

july/aug2018

friends

of the cache river water

Aug30



Friends of  
the Cache River  
Watershed

## Field Notes



photo: Ozark Koala Ecosystems Services

Six Questions for Phil Borsdorf  
Natural Heritage Biologist,  
IDNR

**What is the focus of your work  
in the Cache?**

As a natural heritage biologist for IDNR's Division of Natural Heritage, I focus on management and restoration of natural communities. We inventory and monitor high-quality natural areas like the Cache, with the ultimate goal of restoring them, insofar as possible, to pre-settlement conditions.

**What is the biggest restoration challenge in the Cache right now?**

Certainly one of the biggest challenges is loss of deep water habitat. Over the years, human land use, erosion and changes in natural hydrology have dramatically increased the amount

Come one, come all, for complimentary dessert and beverages, door prizes and Cache merchandise for sale, updates on Friends activities, and presentation of the inaugural Cache Champions Award! We'll also be celebrating the 200th

anniversary of Illinois statehood with a special "living history" program on the early years of the Cache by Tony Gerard. Advance registration is requested; contact Paula Havlik at 217-649-4326 or [phavlik@illinois.edu](mailto:phavlik@illinois.edu).

*continued on page two*

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For more information, e-mail [friendsofthecacheriver@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthecacheriver@gmail.com) or like "Friends of the Cache River Watershed" on FACEBOOK.

# Field Notes *cont.*

of sediment flowing into the Cache, which builds up in the river and surrounding wetlands, reducing their depth. The greater Cache River system was once one of the country's most diverse fisheries, but species that require deeper water for feeding and/or reproduction cannot survive. Loss of deep water aquatic habitat affects not only fish, but insects, invertebrates and the birds and mammals that feed on them.

## **Why is buttonbush a particular problem?**

Historically, buttonbush, which thrives in shallow water, grew primarily around the edges of deeper water swamps. But, as the swamps have lost their depth, the buttonbush has expanded, clogging areas that were formerly open water. The plant's network of deep, tangled roots also traps more sediment, which just adds to the problem of deep-water habitat loss. Ordinarily, buttonbush is a beneficial native that provides food and nesting sites for a variety of wildlife, but this is a case of having too much of a good thing. We don't want to eradi-

cate the buttonbush – just push it back to where it historically occurred, on the fringes of deeper open-water habitat.

## **What is the Buttonbush Removal Project?**

This project, funded by a grant from the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF), aims to restore open water aquatic habitat in the Lower Cache by removal or thinning of invasive buttonbush in selected areas. The work is being done by Ozark Koala Ecosystem Services, employing an “ecologically gentle” method that involves no chemicals or heavy machinery. A four-person crew goes out in wet suits in a small boat, and uses loppers, saws, shears and other hand tools to perform the difficult task of sawing off the bushes at least two feet below the surface of the water. All woody debris is hauled away and later ground into mulch.

## **What are the results so far?**

Removal work began in October 2017 in Buttonland Swamp, one of the sites of worst infestation. This summer, the “Cache Crew” finished clearing the area around the State Champion Bald

Cypress, a popular destination for canoists and kayakers, who will definitely notice a difference, with more open access through areas that were previously clogged with bushes and roots. The crew is now moving out towards the river itself, including some progress in Horseshoe Channel. Our ultimate goals are to restore selected areas of open water and riparian aquatic habitat, including old channel meanders, ponds, sloughs and depressions.

## **Are other restoration projects underway in the Cache?**

Projects are ongoing at Cave Creek Glade Nature Preserve and Wildcat Bluff to restore glade and open-woodland communities. Those restorations include thinning of undesirable woody vegetation and prescribed burning. We are developing an invasive plant species control project at Boss Island, a wetland construction project is in the works off of Porterhouse Road, and we plan to restore more deep water habitat in the Lower Cache River. Meanwhile, you can read more about the buttonbush removal project and see pictures, including a spectacular overhead drone shot of the Lower Cache in its full autumn glory, at <http://www.ozarkkoalaeco.com/projects>



The Friends of Cache Annual Moonlight Paddle was a great event, led by Friends' board member Tony Gerard and Mark Denzer of White Crane Canoe. Participants enjoyed a gorgeous sunset, lots of night critters and the sight of the “Frog Moon” rising over Eagle Pond.



# What's Next

## Bats of Illinois

*Saturday, August 4, 6:30-8:30pm*  
*Cache River Wetlands Center*

USFWS biologist Karen Mangan returns with her popular presentation about the native bat species of Illinois. Indoor program from 6:30-7:30pm is followed by an optional field trip to experience bats' evening emergence. Questions, call 618-657-2064.

## Ducks, Ducks, Ducks

*Saturday, August 11, 1pm*  
*Cache River Wetlands Center*

District wildlife biologist Adam Phillips will discuss the habits and habitats of the great variety of waterfowl that might visit southern Illinois this winter. The program will also include a waterfowl banding demonstration. Questions, call 618-657-2064.

