

ARKANSAS • KANSAS • LOUISIANA • MISSOURI • OKLAHOMA • TEXAS

The River Study Boat: Traveling soon to an area near you

Sarah A. Keating, Lake Dardanelle State Park, Russellville, AR

Start with an old flat-bottom boat and a creative idea, 200-pounds of plastic sand and a recirculating water pump, and you have one of the most innovative interpretive tools I have seen in a long time. This is a true example of turning the ordinary into something extraordinary. There are many options out there when it comes to stream table design. None of them seemed to fit our needs. So we took an existing design and constructed it inside a boat. This River Study Boat is welded right to the trailer for easy transport. Small store-bought stream tables are great for presenting programs about small streams and water ecology but when your site is located along the Great Arkansas River, not just any little stream table will do. We needed a tool that would convey to our visitors how large our river is and how significant it is to the area. What better container for a river table than a boat?

The design consists of a large Lexan reservoir fitted into the boat. The water tank sits at one end and a simple system of hoses and a small bilge pump transport the water to the mouth of the river and along the river system until it is recirculated through a simple filter at the river's end. The pump is powered by a 12-volt battery, and water pressure can be adjusted up or down with a valve at the "mouth of the river." We chose plastic granules instead of the walnut hulls used by other designs because the plastic doesn't require the drying process after each use and it better represents the behavior of soil along the riverbank.

This boat is the focus of our "River Study Program." We can easily transport our River Study Boat to any area of the park as well as schoolyards and community events. Setup is very minimal and involves simply leveling the boat with on-board levels and filling the water tank. Once the

program is complete you drain the water and the boat is ready to go to the next program.

The educational opportunities for this table are endless. With the River Study Boat we are able to lead the visitors through an imaginary tour of a river system. Starting out as a small trickle of water, the river begins to form as it cuts through the soil forming a bending and winding valley of water. You see its effects on plants, animals, and developments along the river. We present programs on pollution by building towns and factories along the river and showing the consequences they have on the habitat down river. We present programs on erosion by showing how the flow of the river erodes the shoreline and carries sediment down river. The many locks and dams along the Arkansas River are vital to the commerce of the river as well as the communities that exist along its banks. We use the River Study Boat to demonstrate the effects of dams along the Arkansas. Just as the Arkansas was once a shallow, winding river, the flow of the

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The Mystery of the Unidentified Track

Karen Westcamp-Johnson, Petit Jean State Park, Morrilton, AR

As interpreters, we are all faced with mysteries. Visitors to our sites are always asking new questions, wanting answers to common mysteries, or ones we have never dreamed of investigating before. Often times those questions are redundant and might be as simple as how long has this site been a state park, or how old are the rocks? However, more often the questions go along with the following scenario.

Guest Jane Doe (outfitted in the traditional tourist straw hat, binoculars gracing the neck, T-shirt proclaiming that her grandkids visited Washington D.C. and all she got was the shirt, new hiking boots complimenting the feet) enters the Visitor's Center and approaches the front desk. Her husband is in tow, dressed similarly in straw hat, khaki shorts, and an atrocious Hawaiian print shirt. Desk Clerk Debbie greets them with her usual friendliness, "Good afternoon. How can I help you?"

"Is there someone here who can tell me about birds?" Guest Jane Doe asks, looking around hopefully.

Desk Clerk Debbie points automatically to me and says, "Karen, our Nature Lady, can help you." And I oblige, as always.

"My husband and I were hiking and we saw a bird ... can you tell us what it was?" Guest Jane Doe queries of me.

I hide a smile at the nondescript question. "What did the bird look like?"

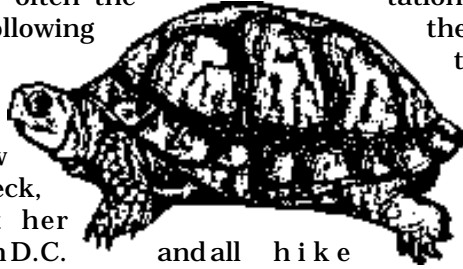
"Well, it was kind of a gray color, about the size of a robin."

