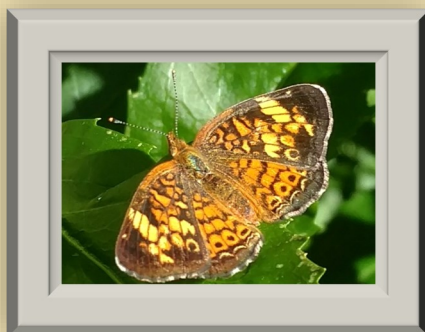
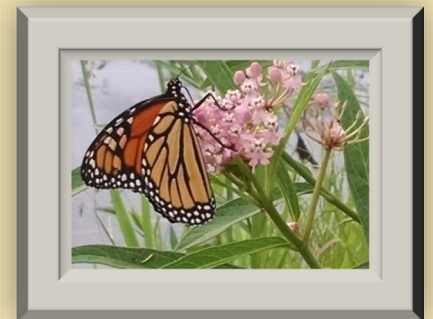
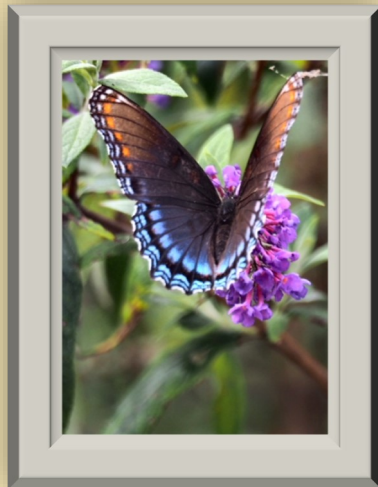
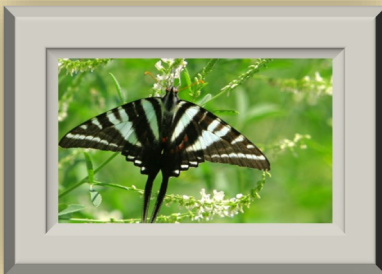
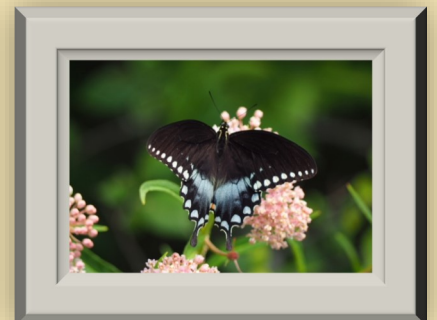


Photo Club

FOCUS ON THIS!!!

If you've driven through the Refuge in the past year or two you have probably noticed a lot of visitors with cameras taking advantage of the diverse wildlife and natural beauty of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. In October 2017 the annual Friends Photo Contest drew 30 more entries than the previous year. Attendance at the awards reception was standing-room only. The advent of affordable digital cameras and iphones with cameras have made it easy for anyone to take pictures...and Refuge management and the Friends of Crab Orchard want to support that recreational activity.

Two things of note are in the works for Friends in 2018: (1) there will be 2 family programs/workshops on photography, and (2) the formation of the Crab Orchard Photography Group. The first of the two workshops is scheduled for Saturday, April 7 at 10am at the Visitors Center. The second will be held on Saturday, August 4, also at 10am at the

Visitors Center. We are calling the first workshop "Birds and Blooms" and will focus on nature photography, particularly spring wildflowers and migrating birds. The August workshop will have an emphasis on choosing and preparing photos for entry into the annual contest. Learn from a judge what they look for and how to prepare and submit your best photos. Space will be limited for both workshops so call the Refuge early at 618-997-3344 to reserve your spot.

We are equally excited about the formation of a Crab Orchard Photography Group (COPG). This informal get-together of photo enthusiasts is intended to support individuals who actively photograph in southern Illinois and, in particular, in CONWR. Participants can share images taken, hear educational programs and caravan to areas in the Refuge to do photography. It is hoped that there will be enough interest in the COPG to schedule quar-

terly meetings. The organizational meeting for the group will be Wednesday, April 11 at 10am in the Visitor Center. Interested persons are encouraged to bring photos they have taken on the Refuge in the past year. Either print photographs or digital images saved on a flashdrive are acceptable. Please limit photos to 10 per person. Although reservations are not required, they are highly recommended as the room in the Visitor Center has an occupancy limit. Again, the number to call is 618-997-3344.

See you there!!

Jim Osborn

Upcoming Quarterly Events

July

Kayaking The Refuge Becoming an Outdoors- Family Program

July 14th. Come kayak Crab Orchard NWR's lakes with us! Get an interpretive tour of the land around you, view wildlife as you pass by, and enjoy the breeze as you kayak out with our rangers. Boats are limited so if you are not bringing your own be sure to reserve your space!