## Reptiles in the Neighborhood

*Saturday, August 24, 1-4pm*  
*Wetlands Center/Heron Pond Trail*

Join Tony Gerard for an up close and personal interaction with reptiles and amphibians native to southernmost Illinois. The one-hour indoor program concludes with an optional hike to look for cold-blooded creatures at Heron Pond. Questions, call 618-657-2064.

## Cache Annual Meeting

*Thursday, August 30, 6:30-8:30pm*  
*Carbondale Civic Center*  
*200 S. Illinois Avenue*

Snacks, door prizes, Cache merchandise, Friends' updates and a special living history presentation on the early days of the Cache by Tony Gerard. Please rsvp to Paula Havlik at [phavlik@illinois.edu](mailto:phavlik@illinois.edu) or call 217-649-4326.

## Nature Fest at Cache River Days

*Saturday, September 8, all day*  
*Ball Park, Ullin, IL*

Join us for a full day of festivities in the Village of Ullin! Celebrate the Cache with live wildlife exhibits, nature activities, arts and crafts, live music, food, guided hikes and more. Cypress Creek Wildlife Refuge will provide free canoe tours throughout the day. Limited space on tours; please register in advance by calling Cypress Creek at 618-634-2231.



photo: IDNR

**It's not too late** to sign up for IDNR's free youth catch-and-release fishing clinics! Two more clinics are scheduled for July 12 and 19, 9-11am at the Cache River Wetlands Center. Basic instructions will be presented for how to catch, handle and release fish; and rods, reels, bait and tackle are provided. Clinics are targeted towards children 16 and younger, but anyone interested in learning basic fishing techniques can attend. Parents and other adults are not required to have a fishing license to assist during this program. Please register in advance by calling 618-657-2064.

## Volunteers are needed

to assist with a wide range of fun activities throughout the day (8am-4pm) for Nature Fest at Cache River Days. Participants will receive a free Cache t-shirt and can use the event for service hours if desired. If you'd like to help out, please contact Kelsey Woodcock at [kelsey\\_woodcock@fws.gov](mailto:kelsey_woodcock@fws.gov) or call the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge office at 618-634-2231.

# Master Naturalists Return to the Cache!



The first Southern Illinois Master Naturalist course premiered in 2013 at the Cache River Wetlands Center, and we can't think of a better way for this outstanding program to celebrate its fifth anniversary than by returning to its

roots. This fall, the 12-week course will be held at the Cache River Wetlands Center, Thursdays from 8:45am to 4:15pm, September 6 through December 6 (no class on October 25 and November 22).

Learn basic principles about the plants, animals and ecosystems of Illinois, and how to more effectively participate in local environmental stewardship. Meet others who share your passion for the natural world, and become part of a growing contingent of Master Naturalist alumni who collectively volunteer hundreds of hours for worthy organizations throughout southern Illinois. The \$250 registration fee covers all 12 weeks of instruction plus materials and optional field excursions.

Applications are due **August 17**. For more information, please contact Erin Medvecz, University of Illinois Extension Educator, at 618-833-6363 or [emedvecz@illinois.edu](mailto:emedvecz@illinois.edu).

## Notes from My 3x5 Notebook

August 20, 2017  
By Susan Post

Prior to eclipse day in Southern Illinois, we check out familiar sites for insects. Imagine my surprise when I encounter a study in black and white and a “lifer” (for myself) insect. As far as insects go, it's huge – almost an inch and half long. The antennae are nearly as long as the insect. I am watching a **cottonwood borer** (*Plectrodera scalator*) amble up and down the furrowed bark of, appropriately, a large cottonwood. Michael reminisces about finding these showy insects in his Brookport backyard many years



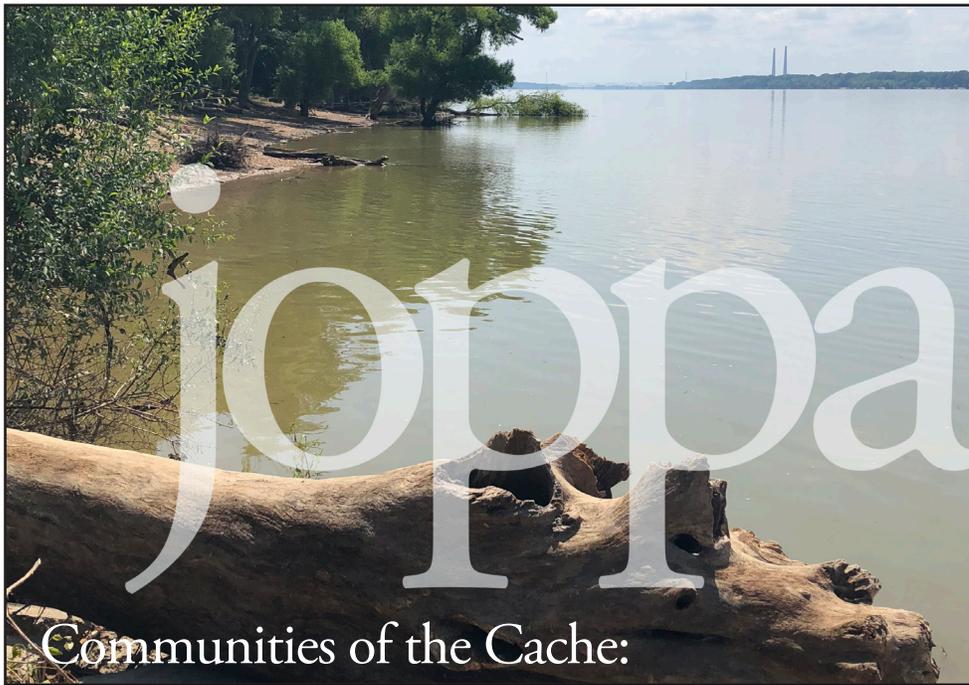
ago. He hadn't seen one in 52 years, yet here are several amongst the discarded cicada skins on the tree bark.

