

Friends of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

Quarterly Newsletter

ISSUE 06 October 2018

this issue

From the Friends P.1
Refuge News P.1
New Water Control Structure P.1
Upcoming Events P.2
Volunteer of the Quarter P.2
Photography on the Refuge P.3
Grant Project Update P.4
Creature Feature P.5
Butterfly Monitoring Project P.6
Photo Op Paintings P.7
Membership Form P.8

From the Friends

Please join us for the annual Friends Members Meeting to be held 6-8:30 PM Thursday, October 4 at the Visitors Center- refreshments, door prizes, and a presentation by local historian and reenactor Tony Gerard! And, oh yes, we'll be voting to elect several board members and on approval of 2 bylaw amendments. We also want to give a big thank you to all of our wonderful donors and volunteers. As you will read in the attached articles, you enable the us to support so many Refuge projects!

Judy Groskind, president, Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge

Refuge News

Refuge manager Richard Speer gave a "State of the Refuge" presentation at the Friends September Board meeting. We were excited to learn that **a contract has been signed for construction of the new Refuge Headquarters and work may begin this fall!** Manager Speer also reported that two of the Refuge's lakes are currently being held at lowered levels: Little Grassy for a safety inspection of its dam, which will probably be completed and the level raised within 2 months; and Devil's Kitchen in preparation for a repair of its emergency spillway next summer. He then presented an overview of several major improvements that have been completed on the Refuge in the last 2 years including: replacement and/or improvement of several boat docks and fishing piers (West End, Greenbriar and the Marina pontoon boat docks; Prairie Creek fishing piers) rip wrap improvements (Prairie Creek and Wolfcreek Causeway recreation areas, the Haven and loop E of the Campground) major invasive removal projects, structural repair of Harmony Trail, new concrete path and benches at Wolfcreek Rec area, new Campground entrance road and bike trail, water and

electrical upgrades at the campground and installation of the new water control structure on A-41.

Our pollinators aren't the only busy bees!

Donors and the Friends Purchase a new Water Control Structure

Thanks to donations from many local hunters, and a matching donation from the Friends Group, a new water control structure has been purchased for the A-41 area. The unit, recently installed by Refuge personnel, will expand wetlands and provide additional natural foods for migrant waterfowl. It will allow flooding of 2 fields totalling 64.5 acres. The fields which are also used agriculturally, can be drawn down after harvest to provide a shallow mudflat habitat to benefit a wide array of water birds. Thank you to all donors!



Upcoming Quarterly Events

October

Open House - Environmental Cleanup

October 23rd 3:30 - 7 p.m at the Refuge Visitor's Center Learn more about the contaminated sites located within the restricted area of the Refuge. Information will be provided on the Superfund process, investigation results, and next steps.

Outdoor Spanish Immersion Class Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program

October 13th
¿Habla español? Trying to learn Spanish? Do you have a child in Spanish class that needs some practice? One of the best ways to learn a new language is to immerse yourself in it. Our Spanish Immersion class lets you try your hand out at speaking Spanish on a beautiful hike with our bilingual ranger! The program includes a brief introduction at the visitors center followed by a short hike.
Program begins at 10 am
Reservations are recommended.

Fee Free Day

Sunday October 14th

Discovery Tours

October 21st & 28th

We will open up the restricted portion of the refuge for a self-guided tour. Tours begin at the Wolf Creek Causeway, volunteers will be stationed throughout the tour to answer questions.

Gates open from 1 - 4 pm

Halloween Bat Program Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program

October 28th Come to Crab Orchard NWR for some Halloween Fun! Learn about the importance of bats and build bat boxes with us to encourage these important pollinators. **Program begins at 1:00 pm**

Reservations are required.

November

Fee Free Day

Sunday November 11h

December

Youth Waterfowl Workshop and Hunt

December 14th & 15th Sign up early for a day of fun and learning at the Youth Waterfowl Workshop. Learn all you need to know about waterfowl hunting, safety and stay for the pizza and prizes! The following day will be the hunt; hunters age 15 or younger may hunt ducks, geese, coots, and mergansers as long as they are accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age. The accompanying adult cannot hunt during the weekend. **Keep an eye on our website, Facebook Page or call to the Visitor Center for more**

information about this event.

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER

Our **volunteer of the quarter** is Laraine Wright who has been a volunteer bluebird nest box monitor since 1990. Over the years the project has grown initially from a research study funded

by SIU's Wildlife Research Center to a perennial volunteer opportunity for Refuge volunteers.