Ages 15 and up only.
First program begins at 9 am

Second program begins at 1 pm

Reservations are required.

August

Summer Nature Photog- raphy Course Becoming an Outdoors Fam- ily Program

August 4th. Learn the basics of nature photography with the whole family.

Learn from our certified instructors and then practice your new skills on a group hike! Program begins at 10 am

Program meets at the Refuge Visitor Center.

Reservations are recommended.

Family Archery Course Becoming an Outdoors- Family Program

August 11th. Do you want to have a Family Archery Course? This is your opportunity! If you want to build your archery skills with all members of the family, come and join us in a basic introduction of archery. All equipment will be provided for all the members of your family.

Program begins at 10 am.
Program meets at the Martha's Theater .

September

Kayaking The Refuge Course Becoming an Outdoors- Family Program

September 1st. Come kayak Crab Orchard NWR's lakes with us! Get an interpretive tour of the land around you, view wildlife as you pass by, and enjoy the breeze as you kayak out with our rangers. Boats are limited so if you are not bringing your own be sure to reserve your space!

Ages 15 and up only. First program begins at 9 am

Second program begins at 1 pm. Reservations are required.

Becoming an Outdoors- Family Program Butterfly Round-up

September 8th. Monarch butterflies travel through our area each year on their way to spend the cold months of winter in Mex-

ico. Visitors are invited to help catch and tag these butterflies as they feed and rest at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.

Reservations are recommended.
Program Runs from 10am - 12pm

Hunting & Fishing Days

September 22nd & 23rd. Come join us out at John A. Logan College for the 29th annual Southern Illinois Hunting and Fishing Days. Attend a casting workshop, watch the dock dogs compete, listen to the waterfowl callers and try archery, check out all the latest gear and much more.

September 22nd 8am-5pm & September 23rd 9am-4pm

Fee Free Day

Sunday, September 22rd& 23rd

Refuge Clean Up / Public Use Lands Day

September 29th. The Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge will be hosting the first annual Public Use Lands Day at the Prairie Creek Recreation Area. Projects could include planting trees, painting, trash pickup, etc. Spend the day outdoors and help keep Crab Orchard

MASTER NATURALISTS

Many of the dedicated volunteers on Crab Orchard NWR are Master Naturalists, completing a program sponsored by local University of Illinois Extension offices. The Refuge has been the training site for several classes, including the most recent. Twenty-three Master Naturalist Trainees became Interns after completing the coursework portion of the Spring 2018 class.

The goal of the Master Naturalist program is to train adults in environmental education, who then volunteer time in support of conservation, management and interpretation of the region's natural resources through numerous organizations. Master Naturalist trainees attend a day of class weekly for 12 weeks, on topics including archeology, as-



tronomy, birds, botany, weather, wildlife, ecology, and other subjects. After completing classes, trainees become interns while they compile 60 volunteer hours of their choosing within the next two years.

The recent class also participated in field trips hunting fossils, canoeing the Lower Cache, and discovering local archaeology where they put their new knowledge to work. Many students got a jump on volunteering by assisting with school field trip presentations, getting their hands in the dirt at the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge pollinator garden, staffing hours at the visitor desks, jumping into citizen scientist projects, and studying under other Master Naturalists.

REFUGE NEWS

Dear Friends Members,

On a recent drive around the refuge, I noticed several projects that have been accomplished that makes me proud of the Crab Orchard NWR refuge staff. Of particular interest to me is the work accomplished at the Wolf Creek Recreation Area, including rip rap placed along the peninsula shoreline for protection against erosion, a sidewalk that provides access for everyone to the tip of the peninsula, and concrete benches along the sidewalk to provide an opportunity for visitors to sit and fish or just enjoy the view of the lake. The Friends Group provided funds to assist with the construction of a portion of the sidewalk, demonstrating just one way in which the Friends Group can assist the refuge in enhancing visitor opportunities. Our maintenance staff works hard to keep the area mowed and restrooms cleaned, while our volunteer patrol help keep the trash cans cleaned and other trash removed. Thanks to both for their efforts. I often drive along the Wolf Creek Causeway at sunset and it pleases me greatly to see visitors fishing, walking, and sitting in this area enjoying the refuge.

This same effort occurs at all of our recreation areas and public use sites throughout the refuge. It takes many dedicated refuge staff, volunteers, and Friends to keep the refuge operational, safe and welcoming to visitors. When you are on the refuge and see our refuge staff, volunteers or Friends working on projects, please stop and thank them for their efforts. If you are one of those individuals, please accept my personal thank you for what you do.

Richard Speer

Refuge Manager

Pollinator Project Accomplishments



As we continue work on the Pollinator Habitat Project under the new ICECS grant, and add new goals and tasks; its good to look back over the last 2 years and note what has already been accomplished. The \$10,000 received through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, which provided funding assistance from early 2016 through May of this year, was spent directly on Refuge habitat, providing food and host plants for native pollinators.

