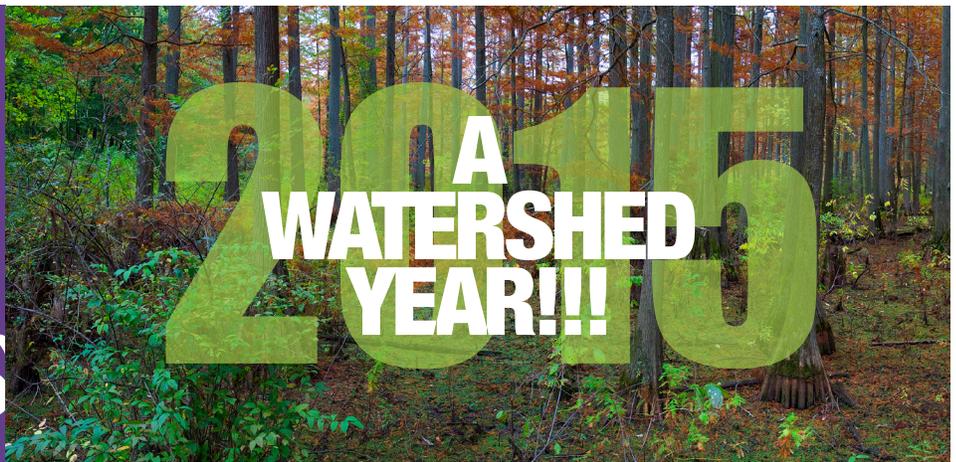


jan/feb
2016

friends



of the cache river watershed

Special Edition: Year in Review

Truly, 2015 was a “watershed” year for Friends of the Cache!

The year began with a complete restructuring of our board of directors and working committees, and ended with an amazing 62 percent increase in membership numbers. Heartfelt thanks to our 170 member households (229 individuals) – your generous support helped make a lot of good things possible.



Board members Jodie Delaney and Lorie Allen work the Friends’ booth at the Southern Illinois Alternative Gift Fair.



Many thanks to Dave Shaffer for building the new Friends Store kiosk at the Wetlands Center.

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

Our 2015 Accomplishments

- Expanded digital newsletter and published six issues
- Built and launched new website
- Kicked off Kids to the Cache program, providing field trip grants to two area schools, Lick Creek and Goreville
- Created, published and distributed Cache River Auto Tour map and brochure

continued on page four

“We’ve set the stage to move forward with a number of new projects and ideas for 2016. We look ahead to helping promote the Cache in its true light, as ‘a wetland of international importance.’”

—Dr. Michael Jeffords, board chair



What's Next

Movie Night

Thursday, January 14, 6-8pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Free nature movies will provide viewers of all ages with a chance to learn about some often-misunderstood critters.

Light refreshments served. This month's showing is *Owl Power*. Questions, call Cypress Creek at 618-634-2231.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Saturday, January 30, 1-2pm
Location: Cache River Wetlands Center

Master Naturalist Anne Parmley will provide tips for bird identification and details about the 19th annual "Great Backyard Bird Count," to be held

February 12-15. Questions, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

Movie Night

Thursday, February 4, 6-8pm
Cache River Wetlands Center.

This month's free film: *Is That Skunk?* Questions, call Cypress Creek at 618-634-2231.

Frog & Toad Survey Orientation

Saturday, February 6, 1-3pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

A call for volunteers to help survey the frogs and toads of the Cache River Watershed during their different breeding seasons. No special skills needed; families welcome to participate. Questions, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

In Search of Raptors

Saturday, February 6, 9-11am
Meet at Cache River Wetlands Center

Come along on a walk in search of hawks and eagles, led by Master Naturalist Dale Foll. Questions, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

The River and Man

Saturday, February 20, 1-2pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Watch the *Riverwork in Southern Illinois* documentary that traces the history of human interaction with the Cache and other regional rivers. Producer Kay Rippelmeyer-Tippy will be available for discussion. Questions, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.



