



FRIENDS OF SQUAW CREEK REPORTER Mound City, Missouri

Spring 2009

Volume 10 Number 1

SQUAW CREEK CALENDAR:

- February 21, 2009 Annual Meeting
- February 28, March 21, April 4, May 2
Refuge Habitat Workdays
- March 14 - May 2 Refuge Office Open on
Weekends
- April 25 Volunteer Workday

VISITOR OFFICE COMMITTEE

Vic Miles 816-444-2459
Amanda Griffin 660-572-0267

REFUGE WETLAND COMMITTEE

Vic Miles 816-444-2459

EAGLE DAYS COMMITTEE

Amanda Griffin 660-572-0267

PLEASE give the above committee
chairpersons a call to assist them.

Visit our website at www.squawcreek.org for
recent bird surveys, events, etc.

Items for the newsletter must be sent to George
W. (Bill) Scheil at 7311 Ditzler, Raytown, MO
64133 or to him at gwsch@juno.com. The
deadline for the next issue will be May 15.

ANNUAL MEETING

The 2009 Friends Annual Meeting has been re-scheduled to February 21st at 1 pm at Refuge headquarters. Refreshments will be served. All members are welcome to attend. There will be a Board meeting following the Annual Meeting.

Volunteers Needed

The spectacle of Spring migration is getting underway, with thousands of birds stopping at Squaw Creek NWR for a few days or weeks as they head North to their summer breeding grounds. That means, of course, that thousands of visitors will flock to the Refuge to enjoy the spring weather and the birds. So we need your help:

Visitors' Center: Teams of two or more volunteers staff the Center from 10 AM until 4 PM on weekends from March 14th through May 3rd. This entails greeting visitors and telling them about the center and the refuge. Volunteers also sell gift shop items such as nature related books, t-shirts, caps and toys. We try to schedule experienced volunteers with all newcomers, so individuals don't need to be afraid to try this fun and rewarding experience. To volunteer, contact Vic Miles at (816) 444-2459 or vicmiles@juno.com.

Refuge Workday: We get together to spiff up the refuge for the coming season at 9 AM on April 25th. No experience needed and you don't have to call ahead. Just show up in clothes appropriate for

a little “yard” work. There will be jobs to fit everyone’s talents and physical ability. Lunch is provided, and you can leave after lunch or go back out until 4 PM. You have fun, meet lots of neat people and do a real service for the refuge.

Habitat Restoration Workdays: Pretty much the same description as Refuge Workday, except you show up on February 28, March 21, April 4 or May 2, from 9 AM to 4 PM to work strictly on habitat restoration.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR VISIT

Region 3 Regional Director Robyn Thorson visited Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge on Monday, October 6. Squaw Creek was one of the few refuges she had never been able to visit during her tenure as Region 3 Director but made it a point to visit before moving to her new assignment. She was given a grand tour of the refuge and treated to a home cooked lunch at the refuge headquarters as well as given a special good bye-good luck cake. We hope that new Regional Director Thomas Melius will be able to visit Squaw Creek in the near future.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The refuge teamed up with the Mound City Library to strengthen the Mound City community and educate students on both books and ecology. This six week program began September 18 and ended on October 23. Children from the Mound City School were bused after school to the refuge at 3:30 every Thursday. The classes were developed and taught by Temporary Biological Technician (and Friends member) Amanda Griffin.

Programs titled Monarch Mayhem, Croaken’at the Creek, Habitat Hike, Forest of Colors, Weather Watchers and Bump in the Night were taught. This included learning about the migration of monarch butterflies and tagging a total of 496 monarchs, collecting and identifying insects and frogs, discovering the layers of the forest, learning about trees, identifying clouds and listening for nocturnal animals. A total of 269 kids and 20 adults were present during the 6 sessions.

VOLUNTEERING AT A FISH HATCHERY

Refuge Manager Ronald Bell and Wildlife Refuge Operations Specialist Corey Kudrna spent the week of October 20 assisting the staff at the Iron River National Fish Hatchery, Wisconsin, spawning lake and coaster brook trout. It provided an excellent opportunity to experience and to appreciate what other Service employees do as well as learn more about what a fish hatchery does.

FALL INTERNS

Two interns from Missouri Western State University developed and presented programs to visitors at Squaw Creek from October 4 to November 30. The students developed a different program each weekend and made presentations to interested visitors. They also spent time driving the auto tour route contacting visitors as well as assisting volunteers staffing the refuge office. They gave programs to 136 visitors and made 832 contacts during the 9 weekends. The Midland Empire and Burroughs Audubon Societies paid basic stipends to each student to help cover the cost of fuel driving from St. Joseph. This provided an opportunity for each student to research a subject, develop a topic as well as gave them experience to meet and greet visitors. The Friends of Squaw Creek sponsored 2 interns in the spring of 2008. Because this program has been so successful, the refuge hopes to get sponsors for 2 students this spring and next fall.

