



Fall 2020 Newsletter



Cypress Creek Acquisition

Purchase of the Powless Tract:

The cooperation of many partners resulted in the purchase of approximately 70 acres along the Cache River Diversion in Alexander county. This property is enrolled in the Wetland Reserve Easement program managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The remaining residual value of the Powless easement was secured through a signed purchase agreement with Ducks Unlimited. The land is currently being surveyed with hopes of scheduling a closing in December/January. The property will be donated to the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge and provide



recreational access to the Cache and Mississippi Rivers. This purchase was made possible with funding assistance from Southern Illinois Audubon, Ducks Unlimited, and Friends of the Cache River Watershed.

Cypress Creek Christmas Bird Count is Monday, December 14. See page 6 for details.

What's Next:

Please plan to observe all COVID-19 restrictions in effect at the time of these events.

Nature Movie Topic: Foxes

Thursday, January 14, 2021, Two showings: 2-3 p.m. and 6-7 p.m. Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.

View a nature film on foxes.

Frog and Toad Survey Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, January 30, 2021, 1-3 p.m. Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.

Try a new venture by assisting in listening surveys of the frogs and toads of the Cache River watershed for the Illinois Natural History Survey! Volunteers are needed for the citizen science project.



Materials will be provided for the surveys conducted four times between February and June. Your choice of the designated routes. *Gray tree frog photo by William Parmley.*

Nature Movie Topic: Squirrels

Thursday, February 11, 2021, Two showings: 2-3 p.m. and 6-7 p.m. Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.

View a nature film on squirrels.

Hummingbirds-Winged Jewels

Saturday, February 27, 2021, 1-3 p.m. Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, Site Interpreter, 618-657-2064.

Get ready for the spring migration of hummingbirds with added knowledge of one of the smallest birds in North America and suggestions for preparing your yard or garden for their arrival.

The right habitat will supply these jewels of



the sky with enough food resources and nesting opportunities that they will make their home in your neighborhood. *Photo by William Parmley.*

Nature Movie Topic: Rabbits

Thursday, March 11, 2021, Two showings: 2-3 p.m. and 6-7 p.m. Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.

View a nature film on rabbits.

Guided Hike at Cedar Bluff

Sunday, March 27, 1-4 p.m. Ferne Clyffe State Park/Cedar Bluff. For information and directions, call 618-657-2064.

Enjoy a spring walk at Cedar Bluff Natural Area, an annex of Ferne Clyffe State Park, utilizing the Cedar Bluff Trail and Bork's Falls Trail. Be rewarded with 50-foot bluffs, overhangs, a shelter cave and dramatic views of the early spring landscape. Meet at parking lot for climbers next to Cedar Grove Church, south end of Happy Hollow Road, Johnson County.

Congratulations and Thank You to the 2020 Recipients of the Cache Champion Award: John and Paula Havlik.



From Tony Gerard, Friends of the Cache River Watershed Board Chair: *I am currently the longest serving member of the Friends of the Cache board of directors. It seems like the years have just flown by, and there have been so many changes.*

When I think back on the various folks that have served on the Friend's board, I remember so many folks willing to spend their time and efforts to help support our mission of promoting and protecting the Cache watershed and helping those resource

agencies charged with its management. Among those many good people, none stand out more than John and Paula Havlik.

As times changed and the public face of the Friends became increasingly important; it was the Havliks that brought us up to speed. From the stellar newsletter, to the membership outreach, to the great graphic designs of our logo and merchandise, they were the dynamic team that did the most! We have so much to thank them for that anything I can say will be inadequate.

On behalf of the Friends of the Cache, the Friend's Board, and myself personally, thank you for all you've done.

