

ARKANSAS • KANSAS • LOUISIANA • MISSOURI • OKLAHOMA • TEXAS

Think Outside the Toilet

Lori Spencer, Arkansas State Parks, Paris, Arkansas

If all the offspring of a pair of houseflies survived, and continued to reproduce, in four months they would cover the earth's surface to a depth of 16.5 yards. This "fun fact" was the topic of conversation for several women as they emerged from the restroom at Mount Magazine State Park Visitor Center. It's part of my "Did You Know" collection. Men came out of the restroom commenting on how they learned about snow formation. The "Scoop on Poop" beside the sinks was also brought into discussion.

These "fun facts" and other snippets of information are part of a gamble I affectionately call "Inturpretation." Only interpreters get the joke.

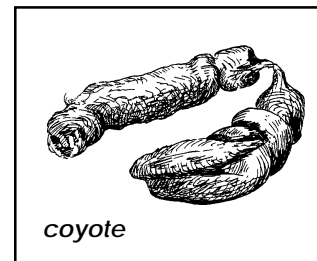
"Inturpretation" came to pass after a trip out west to several national parks and outdoor-fitters. We both had occasion to use a restroom near Lamar Valley in Yellowstone National Park.

You don't normally go into a restroom to learn something. However, on the door was a large sign that said, "Do you feel like you're being watched?" I didn't, but there were grizzly tracks painted on the floor, and there was some interpretation about grizzlies on the wall. Next came the words "look up." In the skylight was a large transparency of a grizzly and cub.

That's when the ideas for "inturpretation" at the park started to flow. The restrooms at the Bass Pro Shop on the way home also gave me ideas. Several mounted animals peering down at me, a nature mural, and wildlife sounds all kept my attention.

Why the bathroom? Why not? Why not give your visitors' brains a wrinkle while they tinkle? It's a matter of space and time. It's not pretty, but honestly, everybody uses the bathroom. There are four walls to a stall, and lots of space near the sinks, dryer, towel dispenser, garbage can, etc, that are not typically used. Most people are in the bathroom just minutes, long enough for them to process something brief about the resource. It could be a "fun fact" (historical,

wildlife, etc.) or the program schedule. Since the success of my "Did You Know?" collection, I've tried to use all the wall space without making it look cluttered. Program schedules, historical briefs, the latest butterfly or wildflower sighting, and cartoons have all been added to the bathroom interpretive repertoire. There is something for everyone. Children who go in the restroom with parents are occupied, if only briefly.

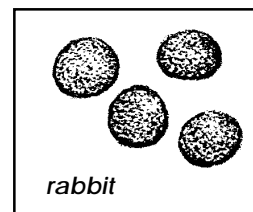


coyote

The benefits last beyond the flush of the toilet. If the visitor learns something about an insect they can relate to, they are more inclined to look at the insect collection mounted on the walls in the hallway between the restrooms and exhibit gallery, or pick up the butterfly checklist. During the winter, more "scoop on poop" goes on the walls, and tracks are added to the scat drawings. This gives visitors an idea of what wildlife to search for on a hike.

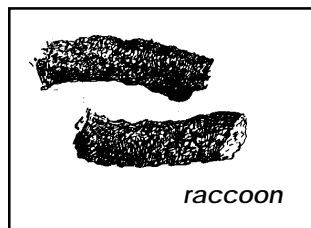
With the success of "inturpretation," this form of non-personal interpretation ought to be incorporated into the design and planning of future visitor centers, rather than planned as an afterthought. Restrooms could then be outfitted with permanent acrylic display mounts to make transfer of information not only easier, but longer-lasting and more attractive. Tracks painted or imbedded into the floor would grab people's attention.

So why not go out on a limb? That's where the fruit is. There's a lot of available space we could be using to our interpretive advantage. I walked outside one morning during our recent Region Six workshop in Fort Smith. I looked at the white sea of Arkansas State Parks vehicles, and thought, "there's



rabbit

continued on p. 4



raccoon

Director's Report

Pat Silovsky

Region Six is well known for our leadership role within the National Association for Interpretation. Our strong membership base, incredible workshops, and distinguished members are recognized nation-wide. Two years ago, we stepped forward and became a key donor for the Legacy Trust Fund (LTF) and that action motivated others to do the same. We understood that while registration fees cover a portion of the expenses to run NAI, underwritten support provides the funding to actively serve our members. Now, the LTF capital initiative is moving to the next level of support that includes naming opportunities.

At the spring Board meeting, I was introduced to this new funding initiative which provides naming opportunities at the National Office. My thoughts immediately went to Bob Jennings, and I wondered if our region would be willing to support this. Bob was a leader who made a lasting impact on each of us. Many comparisons can be drawn between Bob as a foundation of support, a pillar of strength, a great tree in the forest of interpretation, etc., much like the National Office.

Our investment toward capital support will do more than recognize Region Six and Bob. The building that houses the national office makes our certification programs, association store, membership, publications, event planning, fund management and development possible. These services are now available to each of us on an individual level. On a long-term basis, retirement of the debt translates to an additional \$55,000 per year in program support. This

program support will directly benefit our region and each of us personally.

