



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2008

a publication of the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture Partnership

Celebrating 30 Years of Conservation!

It has been 30 years since local residents banded together to tackle the problems facing the Cache River and its connected wetlands. Faced with the imminent loss of the now nationally-recognized wetlands, local residents formed the *Citizen's Committee to Save the Cache River* in 1979 and began the process of bringing global attention to the Cache River and its wetlands. Additional citizen groups and hundreds of volunteers broadened knowledge and support.

Thanks to these efforts, nearly 35,000 acres of the Cache River Wetlands are in conservation ownership today, and local landowners, through easements with Natural Resources Conservation Service have protected 13,500 acres of restored wetlands. Citizen action has also brought about the formation of the Joint Venture Partnership,

Study Being Released

During the last year, the Illinois Water Survey worked on a model of the Cache River and this region. The model, which maps the river's hydrology and analyzes flood risk, provides important information on how best to restore the river and insights into the region's drainage. An open house at Shawnee Community College will be scheduled to present this study's results. The event will include displays, a formal presentation and resource staff will also be available to answer questions.

which is composed of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited Inc., The Nature Conservancy and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The partnership's goal is to protect and restore a 60,000-acre wetland corridor along 50 miles of the Cache River.

Join us September 20th at 2 p.m. at the Wetlands Center for a reception, hosted by Friends of the Cache River Watershed, as we kick off a year long celebration of 30 years of citizens working to conserve the Cache. Exact event details still to be announced.

SAVE THESE DATES

Study Release/Open House: TBA

Birding Festival: April 25-27

Celebrate Citizen Action: Sept. 20

Check out the full schedule of guided programs and special events; call us at 618-657-2064 for information on school field trips.

Get Involved

Are you interested in helping with the Friends of the Cache? Volunteering? Or simply getting our newsletter that will be launched this year? If so, call us at 618-657-



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2064 or send us an email at cypresscreek@fws.gov to get your name added to the list.

Wildlife Imaging On the Cache!



Sunday, January 20, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. & Sunday, January 27, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Bundle up and get out of the house for a two-part workshop on taking digital pictures of wildlife with amateur photographer, Dave Brewer.

Participants will photograph large numbers of waterfowl, a variety of winter resident birds and animal tracks. This workshop is designed for participants to capture life in the Cache while gaining a better understanding of photo composition, exposure and processing.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Go Native!!! Landscaping for Wildlife

Saturday, February 23, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Get ready for spring planting. Learn about the benefits of landscaping with native plants and what plants are best suited for southern Illinois. Whether you want to landscape your yard with drought-resistant plants or create habitat for birds, bees and butterflies, this program will give you the necessary knowledge to go native!

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



Cache River Wetlands Van Tour

Thursday, April 3

All aboard! Take a van tour of the Tunnel Hill State Trail. The trail stretches 47.5 miles along the retired Norfolk Southern Railroad line between Harrisburg and Karnak. It provides bicycling and hiking opportunities through the Cache River watershed. Tours will highlight natural and historic features along the southern 15 mile section of trail. This is a great opportunity for senior citizens



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and those with physical limitations to experience the trail. For more information on times and to make reservations, call (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Spring Bloom

Saturday, April 5, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.



Shake off the winter blues with the pinks, yellows and purples of spring in the Cache. Join botanists John and Martha Schwegman for a guided wildflower hike to Glass Hill, a sandstone knob covered by a relatively undisturbed upland forest of oak and hickory. Please be sure to wear appropriate hiking apparel as the terrain is rocky and un-level at

times.

Location: *Glass Hill Trail Head, Cache River State Natural Area*

Amphibians and Reptiles of Illinois Workshop – IWIN

Tuesday-Thursday, April 15-17

The Illinois Natural History Survey's Illinois (INHS) Wilds Institute for Nature will offer a three day workshop at the Cache River State Natural Area. Join INHS herpetologist Dr. Chris Phillips for a unique opportunity to explore Illinois' most fascinating, yet often misunderstood, inhabitants—its snakes, lizards, frogs, toads and salamanders. The course will be a mix of classroom and field experiences. Participants will learn how to identify Illinois reptiles and amphibians, study their life cycles, examine various behaviors and explore the status of these unique creatures. There is a fee associated with this course and credit is available. For more information on the workshop or to register contact Susan Post at spost@inhs.uiuc.edu.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



