

jan/feb2017

friends

of the cache river watershed



JAN SUNDBERG

photo: Jan Sundberg

2016 Year in Review

To all of our members, thanks so much for your generous support this past year!

Together, here's what we accomplished in 2016:

- Published six issues of digital newsletter, including new feature, "Communities of the Cache"
- Maintained website and active Facebook page
- Published 2016 Calendar of Programs and Activities for the Cache River State Natural Area and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge
- With support from The Nature Conservancy, developed the Pollinator Interpretive Trail at the Cache River Wetlands Center, featuring 12 demonstration/research garden plots.
- With support from the Southern Illinois Audubon Society, created new signage for the Heron Pond Trail

For more information, see www.friendsofthecache.org
e-mail friendsofthecacheriver@gmail.com
or like "Friends of the Cache River Watershed" on FACEBOOK.



Board members Chelsea DeVivo and Lori Armstrong represented Friends of the Cache at the 2016 Southern Illinois Alternative Gift Fair in December.

- Sponsored successful signature event, 2016 Nature Fest
- Through Kids to the Cache program, provided field trip grants to Egyptian School in Tamms and Vienna Grade School.
- Helped the Village of Karnak create interpretive signage for historic sites
- Forged liaisons with area scientists to showcase Cache research
- With Shawnee Community College, cosponsored an intern for the Cache River Wetlands Center
- Provided support for an AmeriCorps intern at Cypress Creek NWR
- Hosted Cache Annual Meeting
- Hosted two members-only programs, the Annual Moonlight Paddle and a night hike for insect viewing
- Maintained Friends Store and developed new merchandise
- Produced quarterly "Refuge Report" publication for Cypress Creek
- Developed brochure to promote educational opportunities in the Cache to area teachers

With your help, let's strive to do even more in 2017, as we work to protect, enhance and share the unique landscape we all love – the Cache River Wetlands.



Photos: Michael Jeffords



What's Next

Movie Nights are back!

Bring the whole family to enjoy free nature movies at the Cache River Wetlands Center on the second Thursday of the month, January through May, 6-8pm. Light refreshments will be served and AmeriCorps members from Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge will lead a brief discussion after each film. Upcoming features are "NOVA: The Incredible Journey of the Butterflies" (January 12) and "Disney's Wings of Life" (February 9). Questions, call Cypress Creek at 618-634-2231.

Common Feeder Birds

Saturday, January 14, 1-2pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Learn tips for bird identification, types of feeds that attract different species,

Notes from My 3x5 Notebook by Susan Post

When we travel, whether local or foreign, we usually know what to expect—lions in Tanzania or penguins in the Falklands. Yet, our best experiences are the unexpected—the surprises, like the one that happened on January 12, 2016 as we hiked in the Cache. After a few warm days, the weather had turned cold and windy. A freeze had come through. We had seen and heard snow geese, winter wrens and greater white-fronted geese. A chilly barred owl posed for photos. We were happy with our observations and wondered what else we could see. Our final stop was a section of the Tunnel Hill State Trail near Heron Pond. Juncos cautiously

walked on the frozen swamp, while oak leaves danced and twirled like skaters across the ice. A polyphemus cocoon dangled like a windsock on a leafless tree—a protein prize for a hungry woodpecker. As we walked, I spied a lichen-colored gray treefrog lying on the trail. Thinking the poor thing must have frozen to death, I picked it up for a closer look. Revived by the warmth from my hands, it extended a leg and tried to hop away. I rushed to the edge of the trail and covered the frog with a blanket of leaves. A live frog in January—who would have thought such a thing possible? My first unexpected observation of 2016.

and how to report your observations as a citizen science project. Questions, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

Butterflies: How They Survive

Sunday, February 12, 1-2pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Learn the life cycles of various butterflies and how they survive winter. Questions, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

Calling All Citizen Scientists – Your Help Is Needed in February!

Frog & Toad Survey Orientation

Saturday, February 4, 1-3pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Learn how to conduct listening surveys of the frogs and toads of the Cache River Watershed for the Illinois Natural History Survey. All materials will be provided for surveys, conducted four times between February and June. Questions, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

20th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

Friday, February 17-
Monday, February 20

Count birds in your own backyard for at least 15 minutes on one or more days and submit your results at eBird.org or through GBBC. For more information, visit <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/get-started/>



Photo: Tony Gerard

Do you know who I am?

Answer on pg 4

Communities of the Cache: Belknap

Belknap, in southern Johnson County, was originally called Morgan's Mill. Laid out along the route of the Vincennes and Cairo Railroad in 1873, the town may have been named after William Belknap, Secretary of War under President Ulysses S. Grant. But, a more colorful legend involves sawmill owner George Morgan, who often sold logs to James Bell, floating them down the Cache River to the Bell Lumber Company near Ullin. Whenever the waters of the Cache were too low to float logs, Morgan would start up his mill and do sawing of his own. These slack periods for the Ullin mill became known as "Bell's naps."