There are two different naming levels for us to consider. Naming of a room within the National Office after Bob would cost \$15,000, payable over a period of one to five years (\$3,000 per year). Based on our annual growth (last year we raised over \$18,000), this level is manageable for our group and will make the biggest impact. Another naming opportunity is the Pioneer Exhibit. This project is a collaborative display that will feature eight to ten pioneers relevant to the history or culture of NAI. Pioneers are chosen by the donors for the amount of \$2,500. I think Bob certainly qualifies as a pioneer in the organization of NAI! This display will be prominently displayed in the National Office for all visitors to view.

For most of us, gifts of the size of naming opportunities are not a consideration on an individual level. However, as a collaborative approach we can make a significant impact. This would be a great way to really put our dollars to work with an immediate return on our investment. I would love to discuss this with you further. Please feel free to give me a call, or contact Julie Buderus at 888-900-8283 with any questions you have.



Region Six Election Results are In!

Don R. Simons, Mount Magazine State Park, Paris, Arkansas

As your elections chairman I am pleased to announce that the NAI Region Six election ballots have been tallied. The following people have been elected:

Director: Kelly Farrell
Treasurer: Jay Schneider

Deputy Director: Sarah Keating
Secretary: Dana Hoisington

520 ballots were sent out. Only two came back with bad addresses. I received 111 ballots.

Thank you all for participating. I look forward to working with this new executive board!

Got a Swarm of Kiddies Coming?

Amber Mascuilli, Lake Dardanelle State Park, Russellville, Arkansas

We all get these calls. A teacher wants to bring her students out for their "field trip."

"Absolutely, no problem, we'd love to have you." As you are going through your checklist of programs, times, lunches, so on and so forth, you ask, "About how many kids should we expect?"

The answer, "Oh, between 100 and 115."

Holy Moly! You try to keep your cool and finish the conversation without hyperventilating. Okay, so that might just be a little more than your meager interpretive budget and staff can handle. Even with breaking them up into stations, you need at least three to four stations to make that number of kids work. Here at Lake Dardanelle, this is a very common occurrence. As gas prices increase and off campus trips decrease, teachers are feeling pressured to bring the entire grade out on one big day. Unfortunately, this is a trend that is not likely to be reversed in the near future.

So, I started letting my wheels turn...

I began thinking about what we wanted the kids to experience while they were here. One of our main goals is to reinforce what they learn in their classroom by doing hands-on activities. I wanted a teacher-facilitated game that reinforces their classroom knowledge. Most good games involve a ball, and I wanted different questions about their area of study to come into play as well. Why not put the questions on the ball? No, that wouldn't allow for much diversity between grades/subjects. But what if I put numbers on the ball? What if I had questions about their specific school topics corresponding with the numbers on the ball? Now that's getting somewhere. We could then divide the colossal number of kids into more manageable groups with several rotating stations. This game could be teacher-facilitated for each group without much preparation on their part.

The following is what I came up with:

Materials:	Set-up:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beach ball with numbers drawn on each section• Copies of questions numbered the same as the ball• Copies of directions for the game	Make up questions pertaining to their school subjects during their trip time, enough for the numbers on the beach ball. We use 24, but adjust to your needs. Print off enough copies of the questions and rules for one teacher in each group. That way they can review it before they start playing. Let your contact at the school know your plan so it won't be a surprise. Decide where you want this station located at your site.
Rules of Play:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Divide your group of kids into two teams.2. Have them line up single file with the leaders facing each other (illustration: ----- ------).3. The teacher throws the ball up in front of the two leaders, like a tipoff in basketball. The student who catches it answers the question that corresponds with the number under his/her right thumb. The teacher can decide whether to allow help from their team.4. If the student answers correctly, that team gets a point. If they get it wrong, the other team has a chance to "steal" the point by answering correctly. Play as long as needed. Make up extra questions for more time.	
With this last spring a blur of yellow buses and kids of all ages, this game served us well. The smaller groups allowed for more personal attention, and we were accomplishing one of our goals by reinforcing their schoolwork, not to mention supplying some exercise. It's versatile, cheap, easy, and the kids really seem to love it. By all means, make it a staple at your place, and feel a sense of calm when you get those calls!	

The Human Head Effigy Vessel: A Cultural Tour of the Ancient Midwest and Southeast

Marlon Mowdy, Hampson Archeological Museum State Park, Wilson, Arkansas

An ancient civilization existed on a meander bend in the Mississippi River around 1400 A.D. It was a sophisticated culture, having a complex political, religious, and social order. It reigned through a chiefdom, which oversaw the daily lives of an agricultural society in what is today Mississippi County, Arkansas. The rich, black soil that feeds life to thousands of acres of cotton today once was the village grounds of the Pacaha tribe, known to many scholars as one of the hundreds of Mississippian Mound Building Cultures that thrived throughout the ancient Midwest and Southeast.