Birding Fest of Southernmost Illinois



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Friday-Sunday, April 25-27

Celebrate birds during the 7th annual Birding Fest of Southernmost Illinois. The event showcases the areas rich bird life and wetland habitat. Scheduled activities and field outings will be led by expert birders and resource staff. Members from Shawnee Audubon Society, Southern Illinois Audubon Society and the Illinois Ornithological Society will provide tips on bird identification and other opportunities to see birds as they migrate north for the summer. Other events include guided field trips, mini-workshops, canoe tours, photo exhibits, music and special bird demonstrations by the International Crane Foundation and Free Again Rehab. Birders are invited to participate in the Birding Blitz 2008, a fun competition to identify (by sight and sound) the most bird species in within a 24 hour period, in an effort to raise money for habitat conservation in southern Illinois! Last year's event drew more than 1,000 attendees from at least five states. For more information call (618) 657- 2064 or visit ww.birdingblitz.org.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Mother's Day Bike Ride

Saturday, May 10, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Take Mom for a journey along a section of the Tunnel Hill State Trail. The ride features a narrow 543 foot tunnel, wooden trestles overlooking numerous bluffs and creeks, spring woodland wildflowers and songbirds. Staff will share interesting history of places that could be described as ghost towns along the route. For more information call the office at (618) 658-2168 or the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

Location: *Tunnel Hill State Trail office, Vienna*

Easy Tree I.D. Workshop!

Saturday, May 24, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.



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White oak, pignut hickory, red oak and tulip poplar. The Cache River Wetlands supports a diversity of bottomland and upland tree species. Join Kevin Rhodes, Shawnee Community College Natural Resources Instructor, for a hike. Learn common native tree found in the Cache River wetlands and gather tips on how to more easily recognize and identify a variety of species.

Location: *Limekiln Springs West Access*



Invasive Species of Southernmost Illinois

Saturday, June 7, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Kudzu, Japanese hops, stilt grass, garlic mustard and phragmites are just a few of the hundreds of plant that pose a great threat to the integrity of Illinois' natural resources. Join us to learn about invasive plants through a special presentation by Chris Evans, River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area Coordinator. The program will identify the most problematic invasive species, where they are found; control measures and steps you can take to avoid spreading invasive species onto your land.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Bottomland Birds of the Cache

Saturday, June 14, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.

Join Dr. Jeff Hoover, Avian Ecologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey, in a program to learn about the importance of habitat restoration and the beneficial influences on the songbird communities in the Cache River wetlands. Participants will learn about different songbirds associated with wetland communities, hike to a wetland for a firsthand look at restoration efforts and observe field techniques to mist net a prothonotary warbler. Be sure to wear long pants, hiking boots and mosquito repellent (just in case).

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Did you know??? Prothonotary warblers are neo-tropical migratory birds. That means they are a bird of two worlds! Prothonotary warblers migrate north in the spring from Central America to North America to breed and feed. Then they fly back south in the winter where it's

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Bottomland Forest Habitat Hike

Saturday, June 21, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Celebrate the first day of summer on an exploration through a mature growth bottomland hardwood forest. We'll look for wildlife and early summer plants. You will also learn about the Cache River State Natural Area and the many opportunities to hike, paddle, and explore this diverse property.

Location: *TBA*



Archery Tournament

Tuesday-Sunday, June 24-29 All Day

This week-long event, held at Mermet Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area, is one of six National Archery Tournaments held by the Archery Shooters Association each year. Manufacturers of



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most major brands of archery and sporting goods equipment are on-site. Children and amateur areas also are available to those who are unfamiliar with the sport or too young to participate in the tournament. More than 26,000 people were in attendance at the 2007 tournament. For more information call Mermet Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area at (618)524-5577.

Winged Wonders: Dragonflies

Saturday, June 28, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.



Did you know there are more than 50 species of dragonflies in southern Illinois, which is more than half of all the dragonfly species in the state? Join naturalists Martha & John Schwegman to learn about these winged-wonders. This program will include a slide show of the many different species of dragonflies in southern Illinois and include fascinating information on their life cycles, flight abilities and behaviors. You will then hike to the wetlands to discover and identify species. Please wear appropriate clothing for the outdoor activities.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

The World According to John Muir

Saturday, July TBA

Join us in welcoming John Muir to the Cache River Wetlands; a Conservation Hero of years past. Known as the Father of Yosemite, John Muir made the American Wilderness his lifework. This naturalist, writer, explorer, and pioneer ecologist popularized the cause of conservation when natural resources seemed inexhaustible. Muir has been credited as being the architect of the National Park system and recognized for his wilderness expertise from presidents and poets alike. Settle in for wild adventure tales, gentle philosophical perspectives, and impassioned pleas in defense of wilderness.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