The project now consists of 10 trails with 180 to 190 boxes presently being monitored. Laraine has served as the coordinator for the project the past 12 years. Laraine is an avid birder and has participated annually in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Spring Bird Count and the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count on the Refuge for a number of years. Since 1999, Laraine has participated in the US Geological Survey's National Breeding Bird survey in Williamson and White counties. She is a past board member of the Friends group and her expertise, willingness to participate and measured approach to discussions was always appreciated.

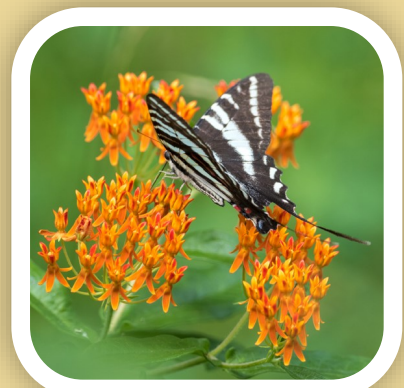
When asked what were her favorite things about the Refuge, she responded, "For one, the privilege of going into the closed area and enjoying the wildlife and the quiet, becoming familiar with certain creatures homes and haunts and watching them living large and unafraid." She also has enjoyed observing how well the land has been cared for the last 10-15 years with respect to promoting all wildlife species - the timing of mowing and haying to respect the nesting birds, the increase of forested areas and timber improvements and the installation of prairies and the attention to native species.



Photography on the Refuge

The changing of the seasons is already here. Driving through the Refuge you can see the yellowing leaves of the soybeans, the red leaves of the sumac, the arrival of the pelicans, the antlered bucks standing majestically in the fields, and the colors of the late summer/early fall flowers along the roadways. I have said before that it is hard to drive through the Refuge and NOT see someone with a camera. In the 6 months since the inception of the Crab Orchard Photography Group the group has made outings to several out-of-the-way locations in the Refuge and taken pictures of geese, ducks, herons, butterflies, dragonflies, wildflowers, landscapes and more. We have held programs to help newbies and novices learn more about photo composition, protecting your images and identification of animals. The most important thing is that we are having a lot of fun. I have had several people ask me in the past month if this is a group of people experienced with photography and I answer that it is a very eclectic group. We have individuals who are still learning how to use their camera and we have individuals who have had winning photos in past Crab Orchard Photo Contests. The key is that the group, regardless of the level of expertise of each individual, learns from each other. We learn about our cameras, lenses, and other equipment; we learn about places in the Refuge we may not have visited; and we learn strategies for creating the best images possible. If you have thought about coming to a meeting but have not, give it a try—it's free and no sign-up is required. The October meeting will be the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 8am while the November and December meetings will be on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 8am at the Refuge Visitor Center. Meetings usually conclude around 11am. See you there??

James Osborn



Grant Projects Update



As most of you know, our **Pollinator Habitat Project** was initiated in 2015 with a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), and though that grant term ended last Spring, the project continued to grow and expand with the help of our wonderful volunteers. Then in May 2018, we were awarded an Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) Community Stewardship grant which supports a 3 to 1 match of funds we raise locally to support the project. We then added restoration of Harmony Trail to our project plans. If we fully meet our goals, we will receive \$27,000 for support of Refuge habitat improvements under this grant. I am pleased to announce that many local donors have already contributed generously, and we have met about 75% of our match goal! The refuge staff have completed structural repair of the Harmony Trail levee and adjacent trail, and we are planning our approaches to invasive removal. Maintenance of our wildflower beds has been ongoing. Thank you to our garden volunteers who showed up Friday mornings rain or shine (or really hot shine) through most of the spring and summer. A major **fall cleanup of the gardens is tentatively planned for Friday and Saturday, October 12 and 13, 9AM-1**. Watch our Facebook page (Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge) and the Visitor Center Sign, for updates.

Now open!

The Friends have also submitted a new grant proposal to NFWF. If we receive a grant award, it will be used to fund a **Youth Archery and Outdoor Skills Education Project**, which will provide a summer day camp opportunity that will teach archery, nature photography, and use of binoculars. Awards will be announced in mid December.

Judy Groskind

News from the Woodland Book Store...

Visitor Center at Crab Orchard Refuge 148 S. Marion, IL

Sales are up from last year and with fall in the air we are adding to our stock with Crab Orchard hoodies and some new books featuring wildlife and plants found in southern Illinois. Tell your friends and co-workers the friends bookstore is the place to find that special gift for the person who has everything.