Cottonwood borers spend their lives on their namesake cottonwood or poplar. The female borer chews small holes at the base of a cottonwood and deposits her eggs. Young larvae will mine their way downward to feed on the wood of the tree's roots, taking up to two years to develop and pupate. The adult then chews its way out of the root and digs up to the surface.

*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](mailto:franceswachter@gmail.com).



The little river town of Joppa, located on State Route 5 in Massac County, about eight miles downstream of the Ohio River from Metropolis, was once one of the Ohio River's busiest ports. This site, originally known as Copeland's Landing, had welcomed river boats since the early nineteenth century. In the early 1870s, A. J. Kuykendall, a prominent landowner, and Jesse

Baccas, a sawmill operator, established the town and named it after an ancient port city in Israel. The Bible mentions Joppa (also called Jaffa) as the port of entry for the cedars of Lebanon used to build the first Temple of Jerusalem.

With the arrival of the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad in 1901, the village was incorporated and quickly

prospered as a river-to-rail transloading system. In the early twentieth century, Joppa was a key port for shipping railroad ties, and home to one of the country's largest tie dressing plants, the Republic Creosoting Company. The wooden ties, manufactured in Kentucky and Tennessee, would be brought down the Ohio on barges and unloaded at Joppa to be cured and treated with creosote. The plant burned down in 1944 and was not rebuilt. Joppa Power Station, a coal and natural gas plant owned by Electric Energy, Inc., opened in 1952 just west of town and is still in operation. Movie and television star Dick Powell spent his summers in Joppa as a youth, visiting his grandfather, Judge Frank C. Thompson.

*"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](mailto:phavlik@illinois.edu).*

photo: Tony Gerard



photo: Cypress Creek NWR

**Illinois residents can help provide more milkweeds for monarchs by signing up to purchase a license plate with a new monarch butterfly decal! All funds received will go to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to support roadside monarch habitat throughout our state. The Secretary of State will only design and print the monarch decal once 2,000 people request it. For more details on how to participate, see the Illinois Environmental Council's website at [www.ilenviro.org/monarch/](http://www.ilenviro.org/monarch/)**



**Do you know who I am?**

Answer on pg 6

photo: Cypress Creek NWR

Left to right, YCC crew members Noah Evans, Breanna Stout, Myra Valentine, Connor O'Malley and Callie Mowery



# Cypress Creek Update

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge welcomes the 2018 members of our Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). This crew, led by AmeriCorps member Kelsey Woodcock, provides vital assistance with maintenance, biological and management projects throughout the summer. Students represent four area high schools: Anna-Jonesboro, Cobden, Goreville and Meridian.

One of the crew's biggest projects (pictured) is the repair of a 100-foot section of boardwalk on the Limekiln Springs Trail. This path, off Cache Chapel

Road, offers 2.5 miles of trail that borders the Cache River and includes mature lowland/swamp forests. Along the way, two wooden boardwalks provide access to the mouth of Limekiln Slough and cold water springs that flow from limestone outcrops. The boardwalks have survived more than 20 years of storms and high water, and are currently receiving needed repairs. While work is in progress, hikers may still access the springs from the east trailhead off Long Reach Road.



photo: IDNR

The Friends are delighted to welcome Kimberly Rohling as the conservation education representative at the Cache River Wetland Center. Kim has degrees in oceanography (BS) and environmental studies (BA) from Eckerd College and is working on her Master's in zoology at Southern Illinois University. She is excited to offer interpretive programs and hikes in the Cache. Visit Kim at the Wetland Center to check out upcoming events.

## 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*

Do you know who I am?

**Waved light fly** (*Pyrgota undata*):

Back off or I'll sting you! Can't you see I'm a scary hornet?!? Well, okay – maybe I'm not a hornet, but I've gone to a lot of trouble to look like one. My halteres, the little white drumstick-like things behind my wings, give me away as a fly – but, you gotta look close!