

may/june2017

friends



photo: Cypress Creek NWR

of the cache river watershed



The AmeriCorps National Service Program employs more than 80,000 young Americans every year, partnering with nonprofits, schools, public agencies and community and faith-based groups to place young adults in intensive service positions. Participants learn valuable work skills and earn money for college, while providing vital support to communities throughout the United States.

Over the past 20 years, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge has been a partnership site for AmeriCorps, and reaped the benefits of talented and energetic young people who provide cost-effective service and essential staff resources for Refuge programs. Assistant Refuge Manager Liz Jones says AmeriCorps members play an indispensable role at Cypress Creek,

leading “Swamp Ecology” field trips and environmental stewardship projects for local schools, giving educational presentations and coordinating public outreach events. They also gain hands-on experience in field work, assisting Refuge staff with biological inventories and habitat restoration.

The newest member of this year’s AmeriCorps team, Krystal Gandrimas, appreciates the opportunity to gain life and leadership skills, while increasing her understanding of biological conservation and land management. “I joined AmeriCorps to become an advocate for wildlife and the environment,” Krystal

says. “At Cypress Creek, I have planted thousands of trees in a reforestation project and have educated many school groups on the importance of wetlands. The sense of accomplishment that is gained after each task makes me believe I have made a difference in my community.”

As the U.S. Congress makes decisions about budget priorities in the coming weeks and months, please consider voicing your support for AmeriCorps to your elected representatives. To learn more about the program’s positive impacts nationwide, visit www.nationalservice.gov/ameriCorps

Annual Moonlight Paddle!



Summer is coming to the Cache, and it’s time for the ever-popular Annual Moonlight Paddle! Join Mike Brown, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Manager, for this fascinating moonlight canoe tour of Buttonland Swamp. Listen for green tree frogs, bird-voiced tree frogs and whip-poor-wills as you glide by ancient cypress trees under the light of the full moon. Participants will meet at Lower Cache Access (south on 37 past the Wetlands Center, then west on Perks

Road) at 7:30pm on **Friday, June 9** for an unforgettable experience. Due to limited seating, advance registration is required: to reserve your space, call Cypress Creek at 618-634-2231. Kayakers are also welcome to bring their own craft and join the group.

The Annual Moonlight Paddle is a members-only event for Friends of the Cache.

To join or renew your membership, please use the mail-in form in this newsletter. Or, you can join quickly and conveniently online: visit www.friendsofthecache.org and click JOIN.

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



What's Next

Heron Pond Birding Hike

Tuesday, May 9, 6-8:30pm
Location: Heron Pond Trail

Look for migratory birds and listen to the evening sounds of the swamp. Questions, call 618-634-2231.

Photo: Chris Benda



Japanese chaff flower

Japanese chaff flower, *Achyranthes japonica*, is an exotic plant that is rapidly spreading through the woodlands of southern Illinois. Learn how to recognize, control and manage this aggressive invader at a free workshop and field tour on **Saturday, June 22**, 1-3:30pm at the Cache River Wetlands Center. The workshop is organized by

Movie Night

Thursday, May 11, 6-8pm
Location: Cache River Wetlands Center

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

Nature Notecards

Saturday, May 27, 10am-12pm
Location: Cache River Wetlands Center

Learn to create notecards and envelopes using flowers and other natural items. Materials provided. **Please register in advance** by calling 618-657-2064.

Annual Moonlight Paddle

Saturday, June 9, 7:30-10pm
Location: Lower Cache Access

A magical members-only moonlight canoe tour through Buttonland Swamp. **Limited seats, advance registration required:** call 618-657-2231.

The Great American Eclipse

Saturday, June 10, 10-11:30am
Location: Cache River Wetlands Center

Learn why the total solar eclipse of August 21, 2017 is unique, what to expect and how to safely view this exciting phenomenon. Questions, call 618-657-2064.

Kids in the Woods: Water, Water Everywhere

Saturday, June 24, 1-3pm
Location: Cache River Wetlands Center

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

Please note that advance registration is requested for some events. For a complete schedule of 2017 programs, visit www.friendsofthecache.org and click EVENTS & ACTIVITIES.