EAGLE DAYS

The 30th annual Eagle Days was a huge success. On Thursday, December 4, three eagles from the World Bird Sanctuary, St. Louis were introduced to St. Joseph and the surrounding area on a “Live at 5” television program (KQ 2 – St. Joseph). On Friday, December 4, approximately 930 students and 100 teachers and volunteers from 18 schools attended the school day program. The rest of the public attended Saturday and Sunday, December 5 & 6.

The refuge hosted more than 250,000 snow geese, 30,000 ducks, 60 trumpeter swans and 266 bald eagles. Weather conditions were ideal with sunny skies and day time temperatures in the low 40’s. Visitation this year was the highest since 1996. A total of 3,484 entered the office, 2013 attended the

live eagle show, 7,154 drove the auto tour route and 679 took the free guided bus tour given by the refuge staff. Members from the Mound City Kiwanis Club encouraged visitors to take the free shuttle bus from the Eagle Nest Truck Plaza to the refuge headquarters. Three hundred and thirty-one visitors took advantage of this service. The Ioway Tribe permitted the refuge to use their property to park buses and vehicles for the shuttle service and paid to rent the 25 foot eagle at the headquarters. The Friends of Squaw Creek staffed the interpretive sales area and sold food in the 3 stall garage.

MUZZLE-LOADING ANTLER-LESS DEER HUNT

The 20th white-tailed deer hunt was completed January 3-4. This year 735 hunters applied for the 127 permits with a potential to harvest 4 antler-less deer to reduce an overabundant deer population that has had an adverse affect on the refuge woodlands, croplands and caused numerous vehicle/deer collisions on Interstate 29 and adjacent state highways over the years. Of the 127 successful applicants, 109 showed up expending 1,569 hours harvesting 153 animals, a success rate of 69%. The mean number of deer harvested per participant was 1.4 deer. Thirty-four individuals failed to harvest a deer while 31 took 1 deer, 17 took 2 deer, 20 took 3 deer and 7 individuals harvested their limit of 4 deer. In the past 20 years, 15,029 individuals have applied for the 3,762 permits harvesting 2,638 deer with 66% successful hunters harvesting at least 1 deer.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The annual Christmas Bird Count was completed December 17. A total of 88 species were identified, the 4th highest total for Squaw Creek. Weather conditions were extremely cold and all refuge wetlands were frozen. Highlights included a Northern goshawk, 4 merlins (all time high count), marsh wren, common yellowthroat, common redpoll and 14 fox sparrows (all time high count).

DUCKS ON A STICK MEMORIAL DISPLAY

The Ducks on a Stick display funded by the Gerald Ragsdale Memorial was completed by Refuge employee Chip Lehmer prior to Eagle Days. The

display contains 7 pairs of male and female dabbling ducks mounted on sticks. The ducks were mounted by Marshland Memories Taxidermy, Galesville, Wisconsin. The waterfowl species presently in the display are mallard, green-wing teal, Northern shoveler, wood duck, gadwall, Northern pintail and American widgeon - dabbling duck species that are commonly seen at Squaw Creek. Future species to be added to the display that frequent Squaw Creek during the fall and spring migration could include blue-wing teal, the remaining dabbling duck, and the common diving ducks including the redhead, canvasback, lesser scaup, ring-neck, common goldeneye, bufflehead, ruddy duck, hooded merganser and common merganser. The ducks on a stick is a great visual display to compare birds but an easy means to handle birds for environmental education and interpretation.

WOMEN IN THE OUTDOORS

On Saturday, January 10, Squaw Creek received two awards during the Missouri National Wild Turkey Federation Awards Banquet held in Osage Beach. The refuge was recognized for the 2008 Women in the Outdoors event receiving the prestigious Golden Hen Award and recognition for holding the second largest event in Missouri. At the April 2008 event, 75 women participated representing 5 states including one woman from as far away as Wisconsin. Squaw Creek is a perfect spot for a Women in the Outdoors event with the great facilities including the George L. Scheil Outdoor Classroom as well as a diversity of habitat for women of all ages to be able to experience the outdoors. The 2009 event will be held at Squaw Creek April 17-18. There will be 26 different classes offered with topics like birding techniques, feather painting, fly casting and wildflower gardening as well as one class dedicated to learning how to create new outdoor activities with your friends and family.

Friends of Squaw Creek
National Wildlife Refuge
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