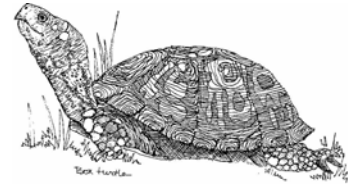
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Cold-blooded Creatures of the Cache Saturday, July 12, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

How can you tell a male box turtle from a female? If you step on a cottonmouth snake does it bite? How do you tell a venomous copperhead from a harmless Prairie King snake? What kind of lizard has a blue tipped tail? Learn about the unique characteristics of some of the many diverse reptile species native to the Cache River region. You also will have the chance to see several species up close and personal!



Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



French Explorer of the Cache

Saturday, August 30, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Come back in time with us to the 1760s with our guide Jean Baptiste Le Kaskaskia. Jean Baptiste was born of a French father and a Kaskaskia Indian mother and has made his living by hunting, trapping and trading with the native people. He will share his experiences as a “Courier de Bois” (Runner of the Woods) in the Cache River swamps of the southern part of the Illinois country. Join first person interpreter, Tony Gerard a local historian and biology teacher for this dynamic performance!

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



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Celebrating 30 Years of Conservation in the Cache!

Saturday, September 20, 2 p.m.

During the 1970s, southern Illinois residents watched the destruction of the Cache River Wetlands with growing concern and alarm. Faced with imminent loss of these now nationally-recognized wetlands, local residents formed the Citizen's Committee to Save the Cache River in 1979 and began the process of bringing global attention to the Cache River and its wetlands. Join us as we celebrate 30 years of citizens working to conserve the Cache River Wetlands. (See front cover for more information.)

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



For the Love of Monarchs!

Saturday, September 27, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.



Join us to learn about the beautiful monarch butterfly and what you can do to help this species survive. The program will highlight their life cycle, migration routes and identification. Participants also will have the opportunity to net, tag and release monarchs as part of an ongoing international effort to understand the fall migration and populations of this rare butterfly. **Location:** *Cache River*

Wetlands Center

Furbearer Hunting & Trapping in Southern Illinois

Saturday, October 4, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Hunting and trapping has a long history in the Cache – join us in learning from Illinois State Wildlife Biologist Dan Woolard everything you ever wanted to know about hunting and trapping



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furbearers in Illinois. A furbearer refers to species of mammal that are traditionally hunted or trapped. More than 75 state, federal and international laws apply to the hunting and trapping of furbearers in Illinois — such laws set standards for animal welfare and prevent these particular mammals from becoming endangered by these activities. This program will address many issues, providing an open forum for questions, answers and learning from an expert in the field.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Cache River Wetland Guided Hikes

Monday, October 13, 9 a.m.-11 a.m. & 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Join us on a morning hike through Wildcat Bluff and Little Black Slough Nature Preserve. The hike starts along the base of an exposed sandstone and limestone bluff and then continues to Boss Island, which is the site of a bald cypress cabin that dates back to 1853. The afternoon includes a hike to Heron Pond that highlights a floating boardwalk that winds through a cathedral of bald cypress trees, an experience not to be missed! **Location:** *Wildcat Bluff Trail Head at 9 a.m. & Heron Pond Trail Head at 1 p.m.*

WILD Weekend at Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, November 1, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.



In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge showcases the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve. Come see an area that normally is closed to the public. The reserve includes 400 acres of wetlands that provide a crucial resting and feeding area for thousands of migratory waterfowl and other birds. Bird watching, hikes, wetlands tours and “live” animal demonstrations are scheduled throughout the day. Refuge staff also can answer questions on hunting and fishing regulations and other activities permitted throughout the refuge. For more information call (618) 634-2231.

Location: *Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*



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Youth Waterfowl Academy

November 2008 TBA

Two weeks before regular waterfowl season opens, Mermet Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area hosts a two-day Youth Waterfowl Hunt. This hunt is open to children under 16 years of age that have a valid hunting license. Young waterfowl hunters are invited to participate in this event. Each year, sponsors provide food, refreshments and prizes. Anyone wishing to participate will need to be at the hunter check station

2 ½ hours before sunrise for the drawings.

For more information call Mermet Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area at (618) 524-5577.