"No. It was brown, and smaller like a chickadee," her husband, Guest John Doe, chimes in.

And the investigation has begun, with no clues to lead me anywhere. But by golly, we'll find out what bird that was!

At countless times in our interpretive careers we

all get questions like that, guests wanting to know what flower, tree, or bird they saw without giving us any detailed information from which to base an answer. But my trusty identification guides always do the trick. Let them use their own observations and experiences to deduce what they saw. Isn't that the base of interpretation, to stimulate the visitor to find the answers on their own? Yes. My trusty field guides have always worked. Until this last summer.



It was an average hot summer day, humid and stifling outside. I had just finished my morning and demonstration, my uniform graced with the sweat of the morning. I had stopped by the Visitor's Center on my way home for lunch when the following scenario occurred.

Local Resident John Q entered the building. Desk Clerk Debbie called out a greeting, "Good afternoon!"

Local Resident John Q approached the desk and asked, "Is there anyone here who knows about animals?"

"Our Nature Lady, Karen, does," Desk Clerk Debbie replied.

"How can I help you?" I asked, always eager to help, even when dripping sweat.

"Well...there is a track in the dirt in my driveway, and I have never seen anything like it before."

Ah. A mystery. "What did it look like?" I asked, somewhat intrigued. In my four years of work at Petit Jean, no one had ever asked me about an animal track before.

"It was at least as wide as my hand. It looked like something was dragging the ground or slithering across it. If I didn't know better, I'd say it was a python or an anaconda." Local Resident John Q explained.

Now I was very intrigued. A mystery indeed!

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Director's Report

Shea Lewis

NAI is only as strong as its members. After attending the Region Six Workshop in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, I am proud to report that NAI is strong. It never ceases to amaze me what quality people we have among us. Our members are willing to give and work to make interpretation a strong profession. With close to 100 participants, the workshop was a great success. Awesome field sessions, concurrent sessions and entertainment, as well as the unique setting of Louisiana, all set the stage for a great workshop. Many thanks to Raymond Berthelot, David Latona and many other Louisiana members who committed to the success of the workshop. Region Six really came through at the Annual Scholarship Auction. Due to the generous donations and bidding at the auction, \$3863 was generated, a new Region Six record. This will ensure all scholarships will be funded as well as the mini grants program. Many thanks to Kelly Farrell and Kristina Hardwick for their dedication to the scholarship program as well as the hard work and auctioning skill of Louisiana State Park Director Dwight Landreneau. I believe he could squeeze water out of a rock!

On the business end, membership approved the idea of pursuing a new revenue-producing product. Look for information in this newsletter about a storytelling CD being developed for sale to all NAI members.

Region Six has a new Interpretive List-Serv. Hosted by the University of Arkansas at Little

Rock, the list-serv should be an effective way for NAI members to stay in contact and discuss interpretive efforts. For more information about the list-serv or to learn how to subscribe, note the information on page 6.

Heather Manier, Membership Manager at the national office, was also on hand to share what is taking place on the national level. I heard many great comments about how nice it was to get to spend time with staff from the national office. Thank you Heather for taking time out of your schedule to visit Region Six.

The 2003 workshop is being hosted by Oklahoma and will be held in Oklahoma City. We hope to see you there!

A few changes have taken place as of late. After several years of service to Region Six, Fred Christian has stepped down as Awards Chair. Thank you Fred, for your time and efforts. This important position has been filled by Cyndi Evans of MO. Karen Westcamp-Johnson, our Webmaster has also stepped down. The webpage has been taken to a new level by Karen, and she will be missed. Her chair has been filled by Craig Johnson of Arkansas, who will be changing the site soon.



