



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2009

a publication of the Friends of the Cache River Watershed

Celebrating 30 Years of Conservation!

So many people helped make the Cache River Wetlands what they are today. Scientists and agency staff worked behind the scenes to get the area protected. Elected officials brokered deals to get money and resources into the region. But at the heart of the effort were the citizens. Motivated by their deep love of the land, they did what was unprecedented at the time: They came together.

That was 30 years ago. Thanks to them, the Cache River Wetlands are internationally recognized for the diversity of life they sustain. Nearly 35,000 acres of the Cache River Wetlands are in conservation ownership, and local landowners, through easements with Natural Resources Conservation Service, have protected an additional 13,500 acres of restored wetlands.

Last year, in September, a group of these early activist came together to celebrate their many accomplishments.

Help us continue the celebration on Oct. 10 to recognize the many amazing efforts to protect the Cache as we honor landowners who helped make this project a success, specifically those landowners



Early activists came together last September to celebrate 30 years of conservation action in the Cache.

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who enrolled their land in conservation programs or took other unique conservation actions.

SAVE THESE DATES

Coffee Hours: March 12, June 11 and Sept. 10

Nature Fest: April 25

Annual Friends Meeting: Oct. 6

Celebrating 30 Years: Oct. 10

Holiday Open House: Dec. 10



The Friends of the Cache River Watershed promotes natural resource conservation throughout the watershed. It works together with landowners and members of the Joint Venture Partnership, which includes Ducks Unlimited Inc., Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resource Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The partnership is leading an effort to revitalize this watershed.



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Pioneers of the West Eden Community

Saturday, January 24, 10 a.m. to noon

People not only made the Cache River Wetlands what they are today – but this entire area! Join Johnson County Genealogical & Historical Society's Ed Annable to learn about some of the true pioneers and permanent settlers of the Cache River region. Pioneers, such as Hezekiah West, first came to the area in 1811 and survived on less than eight acres. Despite many hardships, they called the area "Eden." A visit to the West Eden Cemetery and Church concludes the program.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



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Frog & Toad Survey

Saturday, January 31, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Volunteers—armed with rubber boots, clip boards and data sheets—venture out into the evening to conduct frog and toad surveys as part of a statewide monitoring program. Join us for a volunteer orientation to learn how to get involved with this worthwhile effort!

For more information, call (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Amphibians of the Wetlands

Saturday, February 28, 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Do frogs drink water? Is it really true that salamanders dance? Learn about some of the many fascinating characteristics and behaviors of the native amphibians found in the diverse and unique wetlands of the Cache River Wetlands.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Cache River Coffee Hours

**Thursdays, March 12, June 11, & Sept. 10,
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

Join the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture Partnership for a cup of coffee and an evening chat. Bring your questions or concerns related to events, restoration efforts or related resource issues. Staff from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and The Nature Conservancy will be available. For more information, call (618) 634-2231.

Location: *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Office*

Go Native!

Landscaping for Wildlife

Saturday, March 28, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Would you like to attract more birds, butterflies and other pollinators to your backyard? Conserve the amount of water used in your flower garden? Learn about the benefits of implementing plants native to Southern Illinois into your landscape.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



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Cache River Wetlands

Van Tours

Friday, April 17

Want to enjoy spring wildflowers and learn more about the Cache? Take our springtime van tour to learn more about hydrology, plants, animals, history and the environmental importance of this unique swamp land of Illinois. This tour is recommended for seniors and those with physical limitations.

Reservations required. To make a reservation, call (618) 657-2064.

Cache River Nature Fest

Saturday, April 25, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Celebrate and experience some of the oldest living trees east of the Mississippi River. Come see why people, motivated by their deep love of the Cache River Wetlands, came together 30 years ago to protect this region—for you! Programs, guided canoe tours, bike trips and hikes will feature this amazing place. For more information, call (618) 657-2064 or visit www.birdingblitz.org.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Photographing Birds

Saturday, May 2

Session One, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Saturday, May 9

Session Two, 9 a.m. to noon

Learn how to take better pictures of birds from nature photographer David Brewer. The workshop is for intermediate and advanced

photographers who want to learn more about photographing birds. Instruction includes foundations of avian imaging, desirable equipment, and tips and tricks the pros use. The two-session workshop coincides with peak migration of birds in southern Illinois. For more information or to register, call (618) 657-2064.