The village site was on 12-15 acres of land owned by Dr. James K. Hampson. Dr. Hampson and his family lived on a 5,000-acre plantation named Nodena. Dr. Hampson, a medical doctor, was interested in the pathology of Native American remains and became a skilled and highly praised amateur archeologist. He truly blazed the first path in northeast Arkansas in studying, documenting, and preserving over 40,000 artifacts from what is now known as the Nodena Archeological Phase. This geographical area lays just northwest of Memphis, Tennessee, following the Mississippi River into the bootheel of Missouri, and 40 to 50 miles inland.

Following his death in 1956, the Hampson Family donated Dr. Hampson's vast archeological collection of important "type site" artifacts referencing the famous "red and white Nodena pottery" and "willow leaf chert point," as well as thousands of ceramic and lithic pieces, to the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.

Hampson Archeological Museum State Park, located just eight miles south of the original Nodena Cultural Site, exists today to manage and interpret this vast

collection and to tell the story of Dr. Hampson's work.

One of the most prestigious honors bestowed on Hampson Archeological Museum State Park came in 2003, when the Art Institute of Chicago selected the head effigy vessel from the Hampson collection for inclusion in a six month exhibition entitled *Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand: American Indian Art of the Ancient Midwest and South*. The two host cities were Chicago and St. Louis. The Hampson head effigy vessel is one of only three such unique vessels known to exist, and is the centerpiece of the Hampson Collection. "It is considered a masterpiece in the archeological world of the Mississippian Period," according to Dr. Jeffery M. Mitchem, Site Archeologist with The Arkansas Archeological Survey Research Station at Parkin Mounds Archeological State Park, Parkin Arkansas.

Notes from the St. Louis Art Museum:

- The exhibition featured some 300 masterpieces of stone, ceramic, wood, shell, copper, silver, and gold created between 2000 B.C. and A.D. 1600, and examined them in the context of large-scale plans and reconstruction drawings of major archaeological sites.
- Sculptural forms embrace a wide range of human, animal, and vegetal motifs, as well as composite imaginary creatures, abstract shapes and embellished vessels, implements and items of ritual paraphernalia.

Some 73,000 people visited the exhibition. Hampson Archeological Museum State Park is extremely proud to have been a part of such a monumental undertaking with the arts and academic communities of Chicago and St. Louis.



Think Outside the Toilet, cont. from p. 1

something missing." Then it hit me—each state park vehicle needs a mural on the side, around and between the windows. This mural would be a painting of each park's treasures, like our carved wooden signs. These are the best representatives of our parks' resources, like the murals on each U-Haul trailer for each state.

Shouldn't each park's vehicle be an interpretive tool

instead of just a mode of transportation? I can picture the "famous tree" from Mount Magazine, Cedar Falls at Petit Jean, the Courthouse at Old Washington, diamonds from Crater of Diamonds, and more. The new opportunities are only limited by our imagination and willingness to think outside the box.

Consider thinking outside the toilet and the four-wheeled box.

Crater Expeditions

Rachel Engebrecht, Crater of Diamonds State Park, Murfreesboro, Arkansas

This has been an exciting summer at Crater of Diamonds State Park, near the little town of Murfreesboro in southwest Arkansas. This park has always been unique, in that it is North America's only public diamond mine. Thousands of visitors come here every year to try their luck. Their odds of going home with a diamond are about one in one hundred (based on total visitation and total number of diamonds found in a year). This summer, there has been an easy new way to do improve those odds—a paid, guided diamond mining program called “Crater Expeditions.”

The idea for a paid guided tour at the Crater had been around for a while, but it was not until the spring of 2005 that definite plans for “Crater Expeditions” were drawn up by Park Superintendent Tom Stolarz, Park Interpreter Aneesah Rasheed, and Park Interpreter Rachel Engebrecht. (Other park employees were also consulted for opinions and ideas.) For years the park has offered free “diamond mining demonstrations.” These 20-minute programs show visitors the most popular diamond hunting methods, particularly the “sluicing” (wet screening) method, in which dirt is washed from gravel in special screens, and the gravel is concentrated using a process that involves rocking, tapping, turning and flipping the screens. The best ways to extract diamonds and other minerals from the concentrates is then demonstrated, and the special characteristics used to identify diamonds are discussed. Visitors who watch this program have a much better understanding of diamond hunting methods than those who do not. But we Crater staff thought we

could help more people find those elusive diamonds, and “Crater Expeditions” was born.

Visitors who sign up for Crater Expeditions pay \$8 per person in addition to the normal search area entrance fee of \$6 for an adult, or \$3 for a child between the ages of 6 and 12. Each participant receives a cloth bag containing a magnifying glass, a mini-magnifier collection box, 3 glass vials, tweezers, and a “diamond hunting tips” brochure, all of which can be taken home after the program. Plus, for the two-hour program participants can borrow screens, a bucket and a shovel, which they have the option to rent after the program is over. An interpreter then gives them an overview of the mine and its history, takes them out to a washing pavilion for a mining demonstration, and stays with the group giving individual assistance in their search for diamonds. Visitors are encouraged to dig their own dirt and wash it under the guidance of the interpreter. They are also assisted in collecting barite, quartz, spinel, and other minerals.