Visions -- the newsletter of Region VI of the National Association for Interpretation -- is edited by Lisa Cole, Heard Natural Science Museum, McKinney, TX, and Pam Tooley, Environmental Education Specialist, Lucas, TX. Articles and other newsletter correspon-

dence should be sent to us at one of our addresses (see back page). We use a Macintosh system and will gladly accept submissions on 3.5 disks or by e-mail in a text-only format. Please send a hard copy as well. Printed on recycled paper.

Paving the Way for Visitors with Disabilities

Melanie Thornton, University of Arkansas, Little Rock, AR

For many of us, the word “accessibility” brings to mind images of accessible parking spaces, ramps and electronic door openers. But creating a welcoming environment for visitors with disabilities involves more than simply removing the architectural barriers to our parks and museums. Before visitors step foot in the door of a facility, they are “sizing us up” by reading our brochures, calling for information, or checking out our websites. Their experiences during this process will be a factor in how they plan to spend their leisure time. Here are some ways that you can send a positive message about the inclusiveness of your park or museum.

Develop a basic understanding of various disabilities, the implications, and the accommodations that might be needed by people with those disabilities. Read information or attend training that provides a general overview of working with people with disabilities and disability etiquette.

Consider ahead of time the possible accommodations that might be needed by prospective visitors to your park or museum. Secure the resources for making such accommodations or having assistive devices available if needed. Develop contacts with people with disabilities and service providers. These people can be great resources when a question arises about accessibility. Learn who to call to request sign language interpreters, to get materials printed in Braille, or to purchase assistive listening devices.

Learn how to use the telecommunications relay service. People who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or who have a speech-related disability may contact your park or museum through the use of the telecommunications relay service. The person with the disability uses a TTY to make



the call, and the relay service operator translates the message to voice over the phone.

Provide access information on brochures, flyers and other publicity. When you develop event brochures, provide the visitor with information on the accessibility of the event or location and on how to request accommodations. A simple statement like this one is helpful: “If you have questions concerning access or wish to request accommodations for a disability, please contact (insert name and contact information including an e-mail address or TTY number if available).”

Make sure your website is accessible. Many web designers are unaware that how they design a site can in fact exclude people with disabilities from accessing it. People who are blind access websites by using a software application called a screen reader. Websites should be designed in such a way as to be accessible to this adaptive technology.

Have alternate formats of printed materials ready. Prepare a few copies of frequently used brochures in alternate formats such as Braille, audiotape, or in large print (18 point font size). An individual with a disability may also request to have the information in digital format on a diskette. So that printed materials can easily be provided upon request, it is helpful to save a text version of each brochure in a separate file on a computer. Once the request is made the brochure can be printed in the requested font size or saved to a disk and sent to a vendor to be translated into Braille. Here is a sample statement for inclusion on printed materials: “If you need to request this information in an accessible format (Braille, digital, tape or large print) please contact (insert name and contact information including an e-mail address or TTY number).”

By taking these simple steps, you will set a positive tone for the visitor’s experience—a tone that allows visitors with disabilities to have a relaxing and enjoyable visit. After all, that is the primary reason we all visit parks and museums.

For more information, check out the resources listed on page 10.

Have a Story to Share? A Yarn to Spin? A Tale to Tell?

Region Six will be producing, marketing and selling an interpretative CD. We plan to record during the summer of 2002 and have the CD ready for the NAI national conference in November. We welcome all types of stories, poems and songs to be considered. Interpreters are amazing communicators and great storytellers. Our region has a wealth of talent. A CD can help showcase our diverse stories and sites with a national audience. Please consider sharing your skills and being part of this project. Perhaps you share some folklore on nature walks. Do you use a star story on night hikes? Maybe a living

history presentation sprinkled with outrageous amusing tall tales. This is your opportunity to support our region and grow professionally. Got an idea? Contact Molly Postlewait, 913-764-8580, 909 N Hwy 7, Olathe, KS 66061.

e-mail molly.postlewait@JOCOKS.com



Mystery of the Unidentified Track, continued from page 2

“How long was it?”