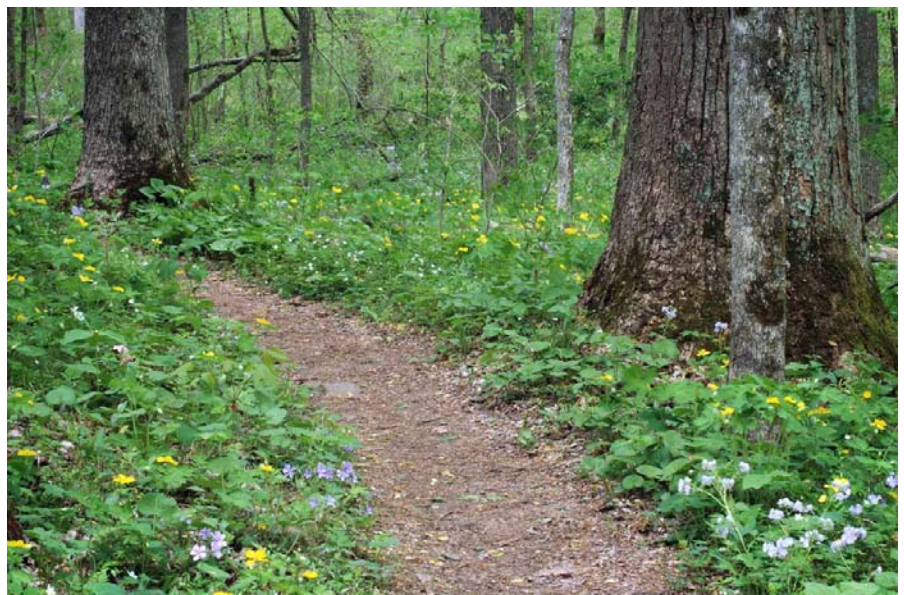
Location: *Shawnee Community College-River Room*

Spring Bloom

Saturday, May 30, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Early citizen activists give many reasons for getting involved in the effort to save the Cache. Most simply, they all loved being out in nature. In celebration of their efforts, experience Limekiln Springs as it's blooming with a rainbow of spring ephemeral wildflowers. Long pants and hiking boots suggested, as the terrain may be muddy and un-level at times. For information, call (618) 634-2231.

Location: *Limekiln Springs Parking Access*





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Canoe the Cache River

Saturday, June 6, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

There's no better way to see the Cache than from a canoe! This experience is how early activists inspired others to care about the Cache River Wetlands. It's an amazing experience, paddling into Illinois' Bayou for a close-up view of ancient bald cypress trees. Free, guided canoe tours depart throughout the day and meander to the State Champion bald cypress or Eagle Pond. Space is limited, so reserve your space: (618) 634-2231.

Location: *Lower Cache River Access*

Bottomland Birds of the Cache

Saturday, June 13, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Join Dr. Jeff Hoover, avian ecologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey, to learn why healthy forests and wetlands are important to

songbirds in the Cache River Wetlands. Hike to a wetland for a firsthand look at restoration efforts, observe field techniques used to net a Prothonotary warbler and discover the many different songbirds associated with wetland communities. Wear long pants and hiking boots.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Archery Tournament

Tuesday-Sunday, June 23 – 28

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 most major brands of archery and sporting goods equipment are on-site. Children and amateur areas also are available to those unfamiliar with the sport or too young to participate in the tournament. For more information, call (618) 524-5577.

Location: *Mermet Lake Fish & Wildlife Area*

Winged Wonders:

Dragonflies

Saturday, July 18, 10 a.m. to noon

Did you know that there are more than 50 species of dragonflies in southern Illinois? That is more than half of all the dragonfly species in the state. Join naturalists Martha and John Schwegman to learn about these winged-wonders. The program includes a slide show of dragonflies found in southern Illinois, as well as fascinating facts on their life cycles, flight abilities and behaviors. Participants also will hike nearby to discover and identify dragonflies.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



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Cold-blooded Creatures of the Cache

Saturday, August 29, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

How can you tell a male box turtle from a female? If you step on a cottonmouth snake will it bite? How can you tell a venomous copperhead from a harmless Prairie King snake? What kind of lizard has a blue tipped tail? Learn about some of the unique characteristics and have a chance to experience up close and personal reptiles native to the Southernmost Illinois region! The program concludes with a hike to look for cold-blooded creatures at Heron Pond.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center & Heron Pond Trail Head*

For the Love of Monarchs!