Kids to the Cache, sponsored by Friends of the Cache River Watershed, provides \$250 grants 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 Spring 2016 grants is Monday, February 1. For information and application materials, contact Jodie Delaney at jodied87@gmail.com

Notes from My 3x5 Notebook

by Susan Post

Sleet, snow and ice can be magical when mingled with a swamp. At Heron Pond, look for ice skirts on the buttresses of cypress and ice spiders in the swamp – these designs are caused by fresh snow falling on melting ice. If there is a fresh snowfall, don't forget to bring along a mammal track book to see who has been here before you. To accent the whites and grays of winter, I am constantly looking for color – the

bright orange feet of mallard ducks and white fronted geese; the stark black crows in yellow-russet corn stubble; silvery gray cypress with orange scars against a cold blue sky.

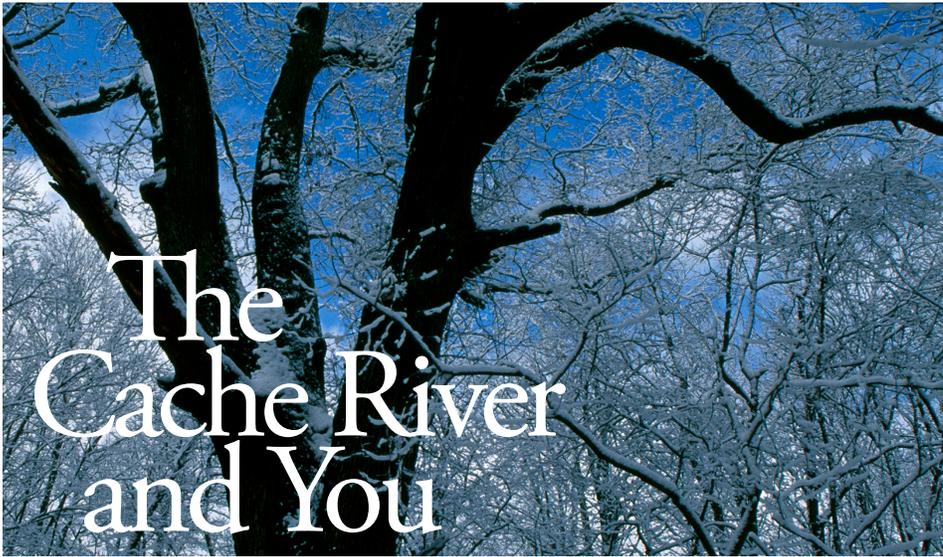
January and February are also good months to refresh your memory by listening to your favorite bird-call tapes. Spring migration will be here before you know it.



Photo: Tony Gerard, Wildcat Bluff

Do you know who I am?

Answer on pg 4



The Cache River and You

The Cache River Wetlands are a rare example of a cypress-tupelo swamp that experiences all four seasons, which makes the area a delight to visit all year long. This year, make a resolution to explore the Cache in winter, spring, summer and fall, and take advantage of the many free, hands-on programs offered by the Cache River State Natural Area and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Learn to spot eagles and hawks, and listen for owls under starry skies. Enjoy monthly nature movie nights, featuring some often-misunderstood critters. Get better acquainted with the Cache's reptiles and amphibians, and find out about efforts to reintroduce the magnificent alligator

snapping turtle. Get tips on landscaping with native plants and preparing your yard for hummingbirds. Find out what you can do to help the monarch and other butterflies thrive. And, learn more about the history of human interactions with the Cache, including the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in southernmost Illinois.

The complete guide to 2016 Programs and Activities was mailed to all current Friends of the Cache in early January. Additional copies are available at the Cache River Wetlands Center and the Cypress Creek Refuge Office, or visit www.friendsofthecache.org/events-activities



Kids in the Woods is a new program developed by area Master Naturalists for families with children aged six to ten. A wide variety of mostly outdoor activities has been planned to encourage participants to observe,

discover, appreciate and enjoy nature. Programs are scheduled for the second Saturday of each month at Giant City State Park, Makanda, Illinois, 1-3pm (except for the September program on owls, which is 6-8pm). Kids in the Woods is sponsored by University of Illinois Extension, Southern Illinois Master Naturalists and the Friends of Giant City State Park, assisted by a grant from the Environmental Education Association of Illinois. Space is limited: to reserve your place for any or all sessions, call 618-457-4863.