This summer 49 people participated in seven “Expeditions.” We are constantly making improvements to the program and, while we have not yet had a diamond found during the program, the visitors enjoy themselves. They take home some interesting souvenirs and become armed with greater knowledge about diamonds and the art of diamond hunting than they otherwise would have. Crater Expeditions, and the personalized attention it offers the visitor, is one of the best improvements made to our park this year.

Eastern Arkansas Refuge Completes New Facility

Dana Dukes, White River NWR, St. Charles, Arkansas

In 2003, White River National Wildlife Refuge completed construction of a 10,000 square foot office and visitor center located off of Hwy. 1 in St. Charles, Arkansas. The recently completed facility houses an auditorium, environmental education classroom, an exhibit hall, and the Friends of White River Bookstore.

The foyer is home to a 28-foot replica of a bald cypress tree. In addition to the birds and other wildlife that inhabit this symbol of the swamp, the tree houses two bear families. A cross section of a bear den illustrates the unique denning habits of black bears on the refuge. Another scenario includes a female bear encouraging her older cubs to leave the den. The base of the tree is surrounded by an underwater diorama showcasing flora and fauna typical of the refuge's oxbow lakes.

The interpretive displays inform visitors about the human and ecological histories of the area, the hydrology of the White River, and the bottomland hard-

wood forest. Two miniature theaters are at the center of the exhibits. One educates visitors about the importance of flooding on the refuge while broadcasting images on the floor and the wall. In the other theater, visitors see the refuge on a summer night. As the light dims, a narrator discusses the common sounds of nocturnal wildlife such as frogs, owls, insects, and foxes. As each call is played, an image of the animal calling is backlit on the theater wall.

The refuge will hold its third annual White River Wildlife Festival on October 8. Children's activities will include making birdhouses and bird feeders, t-shirt printing, button making, and more. Free boat tours will be offered on the hour from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Wildlife programs and guided walks will be offered throughout the day. The Arkansas Bow Hunters Association will have an archery demonstration area set up for children to learn about archery safety and techniques until the close of the festival. For more information, contact the refuge at 870-282-8200.



ARKANSAS State Report

Jay Miller

Arkansas State Parks has had several changes in interpreters –**Brandy Ballard Cornwell** has resigned from Mount Nebo State Park and **Deanna Balthazar** has left DeGray, **Paul Butler** has been hired at Moro Bay, **Dennis Allen** has moved to Assistant Superintendent at Millwood, **Travis Eddleman** has been selected as interpreter at Powhatan, and **John Morrow** has moved from Petit Jean to become this system's first "super" interpreter, overseeing the many interpretive operations at Old Washington.

At **Game and Fish**, **Neil Curry** has been named director of the nature center to be located in downtown Little Rock and **Lucy Moreland** is the new Chief of Education.

Crater of Diamonds State Park's new 3,900-square-foot **Diamond Discovery Center** has one goal: to help visitors find a diamond. Here park interpreters present "Diamond Mining 101," a demonstration of methods for finding diamonds. Exhibits show how diamonds were formed here and how to identify diamonds. A video gives tips for finding diamonds. The two level building also has a classroom, a refreshment area, digging equipment rental, restrooms, office, and bathhouse/changing rooms for the new Diamond Springs aquatic playground.

Interpreter **Don Montgomery** of **Prairie Grove Battlefield** reports that his transcription of primary documents into a single Word document continues. He has completed 115 and still has about half the Union Army, the Confederate Army, and civilian accounts to transcribe. When completed, someone looking for information about a specific regiment can quickly find information directly from this document.

Sarah Keating notes that **Lake Dardanelle's** summer-long **Daycare Daze** finally came to a close. "We awarded 487 junior naturalists with badges and certificates. I dug back into my memory of an NAI workshop years ago where I attended a session on preschool programming, and used some of those ideas. By using transparency sheets, images of nature from magazines, and a colored sharpie, I was able to reveal the shapes found in nature by looking at actual objects. The kids loved the mystery and guessing game. Then they got to create their own nature pictures by gluing foam shapes onto paper."

"This month I've had a huge response to the weekly **Cave Crawl** and the **Twilight Crevice Hike**," reports **Susan Tigert** of **Devil's Den**. In 100-degree temperatures, this is a cool place to be. "One evening for the crevice hike I had 60 people waiting to explore this most unique area. Although that's a lot of people to take on a hike, I managed to accommodate my adventurous group. It required a few adjustments to my traditional route, but everyone was able to enjoy the experience."

Amy Peck keeps us informed about happenings at **The Old State House Museum**, and reports that the museum has opened a **new exhibit**: "Try Us: Arkansas and the U.S.-Mexican War." It details Arkansas's role in the 1846 to 1848 war between Mexico and the United States with U.S. and Mexican military uniforms, weaponry, original flags from Arkansas units, and many personal items that once belonged to soldiers.