“It went all the way across my driveway, like it was slithering across the ground. And on each side of the slither were these little half moons in the dirt.”

Half moons?

“I was wondering if there was someone who could come take a look at it for me.” Local Resident John Q hinted.

The hint taken, I followed him to his driveway just behind our camping grounds. Once there, I climbed out of the park van and carefully approached the mystery track site. The unidentified track was just as he had described ... an impression in the soft dirt about the width of his hand dragging all the way across the driveway. On either side were small half moon-shaped impressions that suddenly reminded me of the imprint little legs would leave as they push themselves forward across the ground. My mind flew to work, trying to think of what animal would be so close to the ground that its belly dug, probably with little legs pushing it along.

Hmmm.

And suddenly it hit me...a box turtle! I deduced that a turtle's shell would more than likely sit

close enough to the ground that when it walked in the soft dirt, the plastron, or bottom of the shell, would drag. Local Resident John Q wasn't overly convinced when I gave him my initial hypothesis. So I promised him a thorough investigation.

I opted for a comparison experiment. I found a box turtle after lunch and transported her to a spot in the park where the dirt was soft and pliable, similar to Local Resident John Q's driveway. Then the turtle was placed on the ground and I waited. It was a hot day, the sun beating down on the turtle's shell, so she quickly opted to maneuver across the dirt toward the shade of nearby trees. The impression she left in the dirt was almost identical to the unidentified track in Local Resident John Q's driveway! My hypothesis was correct. I quickly returned to my office and gave him a telephone call reporting my findings. I think he was just happy to know that a rogue python or anaconda wasn't hiding out in his yard.

Yes. We are all faced with interpretive mysteries to solve. A biologist at heart, a biologist by training, any type of science mystery gets my juices flowing. Especially when scientific experiments back my hypothesis. The mystery of the unidentified track just needed an interpreter to close the case!



ARKANSAS

Jay Miller

The Arkansas crew that attended the Region VI workshop in Baton Rouge returned with glowing reports. The Louisiana folks did a great job.

The big news here is that state parks has four full-time interpreter positions to be advertised soon—and in some of our most prominent parks--**Petit Jean, Crowley's Ridge, Old Davidsonville and Old Washington. Karen Westcamp-Johnson** has left for different pastures. We have some great positions to fill.

Arkansas Post National Memorial, Fort Smith National Historic Site and Hot Springs National Park are taking active roles in Arkansas's commemoration of the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase. Arkansas is making big plans for the 2003 event, partly because the initial point for the survey of the Louisiana Purchase Territory is in an eastern Arkansas swamp which is a National Historic Landmark and an Arkansas State Park.

Arkansas State Parks has officially opened beautiful facilities at **Mount Magazine State Park and Jacksonport State Park**, and will soon be opening the first four miles of the 73-mile rail to trail: **The Delta Heritage Trail**.

James Wilborn reports great success with about 27 people participating in an overnight lake kayak trip on **Lake Ouachita**.

Yours truly thoroughly enjoyed **Lisa Brochu's** CIP training in Austin, Texas, in April. I am looking forward to completing the certification program.

Welcome to **Brian Westfall**, of the Corps of Engineers at **DeGray Lake**. Brian joined Region Six several months ago. We'll hear from him about the Corps' interpretation efforts at the lake. ■

Share Ideas, Get Ideas, Stay Connected!

Region VI is pleased to announce the initiation of a new listserv—NAI Region6-L. This listserv provides an opportunity for NAIMembers and others interested in the field of interpretation to share ideas and get information from their colleagues in the region. This will also offer an avenue for publicizing workshops and training opportunities.

To subscribe, follow these instructions:

1. Send an e-mail message to: listserv@ualr.edu
2. Leave the subject line of the e-mail message blank.
3. In the body of the message type: `subscribe NAIRegion6-L yourfullname`

Once you subscribe, you will receive a confirmation message and instructions for interacting with others on the list. We hope you will join the list and encourage your colleagues and friends to do the same.

