

mar/apr2017

Spring flowers along Limekiln Springs Trail

friends

of the cache river watershed

photo: Cypress Creek NWR

Spring has come to the Cache, along with many opportunities to explore, enjoy and learn from this special landscape. The Cache River Wetlands State Natural Area and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge are offering more free, hands-on programs than ever before, including wildflower and birding hikes, van tours, an owl prowl and a canoe tour along the Old Cache Channel. See page two for more details on what's coming up, and plan to join us this spring as we explore the wonderful world of the Cache!

The Cache's wetlands and woodlands also serve as a "living laboratory" for environmental studies. Cypress Creek staff and AmeriCorps students are now taking reservations for swamp ecology canoe tours, which are free for educational groups in grades six and up. This unforgettable voyage highlights ancient cypress trees and the importance of wetlands to plants, animals and people. For more information, call the Refuge at 618-634-2231.

The Cache River Wetlands Center also offers a wealth of free activities and tools for local educators, including popular programs like the Migration

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



photo: Cypress Creek NWR

Challenge, the Eco Fitness Trail, the Wetlands Center Scavenger Hunt and, in late summer and fall, the Butterfly Round-up. Education trunks that include lesson plans and materials for

teaching about bats, owls, snakes, mammals, wetland birds, insects and other related topics are also available for use in the classroom or in the field. For more information, contact Mollie Oliver at 618-657-2064.



A growing body of research indicates that time spent in nature is essential for children's healthy emotional and physical development, and can also boost creativity, health and wellness in adults. So, what are you waiting for? Grab your family and friends, put on those hiking boots and hit the trail!



The Shawnee Quilters Guild has completed the first of two beautiful wall hangings, created primarily from wildflower photos taken by author and naturalist John Schwegman. The hangings will be displayed at the Wetlands Center this summer and raffled off on September 9 at Cache River Days, so mark your calendar now!

Photo: Maurice Samuels



What's Next

Birding the Bottoms

Tuesday, March 14, 6-7pm

Look for woodpeckers, raptors and migrating waterfowl in Hickory Bottoms. Questions, call 618-634-2231.

Birding at Grand Bahama Island

Saturday, March 18, 1-2pm

Slideshow on birds of the West Indies, by John and Martha Schwegman. Questions, call 618-657-2064.

Fantastic (Reptilian) Beasts and Where to Find Them

Saturday, March 25, 10-11:30am

Learn to care for snakes, lizards and turtles as pets. Questions, call 618-657-2064.

Calling All Owls

Friday, April 7, 7-10pm

Learn all about the owls of southern Illinois, and then head outside to listen for their eerie calls. Questions, call 618-657-2064.

Limekiln Springs Bird Hike

Tuesday, April 11, 6-7pm

Binoculars recommended to search for migrating warblers. Questions, call 618-634-2231.

Guided Van Tour

Thursday, April 13

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

Movie Night

Thursday, April 13, 6-8pm

Light refreshments and free showing of the film *Hummingbirds: Jewels of the Air*. Questions, call 618-634-2231.

Kids in the Woods:

Looking Up, Looking Down

Saturday, April 15, 1-3pm

Program series by Southern Illinois Master Naturalists for families with children ages 5-10. Please register in advance by calling 618-657-2064.

Limekiln Springs Wildflower Hike

Thursday, April 20, 6-7pm

Enjoy gorgeous displays of native spring wildflowers. Questions, call 618-634-2231.

Wildflower Hike at Heron Pond

Saturday, April 22, 9-11am

Guided hike led by John and Martha Schwegman. Questions, call 618-657-2064.

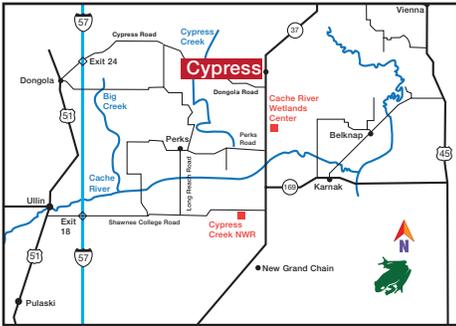
Abandoned Channel Adventure

Saturday, April 29, 9am-12pm

Free canoe tour along the Old Cache Channel. Limited space, please register in advance by calling 618-634-2231.

For a complete schedule of 2017 programs, visit www.friendsofthecache.org and click **EVENTS & ACTIVITIES**.

Communities of the Cache: Cypress



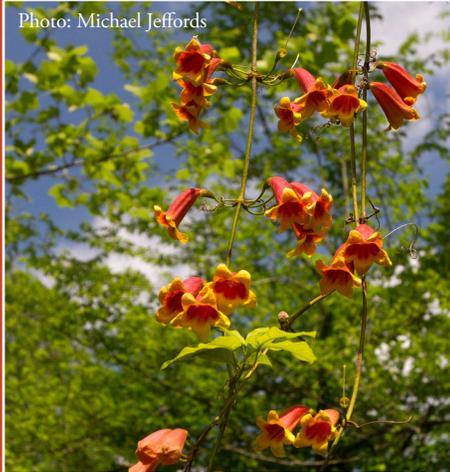
Located on Route 37, about two miles north of the Cache River Wetlands Center, Cypress was once a bustling railroad town. The

community began to develop around 1898 and was chartered in 1905. One of the fastest-growing towns in Johnson County at that time, Cypress had a thriving business district and a population of 800 by 1925. At one point, a concerted effort was made to move the county seat to Cypress, with enthusiastic citizens staging parades and other civic projects. Like many neighboring towns, Cypress was hit hard by the Depression, and as trucking began to replace the railroads, businesses gradually closed. Today, the hillside village is primarily residential, with a population of 250.