Brad Holleman created a special **Fourth of July**, and writes: "A chill ran down my back as I began to read. These were not just any words. I had practiced it several times. I had looked up the unfamiliar words. "Consanguinity" is now part of my vocabulary. I was ready to read the Declaration of Independence to a crowd that far exceeded my expectations. I tried to read forcefully and clearly. I wanted to create a lasting memory for this crowd. This document is what the holiday is all about. We had been busy all weekend with watermelons, ice cream, games, etc. These are all good things. This year I wanted more. Inspired by the annual reading of the Declaration on NPR, I decided to try to add real meaning to our celebration. I am glad to report that real meaning and values still draw a crowd at Queen Wilhelmina. It was a simple salute to the ideas that brought life to a nation and give hope to the world. I can't help but believe that Jefferson's use of "pursuit of happiness" is the philosophical foundation of parks as a function of government."

The **Arkansas Repertory Theater** took its traveling troop to three state parks this summer in a wonderful production of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." They were very well-received by park visitors and community residents. This is The Rep's third production in the parks. ■



KANSAS State Report

Schanée Anderson _____

Events and Brag Bag

Lee Richardson Zoo

- The Zoo is hosting a **Regional EcoMeet** on October 18. EcoMeet is a competition for teams of four 8th-12th grade students who compete in four events testing their knowledge of Kansas wildlife and natural resources—two lab-type tests with specimens and biofacts (a general test and one that focuses on mammals this year), an outdoor scavenger hunt for primarily plant ID, and an interpretive event. Winning teams and individuals receive scholarships for post secondary education.

KACEE

- KACEE is working with the Kansas Chapter of Pheasants Forever to bring the **Leopold Project** to Kansas. A committee has included background information specific to Kansas as well as added information on Kansas teaching standards.

Sunset Zoo

- Sunset Zoo is developing an after school program for the fall. Called **Conservation Camp**, the kids get involved in action projects that will make the community a better place.
- The titi monkey/pygmy marmoset exhibit was expanded, adding an outdoor viewing area.

Great Plains Nature Center

- The GPNC recently released its latest pocket-sized reference guide. **A Pocket Guide to Kansas Threatened and Endangered Species** is available free to visitors who request one when visiting the GPNC. To receive a copy by mail, send name, complete mailing address, and \$1.50 (payable to GPNC) per booklet.
- The GPNC is also accepting entries for **Kansas Critters:Mammals, A Wildlife Book Written and Illustrated by Kansas Kids!** This wildlife learning initiative involves research and includes reading, creative writing and art. The project is made possible by a generous grant from The Forrest C. Lattner Foundation. Rules and entry forms can be found on the GPNC web site at www.gpnc.org.

Nicodemus National Historical Site

- On September 17, Nicodemus National Historic Site and the Nicodemus Historical Society will co-sponsor a **reenactment baseball game** from the 1880's. Teams will be dressed in period baseball uniforms and equipment. The day before the Beye Vintage Baseball Team from Grand Island, Nebraska will visit three elementary schools and talk to 3rd and 4th graders about the importance of baseball to Nicodemus settlers. The students will also get the chance to play a couple of innings of vintage baseball from the 1880's with the rules from that era.

Sedgwick County Zoo

- Construction is moving fast on the expansion of the **Cargill Learning Center**, scheduled to be completed in early spring 2006.
- Plans are underway for a new **Humboldt Penguin exhibit** which will open in 2007. Sedgwick County Zoo will be the twelfth zoo in the nation to host this species.

Conference/Meetings/Workshops

KACEE

- The **Topeka Water Celebration Planning Workshop** will be held September 22 -23, in conjunction with the Topeka Water Festival. The workshop is designed to provide tools for planning water celebration event logistics and curriculum, along with a behind-the-scenes water celebration experience. Participants have inside access to the Topeka Water Festival, along with workshop sessions covering all aspects of conducting educational & sustainable water celebrations. Contact Melissa Arthur at MelisArth7@aol.com for more information.
- **Flyways and Byways Workshop: Exploring the Places We Live.** November 3, 2005, in Hutchinson, Kansas. Contact Beth Carreno at bcarreno@swbell.net for more information. This workshop will be hosted at the Dillon Nature Center.
- **7th Annual Kansas Environmental Education Conference: Exploring EE - Underground to Outer Space.** November 4-5, 2005 at the Grand Prairie Hotel and Convention Center in Hutchinson, Kansas. Visit www.kacee.org or contact Shari Wilson at swilson@kacee.org for more information.

Wonderful staff and volunteers

- **Karen West** will be replacing **Kara Pace** as Interpretive Coordinator at **Sedgwick County Zoo.** 



LOUISIANA State Report

David Latona _____

Editors' Note: David's report was submitted before Hurricane Katrina. We've been in touch with David, but information is still being gathered about the hurricane's impacts on natural and cultural sites. He'll be able to tell us more in the next issue.