Our thanks goes to the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Public History Program for acting as host for this listserv.





KANSAS

Schanée Anderson

Why is Kansas so HOT during the summer? Because of all the great resources Kansas interpreters are providing!

Events

* **Sunset Zoo** opened a new maned wolf exhibit on May 25. This exhibit focuses on the unusual characteristics of the maned wolf and highlights the conservation work being done in Paraguay.

* 2002 is the 75th anniversary of the **Lee Richardson Zoo**. A special celebration will be held on July 4th as part of the annual Zoobalee.

Conferences

* The **Kansas Naturalist Association Meeting** held at **Botanica, the Wichita Gardens**, will be Friday, August 23, 2002. Anyone who presents a program or supervises educational programming is invited to attend—you do not even have to be from Kansas! One highlight is a puppet-making workshop by **Glenn Lower** from the **Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary** in McKinney, Texas. Participants will learn how to make (and get to take one home) large three-dimensional puppets for programs. There will also be roundtable sharing during and after lunch. Cost is \$30 per person, which includes the workshop with a puppet to take home and lunch. Botanica will provide drinks and snacks throughout the day and a wonderful garden to stroll in during breaks. To register or for more information contact **Deb Hiebert** at 316-264-0448 or **Pat Silovsky** at 785-238-5323. Reservations are due by July 15, 2002.

Summer is filled with HOT programs

* **Lee Richardson Zoo** will be offering both weekday and weekend summer zoo day camps.

* **Botanica** will host “White Corn Remembers: A look at Lewis and Clark.” White Corn is a Hidatsa woman who will share memories and stories giving a unique perspective on the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

* **Rolling Hills Refuge** is presenting day camps focusing on animals and their habitats, as well as a Junior Zookeeper program each Friday morning in June and July. Participants will be able to prepare zoo diets, design animal toys, help keepers, and design and implement a conservation project.

* **Botanica** will host several teacher workshops through Friends University. Some topics are “Drawing Closer to Your World: Journaling Across the Curriculum,” “Flying Flowers: Butterfly Gardens and Butterfly Curriculum,” and “Kids in Nature.” These workshops are a great way to bring an audience to the gardens who will likely return with their classes for a field trip.

* **Sunset Zoo** will be hosting three classes through Kansas State University’s Continuing Education Department on teaching taxonomy to elementary age students, how to use an informal education resource, and thematic units. Clubs will also be offered for children ages five to 15 focusing on a variety of wildlife and conservation topics. Sunset Zoo has also teamed up with the Children’s Bookshop to host Storytime at the zoo.


Way to Go!

* **Ted Cable, PhD.**, was named Assistant Department Head in the Department of Horticulture, Forestry and Recreation Resources at **Kansas State University**.

* **Kathy Sexson, Mike Rader, and Schaneé Anderson** were all elected to the **Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education** board of directors.

* Volunteer **Cynthia Hoffman** at **Rolling Hills Refuge** has volunteered more than 600 hours over the last year helping the zoo with education, animal enrichment, special events, and writing the volunteer newsletter.

* **Sunset Zoo** Conservation Education Intern **Molly Edmonds** received a grant to develop a Backyard Habitat at Sunset Zoo. The exhibit area will be completed by June 15.

* The **Lee Richardson Zoo** would like to introduce **Kelly Miller**. She is the new Distance Learning Coordinator who will be in charge of expanding the zoo’s distance learning program through developing, promoting, and presenting programs to students across the United States. 

LOUISIANA

Kristina Hardwick

Sharon Broussard from the **Louisiana State Parks** office reports that they have received \$331,700 in federal enhancement funds administered by the state Department of Transportation and Development. The grant will help the **Los Adaes State Historic Site** in Robeline as a hub for interpreting the El Camino Real transportation corridor that once ran from Natchitoches Parish to Mexico City. Los Adaes State Historic Site commemorates the influence of the Spanish garrison and mission that once stood on the property and served as a hub of trade activity between French, Spanish and Native American cultures in the 1700's. Grant funding will provide for the initial design and construction of an interpretive trail and a new visitors' center.

