

sept/oct2018

friends

of the cache river watershed



Sweater Weather is here — time to explore autumn wonders in the Cache!



photo: Paula Havlik



Congratulations to Our 2018 Cache Champion!

Virginia Street of Simpson, Illinois has been recognized by Friends of the Cache River Watershed with the 2018 Cache Champion Award. The newly-created award was presented on August 30 at the Cache Annual Meeting in Carbondale by Friends' chair, Dr. Michael Jeffords, who said the intent was "to honor the efforts of those often-unsung heroes who love the Cache River Wetlands and put their passion into action as volunteers and advocates."

Street began her involvement in 2006 as a member of the Cache Corps of

Discovery. She went on to become an active volunteer at the Cache River Wetlands Center, where she has logged almost 900 hours as a greeter and general assistant. She regularly helps with special events, and also shares responsibility for creating and maintaining one of the twelve Pollinator Gardens at Egret Slough.

A retired medical microbiologist, Street is a proud graduate of the first cohort of Southern Illinois Master Naturalists in 2013, and has also shared her time and talents with other community organizations, such as Daughters of the American Revolution, Gilead Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Johnson County Ambulance Service.

Tony Gerard, pictured above with wife Berna and sons Vodra and Aldi, entertained attendees at the Cache Annual Meeting with a living history presentation in honor of the 200th anniversary of Illinois statehood.

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



What's Next

Fall Migration "Mini Sit"

Sunday, October 7, 9am-noon

Pre-register to obtain a group location

The objective of the "Mini Sit" (a spin-off of the international "Big Sit" on October 13-14) is to record as many bird species as we can in the Cache River State Natural Area from 9am to noon! Each team will sit in a 17-foot diameter circle in an assigned location, tallying all the birds they can identify by sight or sound. Advance registration is appreciated (both for meal headcount and assigning locations), but teams and individuals can also visit the Wetlands Center that morning to learn which access points are open for counts. Bring a lawn chair, binoculars or a scope, and snacks. The event will be followed by a potluck lunch, so feel free to bring a dish to share. To pre-register, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

Guided Hike at Cedar Bluff

Saturday, October 20, noon-2pm

Ferne Clyffe State Park, Cedar Bluff

Enjoy a fall hike at Cedar Bluff Natural Area, an annex of Ferne Clyffe State Park that features bluffs more than 50 feet tall, rocky overhangs, a shelter cave and dramatic views of southern Illinois' fall colors. The moderately difficult hike will be led by conservation education representative Kimberly Rohling. For directions to Cedar Bluff, call 618-657-2064.



Guided Van Tour

Friday, October 26, various times

Tunnel Hill State Trail Headquarters, Vienna

Senior citizens and those with limited mobility can explore a section of the Tunnel Hill State Trail. Four tours throughout the day. Limited seats; please register in advance by calling 618-657-2064.

Boo at the Slough

Sunday, October 28, 1-3:30pm

Cache River Wetlands Center

This program engages elementary to middle school age children on a guided trick-or-treat adventure through the Wetlands Center and along Egret Slough Trail. The 0.5-mile hike offers a chance for families to interact with misunderstood creatures of the swamp and to enjoy the magic of Halloween. Children are welcome to wear Halloween costumes. Questions, call 618-657-2064.

For a complete schedule of 2018 programs, visit

www.friendsofthecache.org

and click EVENTS & ACTIVITIES.

Fall deadline to apply for field trip grants is Sept 30.

Kids to the Cache, sponsored by Friends of the Cache River Watershed, provides \$250 grants in the spring and fall to help local schools cover transportation costs for field trips to the Cache River State Natural Area and Cypress Creek Wildlife Refuge. The deadline to apply for Fall 2018 grants is September 30. For information and application materials, please contact **Fran Wachter** at franceswachter@gmail.com.



KIDS TO THE CACHE

Anhingas in the Cache

By **Kim Rohling**, *Conservation Education Representative*
Cache River Wetlands Center

This summer, the shallow swamp waters of the Cache River State Natural Area and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge hosted some very special tourists – anhingas!

Anhingas are local to the southeastern United States and Mexico, as well as Central and South America. These birds may have visited the Cache due to post-breeding dispersal population shifts; although there are historic reports of anhingas breeding locally at Heron Pond, Lower Cache Access and Michael Wolff Wetlands. Anhingas look similar to double-crested



Photo: John Schwegman

cormorants, but are distinguished by their longer s-shaped necks, pointed bills and wider tails. Male birds are black with white scapulars, while females are brown with lighter heads and necks. The anhingas were spotted due

to the unique behavior of drying their feathers after fishing forays. Anhingas lack an uropygial gland to waterproof their plumage, so must sun dry their feathers to regain flight. Favorite perches included low-lying branches in the water, as well as the tops of bald cypress trees within the restored wetland off State Route 37 near the Wetlands Center. We hope they return next year!



The Cache River Autotour

Exploring the Cache this fall? Don't forget to pick up a free copy of the Cache River Auto Tour map and brochure, available at the Cache River Wetlands Center and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Office. Created by Friends of the Cache, the auto tour features a wealth of historical sites and natural wonders. You can also download a digital version at www.friendsofthecache.org -- just click on PROJECTS and scroll down to CACHE RIVER AUTO TOUR.