For more information, visit <http://dnr.state.il.us>



Calling all citizen scientists!

Your help is needed to monitor the status of frogs and toads in southern Illinois. No special experience is required, and volunteers of all ages, including family groups, are welcome to participate in the annual "Calling Frog and Toad Survey," sponsored by The Nature Conservancy's Volunteer Stewardship Network.

This year's training session is scheduled for **Saturday, February 6, 1-3pm** at the Cache River Wetlands Center. Site interpreter Molie Oliver will provide an overview of the nineteen anuran (frog and toad) species found in southernmost Illinois and tips for learning to recognize their mating calls. Volunteers will receive a CD of the different calls and other informational materials. Sound surveys are conducted after sunset, along assigned routes at four different times between late February and early June. The resulting data is used by scientists and land managers to help make informed decisions benefiting the amphibian population.

According to a volunteer from Vienna, Illinois, who has participated in the survey with her spouse since 2012: "We feel good about helping gather useful data; plus, getting out into the woods at night is just a cool experience! We've heard magnificent choruses of frogs and toads, and also had close encounters with barred owls, whip-poor-wills, coyotes and even a live armadillo!" For more information, contact Molie Oliver at the Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.

photo: Cypress Creek NWR

Cypress Creek Updates



In December, Tara Gracer (pictured at right) accepted the AmeriCorps position vacated by Matt McClanahan, who landed a full-time job with Iowa Conservation Districts. We congratulate Matt and welcome Tara, who is finishing her MS degree in geography from Southern Illinois University. In the coming months, Tara and fellow Americorps member Sara Stoneski will be focused on reforestation and habitat restoration work, school programs and special event planning.

A draft of the “Furbearer Management Plan, Environmental Assessment and Compatibility Determination for Trapping on Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge” was sent out for public review November 9 through December 7, 2015. Comments are being reviewed and addressed in the final document.

Thanks to the hard work of Ducks Unlimited staff, the Refuge has been

awarded \$53,000 as part of the Wildlife Conservation Society’s 2015 Climate Adaptation Fund. The grant supports bottomland hardwood conservation efforts in southern Illinois and southwestern Indiana. Funding will cover the purchase of seedlings to reforest 275 acres on the Refuge in 2016 and 2017.

Calling Volunteers

Refuge staff members plan to plant 165 acres with 70,000 native trees in 2016 and can always use help. Here’s your chance to enjoy lots of fresh air while riding a tree planter and placing seedlings in the ground. Work usually begins in February and continues through April, as weather permits. For more details on how to get involved with this reforestation effort, contact the Refuge at 618-634-2231.



Kudos to Virginia Street of Simpson, Illinois (left) for completing 700 volunteer hours at the Cache River Wetlands Center! More volunteers are always needed at the center; if interested, contact site interpreter Molie Oliver (right) at 618-657-2064.

2015 accomplishments continued

- Obtained a grant from The Nature Conservancy to establish a Pollinator Interpretive Trail at the Cache River Wetlands Center
- Forged liaisons with area scientists to showcase Cache research
- With Shawnee Community College, co-sponsored intern to assist Molie Oliver at the Wetlands Center
- With Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, sponsored successful signature event, Nature Fest
- Hosted the Friends’ first annual meeting in recent years
- Provided other special programs, including Annual Moonlight Paddle and “Focus on the Cache,” a photography walk to Heron Pond

Become a Friend

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <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"/> \$1,000 Lifetime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Member | |

Name _____		Date _____
Address _____		
City _____	State _____	ZIP _____
Phone _____	Email _____	

To remain budget and environment-friendly, all 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?

Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina*), juvenile, only two or three years old. It takes box turtles several years to attain their bright colors.