Gay Brantley, Interpretive Naturalist at **Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge**, is moving equipment and display materials into their **new Conservation Learning Center**. The CLC Grand Opening is scheduled for October 15 at the **Annual Fall Celebration** during **National Wildlife Refuge Week**. The "unveiling" of an outdoor art sculpture, which doubles as an educational wildlife viewing area, and the new photo blind will be lagniappe that same day. The second refuge photo contest will be judged the Saturday before National Wildlife Refuge Week so that entries can be displayed during that week and at the Fall Celebration. Area teachers are excited about the web site, which has cross-curricular K-12 lesson plans using the wildlife resources of the refuge. With the web site and the new CLC, they are expecting an increase in school and other groups using the refuge as an outdoor classroom. **"Wild Friday" programs** were very well attended this summer. Alligator Alley, in August, included a presentation on alligator life history and management, holding baby gators, shining the eyes of big ones in the lake and sampling delicious alligator nuggets. The October program will feature "Creepy Critters" stories around a campfire.

Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park director **Larry Raymond** kicked off a busy summer for the nature park's staff by attending a PLT facilitator retraining on the first day of June. Larry helped facilitate two **PLT workshops** for LSU-Shreveport Methods Class students and area day care providers and a Project WILD workshop for Caddo Parish teachers over the summer. Senior park naturalist **Judy Sneed** provided a program on tree rings for close to 400 students and teachers at the Oil City Elementary/Middle Environmental Magnet School's Woodstock Science Fun Day on June 3. The next day, naturalist **Rhonda Clay** used several of the park's educational raptors for an outreach event at the **Natchitoches Fish Hatchery** that involved 725 participants.

The Caddo Parish Parks Department partnered with **Shreveport Green and Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation** for a sixth year to provide **Earth Camp** at the Walter Jacobs Nature Park. This year 261 campers and 28 counselors from fifteen pick-up sites (most from SPAR recreation centers) joined camp director **Robert Williams**, park naturalists **Rachel Demascal** and **Kimberly Warren**, and two **ShrevCORPS** workers for a fun-filled eight weeks.

Caddo Parish Parks Department helped facilitate the fourteenth annual "Get Hooked on Fishing Day" on the shores of Caddo Lake in Earl G. Williamson Park on June 25. Over 300 people enjoyed a day of fishing and aquatic-related education. Park naturalists **Rhonda Clay** and **Kimberly Warren** provided an educational station on aquatic wildlife.

This summer, **Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve's Acadian Cultural Center** in Lafayette commemorated the **250th Anniversary of the Acadian Deportation** and the arrival of the Acadians in south Louisiana. Programs included storytelling, a Cajun music program highlighting historical and generational changes, and a day of songs and dances from the twelfth century through today. The series of programs culminated in the world premiere of **"Grand Pre"** ("Big Prairie"), a drama about the Acadian Deportation by acclaimed Louisiana playwright **Cody Daigle**, and the Lache pas la Patate festival. The festival took its name from an old Cajun saying: "Don't drop the potato—don't forget where you came from" and stayed true to its theme with Cajun music, food, traditional crafts, old-time games, and a pig roast. Acadian Cultural Center park rangers offered tours of Bayou Vermilion in a traditional Louisiana boat. Over a thousand people attended the programs, play, and festival and gained a new understanding of how the Acadians became Cajuns.

Louisiana State Parks is gearing up for another wonderful **fall interpretive workshop**. This is an annual event held in September. Interpretive personnel state wide with the agency come together to share ideas and participate in various sessions. The camaraderie, as well as the papers presented by these cooperating groups, will improve upon the already established quality interpretation of the natural and cultural resources of Louisiana. And just to tease a bit more, this year's training will take place in the gentle hills of **North Toledo Bend State Park**. On the banks of one of the nation's top ten fishing lakes, we will enjoy the company, the entertainment and the great Louisiana cooking. Wish y'all were there!





MISSOURI State Report

John Miller _____

The **Association of Missouri Interpreters** (AMI) had another outstanding conference August 16-18. This year's AMI Workshop, "**Interpretation Doesn't End Where the Sidewalk Begins**," was held in the St. Louis Area and featured Powder Valley Nature Center and Route 66 State Park. In addition to a lively scholarship auction and fun, informative field trips, there were great presentations on various facets of interpretation. The following award winners were announced and presented at this year's conference:

Undergraduate Scholarship: Bethany Meyer, University of Missouri-Columbia (seasonal at Mark Twain SP)

Graduate Scholarship: A. Jennifer Stegmann, University of Missouri-Columbia

Distinguished Interpreter of the Year - Volunteer Category (two winners!): Kathy Thiele (Busch Conservation Area, MDC) and Jim Hawes (Burr Oak Woods Conservation NC)

Distinguished Interpreter of the Year - Seasonal Category (two winners!): L. A. Lowrance (Bennett Spring SP) and KyLee Brockman (Busch Conservation Area, MDC)

Distinguished Interpreter of the Year - Professional Category: Dana Hoisington (Bennett Spring State Park)

Best Interpretive Effort - Individual Category: Allison Vaughn (Ha Ha Tonka State Park)