Photographers, here's a chance to enter your best nature photos

in a national contest! American Trails is looking for great photos featuring designated National Recreation Trails (NRTs), and will be giving awards in a number of categories. NRTs in southern Illinois include the Cache River State Natural Area's Lower Cache River/Buttonland Swamp Trail, Giant City's Red Cedar Trail, the Tunnel Hill State Trail and Shawnee National Forest's Rim Rock Trail and Inspiration Point Trail. Up to ten entries are allowed; submission deadline is December 15. For more information: www.americantrails.org/national-recreation-trails/photo-contest



Photo: Tony Gerard

Do you know who I am?

Answer on pg 6

Tradition says that this village,

nestled in a bluff along State Route 37 in Johnson County, was named by an early settler, Levi Casey, nostalgic for his original home in Buncombe County, North Carolina. By 1840, approximately 40 families were living in the settlement, and its first post office was established in 1871. When the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad was built through Johnson County in 1890, it passed within a mile of Buncombe. Residents hastily packed up and moved their entire town one mile west to the rail line. Buncombe's original location is marked by Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, pictured above.

A depot was soon built on the new site, and the town entered its boom years. The village was incorporated in 1916, and in 1920, Buncombe boasted the only graveled road in southern Illinois, built with gravel from a nearby quarry. The business district was laid out in a horseshoe shape with the Wig-Wam, a complex of stores (perhaps an early precursor of today's shopping malls?), across one end, roughly where Route 37 is located now. The Wig-Wam burned down in 1929, and the "hard road" was built soon after, connecting Buncombe to Goreville and Vienna and leading people to shop elsewhere. In the 1950s, the railroad discontinued its two stops a day and the depot was torn down. Today, the town's population is about 200 and its nearest industry is Southern Illinois Stone Company, located north of town on Highway 37.

"Communities of the Cache" will feature a different town in each issue. To submit information on your community, contact newsletter editor Paula Havlik at phavlik@illinois.edu



photo: Paula Havlik

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church marks Buncombe's original location.

Communities of the Cache: Buncombe

Notes from My 3x5 Notebook By Susan Post

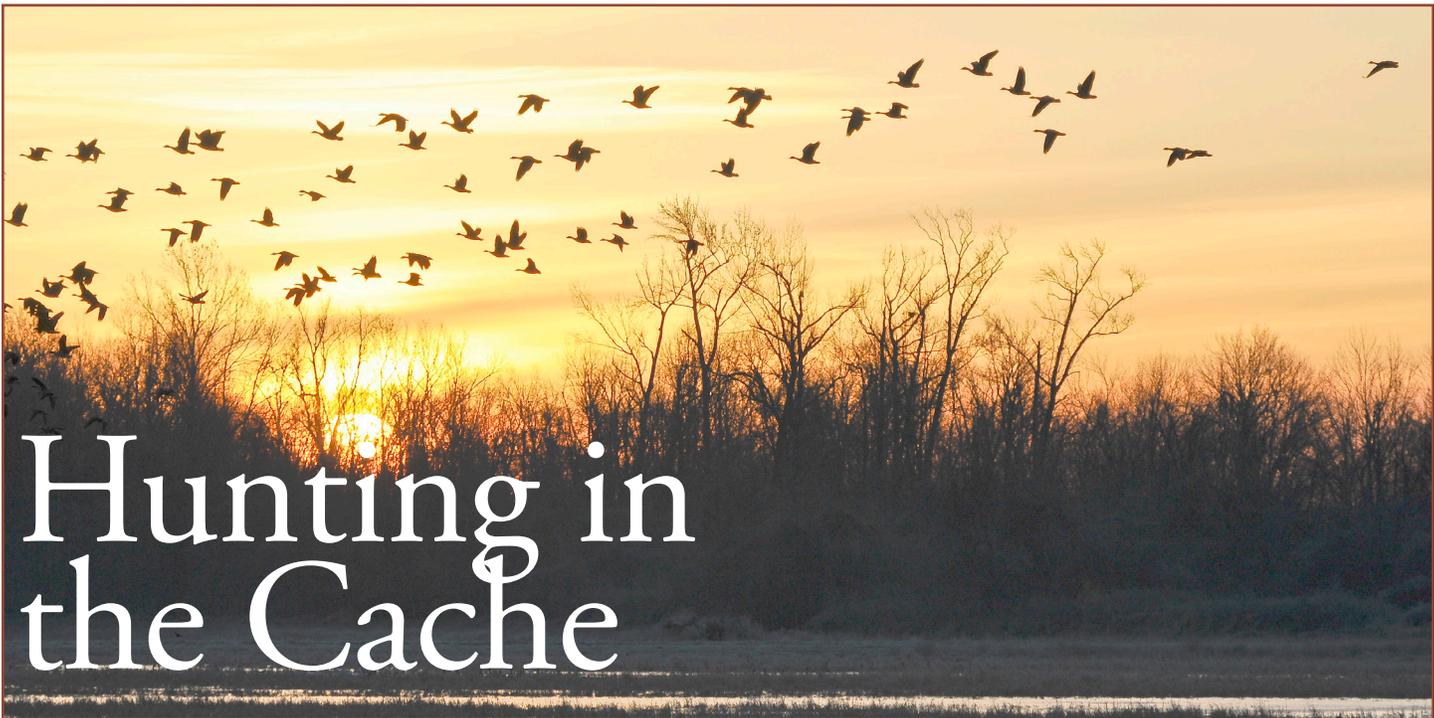
Michael and I head out to spotlight hike one autumn evening near the Wolff Wetlands, hoping to find walking sticks. Prior to our foray, we meet new wildlife biologist Cortez Rohr, who says the best place he ever saw walking sticks was in the crop of a wild turkey. Walking sticks are a favorite food of turkeys and their crops can contain a dozen or more. Walking sticks are curiosities that the average person will likely never see, due to their excellent camouflage (stick-like bodies) and habits. They feed at night and rest during the day, moving very slowly and often staying motionless for long periods of time.