Just south of town is a rounded cliff formation called Glass Hill, also known as Round Bluff or Cypress Citadel, which supports a rich diversity of native wildflowers, grasses and ferns. Main Brothers Box and Lumber

Company once owned Glass Hill, intending to mine its silicon deposits for glass jars before the Mains decided wooden boxes were a more profitable product. However, the bluff's human history goes back to Indians of the late Woodland Period, who occupied this site from 600 to 900 AD. Known to anthropologists as the Lewis People, they used bows and arrows, made fine pottery and grew wild plants in gardens. According to a botanical survey conducted by John and Martha Schwegman in 1998, several of the native plants still growing on Glass Hill may have been cultivated by the Lewis People. These include sumpweed (*Iva an-nua*), rich grass (*Diarrhena americana*) and yellow leafcup (*Polymnia uvedalia*). Today, Glass Hill is part of the Cache River Wetlands State Natural Area, and can be accessed from Dongola Road.

Photo: Michael Jeffords



Notes from My 3x5 Notebook by Susan Post

April 20, 2016

While my visits to the Cache always include Heron Pond, in the spring, I take time to investigate Cave Creek Glade Nature Preserve. One of the best limestone glades in Illinois, the preserve is located on a steep hillside along Route 45, about four miles south of Vienna.

Slow down as you cross over Cave Creek and look for the almost-hidden driveway at the end of the bridge, which leads to a small parking lot.

In April, the lower half of the hillside glade is accented with blue star, wild hyacinth and wild geranium. Climbing higher gives you a vulture's-eye view of the surrounding area. Back down and at your vehicle, look in the small creek for blooming featherfoil. This member of the primrose family is present under the water during winter and floats to the surface in spring. If the creek floods, the plants will be washed away.

From Cave Creek Glade, I continue to Heron Pond. As I cross Dutchman's Creek on the Heron Pond trail, I look up. The crossvine is blooming – large yellow-orange tubular flowers. Two weeks ago, the forest was a riot of trout lily and dentaria (toothwort); now it is a carpet of unidentifiable green leaves punctuated with the final blooms of phlox and Jacob's ladder.



Photo: Tony Gerard

Do you know who I am?

Answer on pg 4



Teachers: Next chance to apply for field trip grants is Sept 1. Questions: franceswachter@gmail.com

Cypress Creek Update



photo: Cypress Creek NWR

Reforestation efforts are underway at Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. The goal to plant 197 acres should be accomplished this month, thanks to assistance from AmeriCorps members, student interns and Refuge volunteers.

We are pleased to have interns from Shawnee Community College and Southeast Missouri State. Josh Aspen, Alicia Coon and Mike Simmons are working with us through the Spring 2017 semester. Josh is finishing his BS in wildlife conservation biology at Southeast Missouri State. Alicia and Mike attend Shawnee Community College and share an interest in fish and wildlife management and ag administration. Their enthusiasm for planting trees, removing beaver dams and conducting frog and toad surveys

has been greatly appreciated! To learn more about internship opportunities, please call the Refuge at 618-634-2231.

Spring migrating waterfowl are passing through and taking advantage of the early drawdowns in some of the units at the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve. Numerous snow geese and white fronted geese were using Bellrose and the surrounding fields throughout January and early February. Large flocks of northern pintail and green-winged teal have been common in the area as well. Snipe and killdeer were also spotted in late February, using the exposed mudflats created in the units being drawn down.

Stay tuned for more information about new programs and tours being planned for Cache River Days, and be sure to mark your calendar for September 9, 2017!



ILLINOIS INDIGENOUS PLANTS SYMPOSIUM

Be sure to stop by the Friends of the Cache

table at the 2017 Indigenous Plants Symposium on April 1. Jim Wilker, co-author of "Butterflies of Illinois," is the keynote speaker for the all-day event, which takes place at John A. Logan College in Carterville, Building H/Workforce Development. On the grounds outside, Green Earth and the Illinois Native Plant Society will sponsor a native plant sale (8am-2pm) featuring high quality native perennial wildflowers, ferns, grasses and shrubs from Southernwood Gardens, a local grower in Alto Pass.

To register for the symposium, visit www.ill-inps.org/2017symposium

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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 *from page two*

Do you know who I am?

Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicat*): you may have hunted me as a kid at summer camp, but I'll bet you never caught me! I don't live in the Cache watershed, but I usually spend a couple of weeks resting up there as I migrate through in spring and fall. I like to forage along the edge of flooded fields – along Shawnee College Road is a great area to spot me.