From Liz Jones, Cypress Creek NWR, Refuge Manager: *The Friends of the Cache River Watershed has had a long partnership with Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. From 1995, I have worked with many dedicated individuals that volunteered their time as Friends members. In 2013, John and Paula Havlik accepted board positions with the Friends of the Cache and brought with them so much talent. They are "shining stars" --always positive, always willing to help, always committed to outreach. Their contributions to the Friends included a skill of art and graphic design, a gift of writing and communication, and a drive to create professional media that inspires and creates enthusiasm for the Cache River Wetlands. They have created so many good ideas that have become the "Face of the Friends." These two, husband and wife, are a "team of talent" that have clearly demonstrated their love of the Cache and their joy to share it with others. How fortunate we were to work with them. On behalf of the Refuge, "Thank You" John and Paula.*

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge AmeriCorps Members 2020-2021:

We are happy to welcome AmeriCorps member, Hannah McCoy, to the Refuge team. Hannah graduated from Southern Illinois University in 2019 with a degree in Forestry; Hannah stated, "I love being in nature and working outdoors, so I am very excited to be working at Cypress Creek for the next year!" Hannah is involved with forest



Above: Hannah McCoy and Callie Mowery monitoring open flow on the Cache River.

Right: Hannah working on water gauges at Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve.



Who Am I?

My bright red berries make a small splash of color as days get more gloomy. Do you know who I am?

See page 6 to check your answer. *Photo by Tony Gerard.*



Notes from My 3x5 Notebook by Susan Post

In late August we were fortunate to spend time in one of our favorite places—the Cache, and we were able to stay at the University of Illinois’ Cache CREO (Center for Research, Education and Outreach). It has been said that some of the best treasures to be found are in your own backyard. This is especially true for us when we set about to discover the “night shift” by spotlighting in the backyard of the CREO. Like thieves with flashlights, we examine brush, brambles, trunks and tangles. Our cover is broken only when an owl announces our presence with a scream, followed by the question “Who cooks for you?”



During the first evening’s spotlighting we concentrate on the yard bald cypress trees. The first insect we find is a 2nd instar cypress sphinx. It is about as long as the cypress needles and so cryptic we will never be able to relocate it. While the sphinx



is a nice find, the next insect is a true treasure—a cypress katydid. Cypress katydids are green and silver, the silver resembling stardust captured from their lofty perches. I call over to Michael—“the katydid is laying eggs, using her blade-like ovipositor.” She is depositing eggs under cypress bark flaps and lays

sideways against the tree. While the katydid looks delicate, she has a death grip on the bark with her mandibles. Our diligent searching and flashlights will yield three more that evening.



When we return to Champaign we send our photos to our Orthopterist friend Sam Heads. He tells us we are probably the only people to witness this, let alone get photos, as these katydids are canopy dwellers and are rarely encountered. *Photos by Michael Jeffords.*

Cypress Creek CBC: The count to be held on December 14, 2020, will be the 28th year for this CBC. Anyone interested in participating should contact Jeff Hoover prior to that date via email (hoover_jeff@hotmail.com) or cell phone (217-417-8277). Participants can hike in bottomland forest all day or drive/hike in areas that are a mixture of agriculture, grassland, forest, and wetland habitats. We historically have had some of the highest species totals for Illinois, as well as high counts for several species. Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, there will be no meeting before or after the count this year. Areas to cover will be assigned prior to the count and results should be emailed to Jeff Hoover at the above email address as soon as is convenient. Access audubon.org for other COVID–19 restrictions and CBC details.

Answer to Who am I? from page 4: *I'm Possumhaw (Ilex decidua) - although I'm also known as Swamp Holly or Deciduous Holly. That's right- I'm a native southern Illinois Holly! But like most of my family I have separate male and female plants. Those beautiful red berries are only found on the girls!*

Editors' note: Possumhaw berries are a delight for birds to dine on during the fall and winter months. Some other great fall berry-producing natives include Eastern Wahoo, Pokeweed, Beautyberry bush, and Flowering Dogwood.

Because of COVID-19, we have not had outreach events. Therefore, please consider renewing your membership if you have not done so in the past few months. We always welcome new members as well.

Become a Friend of the Cache River Watershed

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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Supporting | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Lifetime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Member | |

Name _____ Date _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

To remain budget and environmentally friendly, most communications are by email.

Check here if you need to receive information by U. S. Mail.

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

OR go to our website: friendsofthecache.org and click "join" to become a friend online.