photo: Michael Jeffords



Can you spot the male walking stick above?

During late summer, a female will drop her eggs onto the forest floor while moving in the treetops. In the early 1900s, when the walking stick was common, the sound of abundant eggs dropping was like the constant patter of rain. Eggs over-winter and hatch during spring. Walking sticks molt five times. Young nymphs are green, shifting to various shades of gray and brown as the foliage colors change and they move from the understory to the treetops. Walking stick nymphs can also do something no other immature insect can: regenerate lost limbs.



Hunting in the Cache

Crisp fall weather turns many folks' thoughts to hunting, and the Cache River Wetlands, with their diverse habitats, provide ample opportunities to hunt waterfowl, deer, turkey, squirrels, rabbits and other game species. Hunting in season is permitted on most public lands within the Cache River State Natural Area and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, with the exception of designated nature preserves. For more information about hunting permits and regulations, visit www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting or www.fws.gov/refuge/cypress_creek/

To pick up hunting maps, visit the Cache River Wetlands Center, on Illinois Highway 37 three miles south of Cypress, or call 618-657-2064. Site interpreter **Molie Oliver** is extremely knowledgeable and always happy to answer hunters' questions. The Wetlands Center is open Wednesday through Sunday, 9am to 4pm. To learn more about hunting on Cypress Creek NWR, call 618-634-2231 or stop by the Refuge Office on the Shawnee Community College campus at 137 Rustic Campus Drive, Ullin, Illinois. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30am to 4 pm.



The Pollinator Gardens at Egret Slough

Early fall is a great time to view the twelve pollinator gardens, located along the cement path behind the Cache River Wetlands Center. This Friends of Cache project, now in its third year, is developed and maintained by volunteers. The garden plots are surrounded by restored prairie, which is also in full glorious bloom and alive with pollinators this time of year.



Congratulations to the Southern Illinois Master Naturalists, who recently received an Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The group was recognized for their "Kids in the Woods" series, which provides monthly outdoor-themed, hands-on programs for families. Pictured below is the latest Master Naturalist class, which meets at the Cache River Wetlands Center for ten weekly sessions this fall. For more information on the Master Naturalist program, contact **Erin Medvecz** at 618-833-6363 or emedvecz@illinois.edu.



photos: Paula Havlik

Cypress Creek Update



Please welcome 2018 AmeriCorps members **Daniel Morales** and **Brett Casper** (pictured at left) to the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge team! Daniel is a recent graduate from SIU, with a bachelor's degree in zoology. Brett recently graduated from Shawnee Community College, and plans to continue working on a natural resources degree at Southeast Missouri State University. Since July, Brett and Daniel have been exploring parts of Cypress Creek NWR that are rarely visited, to document plant communities for the refuge's Forest Invasive Survey. Their data will be used to map invasive species

and provide the groundwork for an invasive management plan. The benefits of renovation and management work at Bellrose Reserve and other moist soil wetlands on the refuge are evident as fall migration approaches. The units are full of native moist soil plants with high nutritional value for waterfowl, including wild millets, smartweeds, bidens and others. Much needed rain has begun to fill the wetland units, along with the arrival of blue-winged teal, wood ducks and other early migrants.



photos: Cypress Creek NWR



The Friends would like to thank all who contributed to the planning of Nature Fest at Cache River Days 2018, especially **Liz Jones** and her Cypress Creek crew, and Friends board member **Kelsey Woodcock**, this year's Nature Fest coordinator. We were disappointed that, due to inclement weather, all of the Nature Fest activities and field trips planned for September 8 had to be cancelled. We are looking forward to Cache River Days 2019 and celebrating the event's 25th anniversary!

Photo: Tony Gerard

Become a Friend

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- \$25 Family
- New Member
- \$50 Contributing
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- Current Member
- \$250 Sustaining
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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

Do you know who I am?

Golden mouse (*Ochrotomys nuttalli*): I'm one of southern Illinois' native mouse species. I'm almost completely nocturnal, so you'll probably never see me during the day. I have a prehensile tail, which is not too common among mice! I usually make my nests above ground in shrubs and honeysuckle tangles, and that tail can help me hold on.