Stan Richardson, an interpretive ranger at **Plaquemine Lock State Historic Site**, reports that they have a new exhibit. Photos on display trace the lock construction, operation and recent history. A tour of the lock house museum and lock chamber will also be included. Plaquemine historian **Tony Fama** is providing many of the photographs that will be on display. Plaquemine Lock SHS is a five-acre complex, which includes the historic lock that operated from 1909-1961. The lock was designed by Colonel George Geothals, who later assisted in the design of the Panama Canal.

Looking for some unusual program ideas? **Sharon Broussard** at **Louisiana State Parks** has provided a few. For a great "hands-on" program, how about learning how to do laundry the 1800's way? This "Wash Day" program takes place in July at **Audubon State Historic Site** in St. Francisville. (I wish the press release had more information in it. Hey, Ray, can I bring my own laundry or will it be provided!!!) Or, if you can't wait for Halloween for a little something spooky, how about "Tombstone Rubbing?" At **Poverty Point State Historic Site**, visitors will get to rub up against history literally as they learn to use charcoal for rubbing the inscriptions from the grave sites there.

Congratulations to **Judy Sneed** at **Walter Jacobs Nature Park**. Thanks to her hard work, the park has snared a \$2,500 grant for an Earth Science Teachers Workshop to be held in the upcoming school year. Funds are provided by the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission. **Gwen Emick**, Director of the Office of Environmental Education, has done an outstanding job of raising money for the grant program by publicizing the state's environmental license plate. Fees from the plates provide funds for the grant program.

Coe Haygood, secretary at the **Louisiana State Oil and Gas Museum**, reports that even as we speak the walls are going up inside the museum. The exhibit design work is underway for Gallery One and Gallery Two. **Jules Babineaux**, owner of **Exhibits Inc.**, has put in some long hours and drive time from Baton Rouge in preparing the designs and construction at the museum in Oil City. **Warren Ponder**, assistant to **Fox McKeithen**, Louisiana's Secretary of State, reports that Secretary McKeithen has worked hard to obtain the \$800,000 necessary for this phase in the museum's design. Way to go! Now if Coe can just get some interpreters to help with all of those school groups, she will be, as they say, "cooking with gas!!!"

The **Office of State Parks** has joined with the **Louisiana Association of Museums** to promote the Treasure Trail Program that will run from now through November 30. The program is designed to encourage school children to discover and enjoy the treasures housed at Louisiana's historic sites and museums. A Louisiana Treasure Trail Tracker Certificate and a t-shirt will be awarded to each student who visits six participating Louisiana State historic sites and/or museums. Everything needed to start the adventure can be found at www.LouisianaMuseums.org/trail, where students can download a passport, a list of participating sites, and information on receiving the certificate and T-shirt. Kudos to State Parks and the museum association for coming up with a great way to keep students' curiosity and sense of adventure going in the summer!



MISSOURI

John Miller




The chairman for the 2004 NAI Region Six workshop steering committee is **Grady Manus**. Grady is the president of the **Association of Missouri Interpreters**. The 2004 workshop will be in Kansas City and will highlight the outstanding work of the interpretive site coalition.

George Kastler (Jefferson City) reports that the annual spring interpreters training, hosted by the **Missouri Department of Natural Resources** May 19-23, was a big success at **Babler State Park**. Over 100 individuals from the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Conservation, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers attended the conference, either as resource instructors or as participants. The training topics included: ADA, dealing with difficult people, historical presentations, spider sniffing, owl prowls, a kaleidoscope potpourri, and individual practice presentations.