Best Interpretive Effort - group category: Interpretive Staff at Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center: Lisa LaCombe, Stephanie Acers, Sheri Medlock, Carol Barclay, Diane Neal and Shalena Tolbert

Best Presentation at the Workshop: Ted T. Cable (Kansas State University) "What Interpreters Can Learn From The Business World"

Best Share Fair Presentation at the Workshop: Eugene Vale, DNR-DSP "Lewis & Clark Teaching Trunk"

AMI Special Award: Cyndi Cogbill (Prairie State Park) special recognition for her service to NAI committees and AMI

Next year's AMI Workshop will be in the Cape Girardeau area. For more information about AMI and future workshops visit www.mointerp.net

Tim Smith (Cassville) reports that **Merle Rogers is retiring** after 30 years with MO DNR. In addition to working nearly his entire career at **Roaring River State Park**, he is a former Director of NAI Region Six. Merle's last day will be at the end of September. If you would like to be involved with going away messages or festivities, contact Tim at smithfarm@mo-net.com. We will miss Merle and his unique style of interpretation and humor.

News from MO Department of Conservation. Several MDC interpretive sites across Missouri have **new faces** on their staffs, including: **Jeremy Soucy & Sara Scheper** as the first Education Specialists and **Lisa Seyer** as the Office Supervisor at the newly opened **Cape Girardeau Conservation Campus**; **Catherine McGrane** has transferred to the **Columbia Bottom CA** from Powder Valley CNC; **Kevin McCarthy** is the newest Naturalist at **Powder Valley CNC**; **Tamera Bruckerhoff** is now the Grow Native Communication Specialist in Jefferson City; **Martha Daniels** was promoted to Exhibits Coordinator in Jefferson City; and **Greg Collier** was promoted to Outdoor Skills Specialist in Clinton.

Jamie Salvo (St. Charles) reports that MEEA will host the **9th Environmental Education Conference November 4-6, 2005** with the return of the **EE Campus!** Held at the University of Missouri-Columbia, this EE Campus is the perfect format for those striving for MEEA Certification. The conference will kick off with a visit from **Green Elvis!** The EE Campus boasts sessions full of content and proven teaching methods. Topics range from earth science, environmental history and policy, to GPS technology integration, grants, and non-profit management! Some sessions may be conducted outdoors, and you will have plenty of time for quality "hands-on" understanding of a new concept. This is a power-packed conference at a great price. It's only \$55 for MEEA members and \$80 for non-members. Even better, the non-member rate includes MEEA membership! Visit www.meea.org for more information.

Sue Holst (Jefferson City, DNR) reports that the book **The Terrestrial Natural Communities of Missouri** has just been revised. First published in 1985, this full-color revised edition is 500 pages and includes 300 photos, digital images, maps, and charts. Along with descriptions, there also are examples of where you can still see these communities today. The book also includes information about the communities' conservation status, threats and ecological restoration. The book is available in many nature centers, state park and historic site visitor centers. Copies also may be ordered by contacting MO DNR at 1-800-334-6946 (voice) or 1-800-379-2419 (TDD) or at moparks@dnr.mo.gov. The cost is \$29.95 plus shipping and handling fees. The order form is available directly at www.mostatoparks.com/ternatcom_order.pdf.





OKLAHOMA State Report

Neil Garrison _____

Joey Williams, the Director of Education at the **Museum of Osteology/Skulls Unlimited International** (Moore, Oklahoma), says they are as busy as beavers preparing their brand spanking new museum for its **Grand Opening**. According to Joey, they still “have a long way to go.” He also mentioned that future exhibits in the museum will be a completely articulated 45' humpback whale skeleton...as well as a huge African elephant skeleton (as a centerpiece). Skulls Unlimited is continuing negotiations with a **Discovery Channel** production company for a reality television series. The proposed program is sort of an “American Chopper meets C.S.I.”(...i.e., a type of program dealing with skeletal preparation and articulation). Details, which are sketchy at this time, will follow.

News from the **Tulsa Zoo**: They recently completed their **summer Wildlife Discovery classes** for children from five to 14 years of age. Each class involved students for six to nine hours over the course of a week and included crafts, projects, time on the zoo grounds and SNACKS! The horticulture crew is planting an **Oklahoma Trail** which will showcase OK native flora from east to west. Docents will be able to visit with guests about how these plants are used by wildlife and people as well as the value of landscaping with natives. **Rusty Grimpe** and **Susan Lewis** are both retiring within the next month from the world of Zoodom. Zoo staff gave them a Toga Party to send them off. Lots of interpretive material at that one.

Sue Hughart, the Park Manager at **Lake Eufaula State Park**, sent me this report: “Bake sales or beer cans? For the third year now, a Biker Rally has rented an entire campground at Lake Eufaula State Park. The Friends of the Park have until this year tried to make a little pocket money by a bake sale, but it has just not gone over too well. This year, the Friends decided to try gathering up and recycling the aluminum cans that were thrown on the ground. In three days, they collected almost 500 lbs. of cans (not all beer, by the way). The cans will be sold and put in the Friends’ “Yes, we CAN” account. This allows the naturalist to purchase items that are needed (...but are not covered by state budget funds) ... and, besides that, it saves landfill space.”