We have also reordered kids backpacks to be given away at events and to young people with purchases in the book store. Open from 10am to 3pm every day we are always looking for additional staffing at the refuge book store. Check with Rick Whitecotten for open times...

Creature Feature

Our Creature Feature spotlights the striking Red Admiral Butterfly, notable for its dark brown coloration and contrasting bright red-orange bands on the fore- and hind-wings. It is a member of the true brush-footed family of butterflies, along with its cousins, the Painted Ladies, the punctuations (I.e. the Comma and the Question Mark), the Pearl Crescents, the Checkerspots, the Buckeyes and the Mourning Cloaks.

The really interesting thing about many of the members of this group is the fact that fall adults migrate southward to Mexico and South Texas for the winter, similar to Monarchs. In addition, some Red Admirals overwinter locally either as hibernating adults or as a chrysalis. After mild winters, surviving Red Admirals can be seen on the wing as early as late March. However in the case of the Red Admiral and several others of this group, migrants from the south are largely responsible for repopulating the state each year.

The Red Admiral prefers moist woodland and clearing edges along stream banks or road edges. The caterpillars feed on nettles and the adults can be seen feeding on sap flows and rotting fruit as well as nectar. The males perch on ridge tops or buildings waiting for females and defend their territory by chasing other males away. They are crepuscular, staying active at dusk, well after many other butterflies have gone to roost. There are multiple generations each year and adults can be seen flying into early November.



Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Photos: Wikipedia by Harald Supfle

Text: Butterflies of Illinois by Jeffords, Post and Wiker

Butterfly Monitoring Project

As part of our focus on increasing pollinator habitat, several Friends volunteers attended a Spring training workshop presented by the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network. We studied Butterfly identification, and monitored 6 trail sites on the Refuge throughout the summer (IBMN will be coming back to do another workshop in the Spring, if you would like to become a monitor on any public land site in Southern Illinois). 8 volunteers submitted a total of 52 surveys, and the results were amazing. Crab Orchard Refuge had very large population numbers compared to other Illinois sites! Totals are listed below. *asterisk indicate a species count that was the highest recorded in the state for 2018.

Cloudless Sulphur*	1041
Eastern Tailed Blue*	620
Spicebush Swallowtail*	545
Pearl Crescent*	474
Common/Orange Sulphur	341
Buckeye*	195
Monarch	184
Little Yellow*	174
Zebra Swallowtail*	125
Silver Spotted Skipper	109
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail*	106
Red Spotted Purple*	85
Pipevine Swallowtail*	81
Gray Hairstreak*	66
Sleepy Orange*	62
Hackberry*	62
Red Admiral*	58
Silvery Checkerspot*	53
Black Swallowtail	35
Question Mark*	34
Great Spangled Fritillary	26
Viceroy	20
Least Skipper*	17
Little Wood Satyr	17
Variegated Fritillary*	14
Eastern Comma*	13
Northern Pearly-eye	11
Cabbage White	10
Gemmed Satyr*	9
Tawny Emperor*	4
Zebulon Skipper	3
Southern Cloudywing	2
Appalachian Brown	2
Sachem skipper	1
Snout	1
American Painted Lady	1
Dun Skipper	1
Peck's Skipper	1



Question Mark



Gray Hairstreak

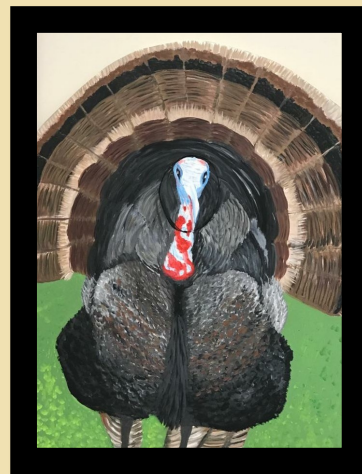


Northern Pearly-eye

And 269 butterflies and skippers that could not be identified to species

Volunteers Create Photo-op Paintings

One person with a great idea, and a willingness to organize a project, can really make a difference. Jo Anne Swafford, a long-time Refuge volunteer, thought some of the Refuge programs could use some big paintings of wildlife that could also be used as photo opportunities for kids. Jo Anne gathered some volunteer Friends willing to paint, met with Refuge staff to discuss the project, and asked the Friends Group to fund materials. Look what was produced! Great job, Jo Anne, thank you!



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