Stephanie Ramsey Westbrook (Jefferson City) reports that the **Missouri Department of Conservation** will have a new director beginning July 1. **John D. Hoskins**, 47, will become the seventh director since MDC's formation in 1937. He has been with the department since 1977, serving as conservation agent, regional protection supervisor, chief of general services, and presently as protection division administrator. Mr. Hoskins will fill the vacancy created when the present director, **Jerry M. Conley**, retires.

Ken Lucius (Stockton Lake) reports that a special summer field school will be held at the "Big Eddy Site" at **Stockton Lake** from June 10 to July 19 and will be taught by **Burt Purrington**. **Southwest Missouri State University Center for Archeological Research**, under contract with the Kansas City District Corps of Engineers, will conduct this intensive archeological research. As a bonus to participating in the dig, students enrolled at SMSU will be camping out at Stockton Lake. Another opportunity awaits you if you want to participate in the paleo-Indian excavation this summer as a volunteer. For more information, contact the Center for Archeological Research directly at 417-863-4888. **Ken Lucius** will be coordinating activities between Stockton Lake and the Center for Archeological Research. He can be reached at 417-276-3113.

Wanda Doolen (Patterson) reports that **Sam A. Baker State Park** sustained heavy damage from the spring floods. The Visitor Center/Nature Center will be closed for at least six weeks while the building and exhibits are repaired. The flooding also affected about half of the campgrounds. They may be open later in the summer.

Nancy Smith (Imperial) reports on a program being offered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources at **Mastodon State Historic Site**. It celebrates September as Missouri Archeology Month and will take place on September 27. Demonstrations will include: skinning deer hides, flintknapping stone tools, starting fires without matches, and identification of found artifacts. Visitors can participate in corn/walnut grinding, spear throwing with an atlatl, rock painting, and tours of the former excavation site. For more information, call 636-464-2976. 

River Study Boat, continued from page 1

river table begins small. As the water flow increases we demonstrate ideas such as channelization, which has created a much wider, straighter, and deeper river and created the opportunity for the formation of Lake Dardanelle.

We have used this programming tool to educate adult fishermen at tournament weigh-ins as well as preschoolers wondering how the river and lake were formed. Young and old alike benefit from the lessons demonstrated by the River Study Boat.


OKLAHOMA

Steve Black and Neil Garrison

Dutch Oven Cooking is really heating up for **Julie Tarver** at **Lake Thunderbird State Park**. Since starting the program five years ago it has grown so much there is now a waiting list to get into the classes. Each of the March, April and May classes had 50 people registered and the fall classes are starting to fill up. What better way to celebrate a successful program than with a contest, of course! Julie is planning the Red Dirt Dutch Oven Cook-Off for October 5. Judges and contestants are needed, so pull out your Dutch Oven and dust off your old recipe and head off to Lake Thunderbird. Julie also reports that her snake program and exhibit are doing fantastically, and she hopes to have it grow even more in the future. For more information about the Dutch Oven Cook-Off or any of the other programs that Julie has to offer, please contact her at 405-321-4633.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area and Amtrak are teaming up to train volunteers to give on-board education programs on the Amtrak's Oklahoma City to Fort Worth—Heartland Flyer. These volunteers will act as tour guides and give passengers a chance to learn about the rich and wonderful history of two great states, Oklahoma and Texas.

The Oklahoma Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, **JT Nickel Family Nature and Wildlife Preserve** in Tahlequah, now has two new nature trails. The trails are open for guided tours by appointment and are free of charge.

The **Oxley Nature Center** sponsored two night hikes this past winter. The hikes were "New Moon Silhouettes" and the whole idea was to teach winter tree identification by using the tree's outline against the night sky of Tulsa.

Beavers Bend State Park is getting a new nature center. The new center is expected to be completed in two years. The park also hosted its Women's Day Out programs this spring. The program was hosted by the park, the U.S. Forest Service—Ouachita National Forest, and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Speaking of new and along the lines of partnerships... **Washita Battlefield National Historic Site** has received National Park Service approval to build its new visitor center. The 4,500 square foot building should be completed by the fall of 2004. The visitor center will be part of a joint U.S. Forest Service—National Park Service complex that will house the administrative, visitor services, and maintenance functions of both Washita and the **Black Kettle National Grasslands**.