Exact date in September TBA

The Monarch butterflies' 2,500-mile migration between various North American sites to Mexico is endangered. Help us contribute to an international effort, Project Monarch Watch, by netting, tagging and releasing monarchs during their migration south to

Mexico. You also will learn about the Monarch, what native plants they are attracted to, the vital importance milkweed plays in their survival and what you can do to help them survive.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Cache River Days-Ullin

Saturday, September 12—All Day

Don't miss the 15th Annual Cache River Days in Ullin. Food, music, exhibits and family activities are just part of the fun. Enjoy guided canoe tours through the wetlands, courtesy of Cypress Creek Refuge. Participants will get an up-close view of ancient bald cypress trees while experiencing the sights and sounds of one of the largest remaining wetland resources in Illinois. To reserve your space on a canoe tour, call (618) 634-2231.

Location: *The City Park in Ullin*

Furbearer Hunting & Trapping

Saturday, October 3, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Hunting and trapping has a long history in the Cache. Illinois State Wildlife Biologist Dan Woolard shares everything you ever wanted to know about hunting and trapping furbearers in Illinois. 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 provide an open forum for questions, answers and learning from an expert in the field.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



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Annual Meeting: Friends of the Cache River

**Tuesday,
October 6,
6 p.m.**

Friends group members are invited to the annual meeting, where we will enjoy great food and determine priorities for 2010.

Location:

Cache River Wetlands Center



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Celebrating 30 years of Conservation in the Cache!

Saturday, October 10, noon

Today, nearly 35,000 acres of the Cache River Wetlands are in conservation ownership, and local landowners, through easements with NRCS, have protected an additional 13,500 acres of restored wetlands. Join us as we honor landowners who helped make this project a success, specifically those landowners who enrolled their land in conservation programs or took other unique conservation actions.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Cache River Wetlands Guided Hikes

Monday, October 12

9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Heron Pond Trail

Walk on a floating boardwalk that meanders into the Heron Pond's cathedral of cypress trees.

Location: *Heron Pond Trail Head*

1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Wildcat Bluff Trail

This moderately difficult trail begins along the base of a sandstone bluff and winds through a floodplain forest, giving passage to Boss Island, where a cabin that dates back to 1853 still stands!

Location: *Wildcat Bluff Trail Head*



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WILD Weekend at Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge

**Saturday, November 7 from
8 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge showcases Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve and provides canoe tours of the Cache River.



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The reserve, normally closed to the public, will be open. View 400 acres of wetlands that provide a crucial resting and feeding area for thousands of migratory waterfowl and other birds. In addition to guided canoe tours, bird watching hikes, wetlands tours and “live” animal demonstrations are scheduled. Refuge staff also will provide information on hunting and fishing regulations and other activities permitted in the refuge. For more information, call (618) 634-2231.

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

Youth Waterfowl Academy

Exact date in November TBA

Two weeks before regular waterfowl season opens, Mermet Lake State Fish & Wildlife

Area hosts a two-day Youth Waterfowl Hunt, which is open to children under 16 years of age with a valid hunting license. Each year, sponsors provide food, refreshments and prizes. Anyone wishing to participate will need to be at the hunter check station 2½ hours before sunrise for the drawings.

Location: *Mermet Lake Fish and Wildlife Area*

Holiday Open House

Thursday, December 10 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Celebrate the season with us! There will be lots of food and even more cheer. For more information, call (618) 634-2231. **Location:** *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Office*

Christmas Bird Count

Monday, December 14—All Day

Join us for a holiday tradition! The Christmas Bird Count is 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.” For more information, please call (618) 634-2231 or visit <http://www.audubon.org/Bird/cbc/>.

Location: *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Office*



**FRIENDS OF THE CACHE
RIVER WATERSHED**

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8885 State Route 37 South
Cypress, IL 62923

Phone: 618-657-2064
Email: cypresscreek@fws.gov

Experience the Cache.
Make 2009 the year
you get involved.



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Become
a Friend!

Dues are only \$10!
Contact us for an
application.

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

[Cache River State Natural Area](#)

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