Purchases included:

- Over 2500 native wildflower and prairie plant starts, which were used to establish a 700 square foot demonstration pollinator garden (showcasing native wildflowers and educating the public about their beauty and the importance of including them in home landscapes), 2 spring ephemeral beds, 2 milkweed beds and 12- 8x10 foot prairie plant nursery beds.
- Native prairie seed, of 31 different species, for an initial 2 acre planting of prairie restoration
- 10 native trees and 5 native bushes
- Interpretive materials (4 large permanent signs, laser printed plant labels and holders)
- Purchase of tools and materials to establish and maintain the plantings (plant augers, hand tools, garden hose, and edging)

Donations included:

- 1500 milkweed plugs, from the Monarch Watch Project (1000 planted by volunteers at several field sites on Crab Orchard and 500 planted at Cypress Creek NWR)
- Several pounds of native, local ecotype, prairie seed (which included 17 species); from Robert Rothrock
- Several dump truck loads of compost and wood chip mulch, from Joseph Groskind of New Earth Compost
- Funds to purchase 1400 Native plant plugs, from US Fish and Wildlife Ecological Services
- Over 1600 hours of labor donated by volunteers

Thanks to all who have worked so hard to make this project a success. A special thanks to Refuge management and staff, who have been our advisors, our close collaborators, and who have “gotten down in the mud” with us when it most counted.



Crab Orchard Volunteer Recruitment Day 2018

Dana Maleve-Miller set up the Volunteer Recruitment Day, it was held March 10, 2018. There was excellent advertising, even a mention on WSIL, regardless we had two participants. The same event in 2017 drew many more. We cannot figure why the difference, regardless there are some things to note about the effort.

First, Dana did a top notch effort at setting up the event. She contacted representatives to talk about many of the major volunteer areas. We specifically contributed to “Patrol” or Public Use Survey, Trail Crew, Bluebird Trail, Kayak Tours, Pollinator Garden/Prairie Restoration, Nature Book Store, and Photography. We had six volunteers speaking to an audience of two. Regardless, we put all our efforts into the two. The results were that we have two new volunteers. Vern McMaster has taken on a brand new specific project to design and create wooden covers for the fishing line tubes around the refuge. Ray Adams is supporting by creating a map of all the locations. We also gained Laura Lindsey as a new Book Store Volunteer. Laura is trained already by Linda May and me and will work for a few weeks with Dennis Gibbons on Tuesday afternoons before taking her own spot.

The second thing I want to point out is that both of the new volunteers joined our Friends organization. Hooray!

The third thing on my mind is how many folks does it take to pull off an event well? It almost sounds like a joke is coming here, but it is not a joke. Let’s take Deer Hunter Sign In, a specific project of 4 days length or is it just 4 intense days? The trail crew and some specific volunteers start repairing the handicap deer blinds and areas well in advance. For several weeks in advance 2 or 3 volunteers patrol the grounds on a daily deer survey developing a good estimate of the herd and locations. Staff typically collects and collates the data; The event has to be advertised. Then on the day of the event (four actually) there is a day of set up in advance, a short brief, then sporadic high levels of work to perform the check in, a specific team handles the Handicap and Youth areas. Someone staffs the book store for the duration and of course the hunter sign in process itself. Almost all of this is performed by us, the volunteers. This same background and preparatory work goes into all events. I have seen it on Earth Day, specific group educational/interpretational events, Fishing Derby, Refuge Clean-up, Eagle Tours and such like. Yes, the number of volunteers may vary and the length of preparation may vary but there are two standards. One, it takes a lot of volunteers to successfully pull off an event or a project. Two, there is a varied skill set that is needed with many different tasks to perform. There is also one prerequisite, the willingness on your part and mine to give of our time and talents to support the goals and mission of Crab Orchard through our Friends organization. Thank you all for all the many and varied tasks you perform!

I also want to note the presenters who gave their time to speak with the new volunteers about the aspects of their volunteer work at the Refuge. Willie Walker, Jonathan Lake, Ray and Pam Adams, Jim Osborn, Jim Hancock, and me all contributed, we thank you all so much!

Rick Whitecotton

MEMBERSHIP

Each year, members should renew their membership dues.

Please fill out the form below and mail it to : Friends of CONWR, 8588 Route 148, Marion, IL 62959. Please send this form along with your payment of \$10.00 per person or \$20.00 per family.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

AMOUNT PAID: _____

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO SERVE ON A COMMITTEE: YES _____ NO _____

COMMITTEE NAME: _____

FRIENDS of CONWR

8588 Route 148
Marion, IL 62959

618.998.5933

Website: www.friendsofconwr.com

Email: admin@friendsofconwr.com

Like us on Facebook