By 1900, Belknap had become one of the county's busiest industrial centers, with a population of 800. Farmers



This 1918 photograph shows lumbermen floating logs along the Post Creek Cutoff, just south of Belknap. The cutoff, completed in 1916 as part of a series of drainage projects, divides the Upper and Lower Cache and has led to dramatic alterations in the flow of the river.

from miles around brought their grain to the flour mill built in 1877. The town's heyday ended when the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad bypassed Belknap and was routed through nearby Forman in 1910.

Today, Belknap is a key stop along the Tunnel Hill State Trail and home to the headquarters of the Cache River State Natural Area. The little town is

bordered on its north by the Heron Pond-Little Black Slough Nature Preserve, which has been designated a National Natural Landmark.

"Communities of the Cache" will highlight a different town in each issue. If you'd like to share historical photos and tidbits about your community, please contact newsletter editor Paula Havlik at phavlik@illinois.edu

News Flash: Nature Fest Moving to September

This year, our popular Nature Fest celebration, traditionally held in early May, will be moving to **Saturday, September 9**, so we can join forces with another community-wide event, Cache River Days. Festivities will be headquartered at the Ullin Ball Park, but will also include special displays at the Cache River Wetlands Center and guided tours at various points of interest throughout the Cache River

Wetlands. Plans are still in the early stages, but you can count on celebrating the Cache with wildlife exhibits, nature activities, live music, free canoe tours by Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge and more.

As one of the special activities planned, members of the **Shawnee Quilters Guild** are already hard at work on two wall hangings, each of which will include 12 wildflower blocks created primarily from photos taken by southern Illinois author and naturalist John Schwegman. The wall hangings will be displayed at the Wetlands Center in July and August, and then raffled off on September 9, with proceeds donated to Friends of the Cache educational programs.

We thank the Shawnee Quilters and look forward to seeing their beautiful handiwork!

Shawnee Quilter Mary Hackett is pictured below with some of the quilt squares in progress.

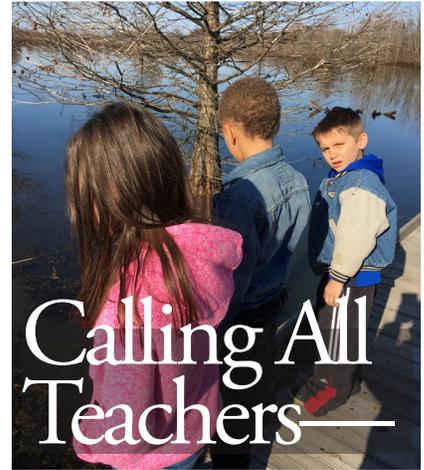


Cypress Creek Update



Congratulations to Jazmin Porche of Egyptian School in Tamms, first prize winner of the Cypress Creek Fall Photo Contest. Jazmin's photo (pictured above) was one of more than 60 entries from area schools. Jazmin will receive a \$50 Visa gift card, a t-shirt from Friends of the Cache and an 8x10 print of her winning entry. Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge and the Friends cosponsored this event and look forward to more entries during the Spring Photo Contest. Find out how to participate by contacting the Refuge office at 618-634-2231.

The 23rd annual Cypress Creek Christmas Bird Count on December 19 was a success, thanks to dedicated Refuge volunteers. Despite single digit temperatures, eighty-five species of birds were observed throughout the day. Cypress Creek was one of more than 500 sites to participate in the Christmas Bird Count, which has been sponsored by the National Audubon Society for more than 100 years. This early winter census is used to assess the health of bird populations across North America and is the longest-running database in ornithology. Thanks again to all the citizen scientists who braved the cold to support this national bird conservation effort!



Calling All Teachers—

Kids to the Cache grants are available for Spring 2017!

As part of our education and outreach mission, Friends of the Cache River Watershed offers \$250 grants to assist public schools in southern Illinois that are bringing student groups on field trips to the Cache River State Natural Area and/or Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Funds may be used to help cover costs of the field trip or related classroom expenses. The deadline to apply for Spring 2017 is **February 1**. For more information, contact Fran Wachter at franceswachter@gmail.com.

Become a Friend

- \$15 Individual
- \$25 Family
- New Member
- \$50 Contributing
- \$100 Supporting
- Current Member
- \$250 Sustaining
- \$1,000 Lifetime

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

To remain budget and environment-friendly, most communications are sent via e-mail.

Please let us know if you need to receive information via U.S. mail.

All contributions are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to Friends of the Cache River Watershed and mail to: 8885 State Rt. 37 South, Cypress, IL 62923.

Answer *from page two*

Do you know who I am?

I am **overcup oak** (*Quercus lyrata*), also known as swamp post oak, swamp white oak and white water oak, which should give you a good idea of where I live. I love the floodplain forests of the Cache, where my cup-shaped acorns provide a lot of food for wildlife. My cousin, **bur oak** (*Quercus macrocarpa*), has similar acorns, but hers are larger.