Photo: Tony Gerard

Do you know who I am?

Answer on pg 4

Photo: Paula Havlik



Communities of the Cache: Grand Chain

Grand Chain's old jailhouse has been refurbished and is now open as a tourist attraction.

Grand Chain, a village of 250 located just north of the Ohio River in Pulaski County, is one of Illinois' oldest communities. The settlement began its life as Grand Chain Landing, a collection of huts and wharf boats along the riverfront. In the late 1700s, river men referred to the little outpost in the wilderness as "The Nation." As more settlers arrived, a proper town sprang up about three miles inland, around the old Tucker home, which was used as a polling place. Grand Chain prospered in this location until 1872, when leading businessmen decided that the town should be moved closer to the new Cairo and Vincennes railroad, half a mile away. Two rival groups submitted plats, for "Grand Chain" and "New Grand Chain." The latter, at first the underdog, began to gain ground. By 1875, the post office was officially moved to (new) Grand Chain, and (old) Grand Chain faded away.

Today, the town's official name is New Grand Chain, but local residents prefer to call it, simply, Grand Chain. The name is derived from a treacherous, six-mile chain of limestone rocks that once stretched across the Ohio River, making navigation hazardous. In the late 1920s, the U.S. government built Dam 53, and the infamous rocks are now covered by water.

"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.



Photo: Susan Post

Notes from My 3x5 Notebook by Susan Post

While volunteering as a parking attendant for Nature Fest on May 7, 2016, I am amazed by how much I see and hear, just standing at the front gate of the Cache River Wetlands Center. It's the height of bird migration and nesting in Illinois, and I am surrounded by the calls of common yellowthroat, prothonotary and northern parula

warblers, red-winged blackbirds, blue-gray gnatcatchers, mourning doves and a lone Bell's vireo. Cricket frogs sing and tree swallows flit by, hopefully eating the pesky blackflies buzzing around my head. A trio of little green herons – the first I've seen in awhile – squawks overhead. In the distance, I spot an osprey, less common here than bald eagles. The osprey circles over the small pond to my left and does a few fake dives before SPLASH, a fish grasped in its talons, leaving to eat its meal nearby. A hidden catbird mews in the thicket across the road and a yellow-billed cuckoo pops into view – the perfect photo opportunity, if only I had a camera. Just as my shift is ending, a small flock of dark birds with white rumps flies by—a favorite, bobolinks! Who knew that standing at the end of a road I had entered and exited many times could be so exciting? My eyes were open to the magic of discovery that can happen anywhere your curiosity takes you.



A special night hike on Friday and a host of free activities and tours on Saturday will highlight reptiles and amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and plants found in the Cache River Wetlands.

Don't miss Cache River Days, scheduled for **September 7-10, 2017** in Ullin, Illinois. Arts and crafts, live music, food and more family fun are planned throughout the weekend. Wildlife of the Cache will be featured on Friday evening and Saturday. A special night hike on Friday and a host of free activities and tours on Saturday will highlight reptiles

and amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and plants found in the Cache River Wetlands. For more information about the weekend's events, contact Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at 618-634-2231, or event coordinators Mike or Millie DeWitt at 618-845-3445. For information on accommodations and other area attractions, contact Southernmost Illinois Tourism at 1-800-248-4373.



Save the Date – September 30, 2017

The Friends of the Cache River Watershed will host the first ever multi-sport adventure race in the Cache River Wetlands! The **Wetland Warrior Challenge** is designed for participants who have the vigor and courage to experience the Cache through orienteering/hiking, canoeing, biking and surprise challenges. Using only a map and compass, two-person teams will navigate through a series of checkpoints across several different landscapes. The event will begin at the Cache River Wetlands Center and include trails within the Cache River State Natural Area and the Tunnel Hill State Bike Trail. Registration details will be published soon; for more information, contact Greg Nejmanowski at 618-634-2231.

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 _____

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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 *from page two*

Do you know who I am?

Indian Pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*), also known as ghost plant or corpse plant. Unlike most plants, I'm a parasite. I live underground and parasitize fungi that form mutualistic relationships with trees. I'm usually only visible when I bloom, early summer to early autumn, often after a rainfall.