Paving the Way, continued from page 4

Online Resources:

National Center on Accessibility
www.indiana.edu/~nca/

Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design
www.si.edu/opa/accessibility/exdesign/start.htm

Tip Sheet on Using
 Telecommunication
 Relay Services:
[www.netac.rit.edu/
 publication/tipsheet/
 relaya.html](http://www.netac.rit.edu/publication/tipsheet/relaya.html)

Information on Web
 Accessibility:
www.webaim.org





TEXAS

Brian Barnette



Greetings from Texas, where it's two days 'til June, and the mercury's still in the seventies—take that, global warming! . . . Speaking of the seventies, in our last issue, Pam alluded to pictures of me in sideburns and bellbottoms. Actually, I wore neither—but a good P.I. could probably turn up a picture of me with my “Nixon—Now More Than Ever” pin. Ah, youth . . .

Kathy Lentz is the new Exhibit Tech II at **Dinosaur Valley State Park** in Glen Rose. The park hosted a film crew from Japan in May. They were working on a program for PBS.

Susan Scott (CIT) down at **Texas A&M** reports that she had 22 Aggies working on becoming Certified Interpretive Guides as part of a course in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences this spring. (Thanks, Susan - now I've got an image of a yell leader leading a nature hike stuck in my head . . .)


There's a new full-time staff member in the **NAI national office**. It's none other than our own **Lisa Brochu**, who is taking on the role of Program Director. Her duties will include development and management of programs and services such as certification, training workshops, and the international program. Actually, she won't be in the national office—she'll be working out of her home in Elgin. She does have a new e-mail address (naiprograms@aol.com) and a toll-free number for NAI business (1-866-309-4636). Congratulations, Lisa!

Julie Coombes, Interpretive Planner for the **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department**, sends the following news of doin's in the TPWD: Archaeologists are excited about the possibility of discovering the remains of a large ceremonial structure, dubbed “Woodhenge,” at **Caddoan Mounds SHS**. So far, only one large post hole has been found that hints at its existence. If the structure is located, it will be only the second such feature found in the U.S. Four previously unidentified archaeological sites have also been discovered at **Confederate Reunion Grounds SHS**.

Eighteen park interpreters from the TPWD's Region Six (Panhandle-Plains region) gathered for their annual Interpretive Conference back in February. A restored 200-acre marsh at **San Jacinto SHS** is now accessible by asphalt and boardwalk trails, thanks to a collaboration between the Environmental Institute of Houston, TPWD, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Galveston Bay Estuary Program, and the Telephone Pioneers of Texas.

Over at the **Dallas Zoo's Lacerte Family Children's Zoo**, **Lisa Dolliver** isn't resting on the success of the Nature Exchange. She's starting up a Bug Club, open to professionals and amateurs, kids and adults. Lisa is also working on a gall research project. (A subject that has fascinated her for years.) And in her spare time, she performed with Xlthlx Puppet Theater in a production of “Secret Place,” a story of a boy who discovers a magical wilderness in the middle of the city.

Last time out, I asked for the whereabouts of three missing members. Two of the MIA's have surfaced. **Mike Gaddis** of **Eisenhower SP** wasn't missing at all - just the last two letters of his e-mail address. And **Perry Ground** has surfaced as the Gallery Programs Manager at the **Children's Museum of Houston**. Perry's info was passed along by **Geralyn Warfield**, formerly Curator of Education at the **Children's Zoo of Houston**, who has left that position to become the national director of **Project Wild**. Congratulations, Geralyn!

Well, as they say at the Streaker Olympics, that's all the nudes that's fit to sprint. If you didn't read it here, it's because you didn't send it in. So let's keep those cards and letters coming (actually, e-mail's better) and y'all have a good summer, y'hear? 



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