Christmas Bird Count

December 2008 TBA

Join us in a holiday tradition of venturing forth on a crisp December morning to count birds. This special outing is part of the Christmas Bird Count – an all day census of early winter bird populations. This conservation effort has been conducted throughout the entire country during mid-December for more than 100 years. This information has resulted in the longest running database in ornithology. The data shows trends of bird populations across the Americas. Interested individuals of all skill levels are welcome to join us for a day to learn more about our region's winter avian residents. You can even participate from your own back yard, as a “feeder watcher.” Check out www.audubon.org/bird/cbc or for more information call Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at (618) 634-2231.

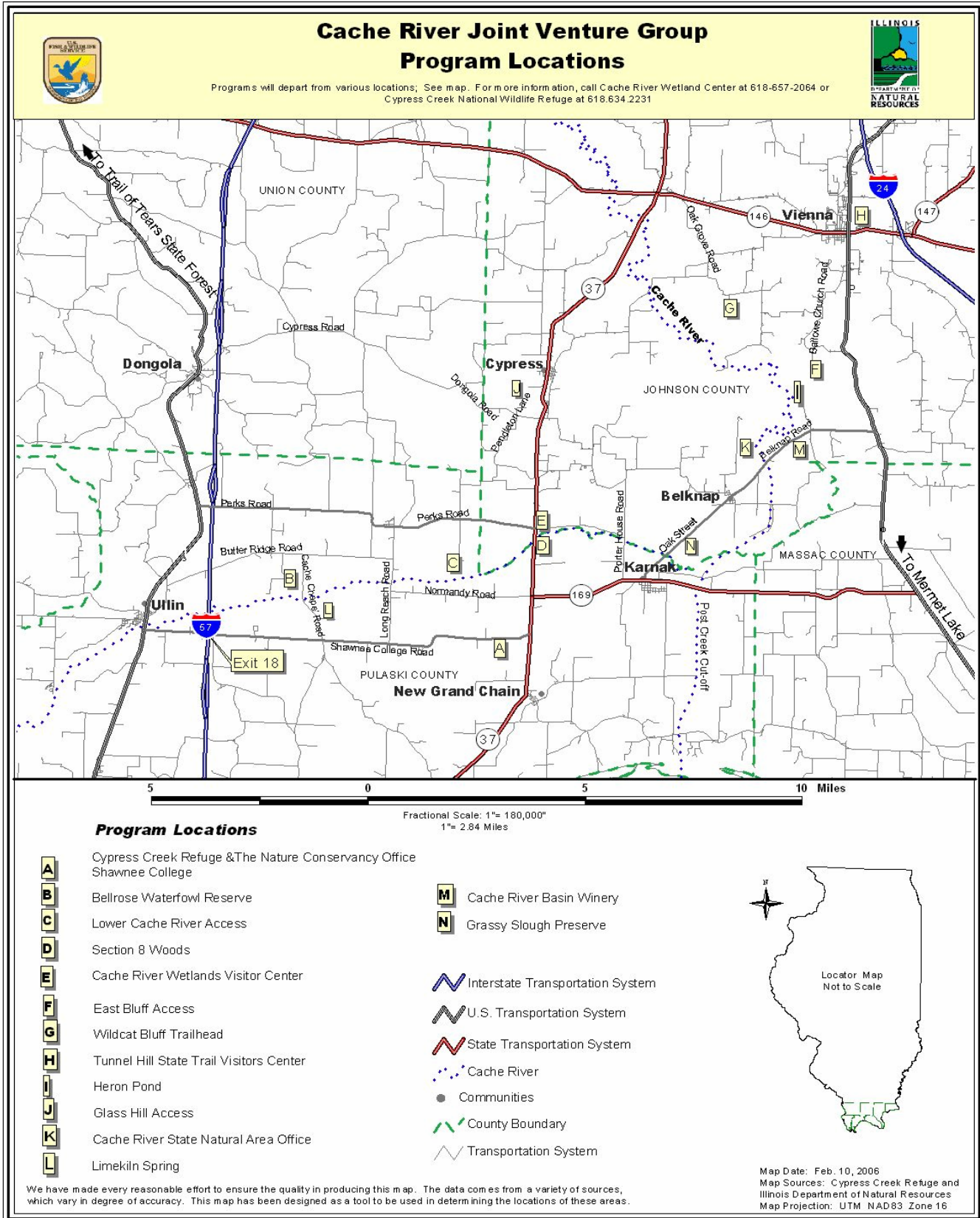
Location: *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Office*



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