Loraine Richmond at the **Deep Fork Nature Center** (at Lake Eufaula State Park) told me that their Friends organization conducted yet another **fund-raiser** for her facility. This time, they charged \$5 a plate for fried frog legs. (Other items in the meal included fried fish, coleslaw, hushpuppies, French fries and dessert. The fried frog legs dinner was a part of the September 17th Grand Opening festivities for their new interpretive exhibit: the “**Frogatorium**.” (Is there a touch of irony there? Ha!) This indoor wetlands exhibit is similar to a rain forest exhibit at the zoo in that the frogs are not confined in enclosures. At the moment, Loraine reports that they have green treefrogs, gray tree frogs, southern leopard frogs, toads and aquatic turtles.

The much-coveted “**HUB CAP AWARD**” went to the staff and volunteers of **Lake Tenkiller State Park**. The June 28th award ceremony was conducted at the Governor’s Mansion. Wow! This award is given by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for having the most volunteers participating in a CLEAN-UP DAY for a state park. **Leann Bunn**, the Naturalist at Lake Tenkiller State Park, reports that a “**Gold Rush**” event was held at their state park. She says it even included panning for gold. Leann says: “We discuss the history behind the Gold Rush era and then we let the kids go out in the park looking for ‘gold’ ... well, our version of gold, that is. It is really fun to teach a little about history. We, of course, have hidden ‘fake gold’ throughout the park’s walking trails and camping areas. The kids can turn in the nuggets for prizes. We have had a great response from the public.”

A big WELCOME goes out to **Julie Monnot**. She is the new Staff Naturalist at Tulsa’s **Oxley Nature Center**. She filled the position left open by retiring naturalist Lynda Fritts. However, Julie is not a new face around the nature center. She worked as a seasonal naturalist at Oxley Nature Center while attending school. She later volunteered her time for trail work and as a trail guide up until her hiring.

Oklahoma’s “**BioBlitz 2005**” event was held at Tulsa’s Mohawk Park and Oxley Nature Center on September 9th and 10th. Dozens of scientists from all over the state participated in this year’s event. The goal was to inventory (with nets, live traps and binoculars) every living thing in the area during a 24-hour time period. It is the first time that the event was held so close to a large urban area.

The **Oklahoma Wildlife Expo** was held in Guthrie on August 27-28. The naturalist at Lake Thunderbird State Park (**Julie Tarver**) conducted Dutch oven cooking demos at the event. Julie reports that they labeled her as a “renowned Dutch oven instructor” in the article that appeared in the “Outdoor Oklahoma” magazine. Julie had a big chuckle after she read that.





TEXAS State Report

Tara Tucker

A BIG congratulations to **David Owens**, Assistant Park Manager for Administration and Interpretation at **Lake Mineral Wells State Park and Trailway** who was awarded the “**Best Workshop Presentation**” at the NAI Region Six Conference in Fort Smith, Arkansas in March. He presented a program entitled “The Evolution of an Interpretive Program: Evaluation and Improvement,” and is invited to present his program at the upcoming NIW in Mobile, Alabama in November.

Katie Facker of **Houston Zoo, Inc.** reports that **Lia McDonald**, Manager of Volunteer Programs and Travel Program Coordinator, has left the zoo to pursue her MBA at Rice University. While we congratulate her, she will be greatly missed!

As always, thank you to **Julie Coombs** for the plethora of **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department** news below. She left the agency at the beginning of September, but will still be active in NAI Region Six!

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department News – WOW! Have they been busy!

According to **Cari Box**, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Region Seven Interpretive Specialist, the **Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm** celebrated 30 years of hands-on history with a big **anniversary bash** on June 17 and 18. Living history demonstrations, crafts, and activities helped to bring this early 20th century Texas farm to life for park visitors. Today the farm is part of the Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site. Over 1,000 people attended the event, which in addition to a 5/10 K Walk/Run and the Stonewall Peach Jamboree Parade and Rodeo, included over 20 presenters and demonstrators. The visitors were treated to programs on sheep shearing, fence building, lye soap making, candle dipping, cotton ginning, spinning, quilting, blacksmithing, rope making, and much more. The farm’s interpretative staff of 12 park volunteers, more than 20 demonstrators, and the entire LBJ State Park and Historic Site staff pitched in to make this an enormously successful event. Here’s to another 30 years!

Lupita Barrera, Regional Interpretive Specialist, says **The Landmark Inn State Historic Site** stepped back in time to the 1800’s on May 20-21 at **Castroville Pioneer Day**. By special arrangement with the Castroville and La Coste campuses of Medina Valley Elementary Schools, over 450 children attended a special program. In period clothing, park superintendent and recent NAI-certified interpreter **Ken Conway** welcomed the children to Landmark Inn and “set the stage.” A blacksmith, rope and soap makers, and chuck wagon cooks brought their trades to life with demonstrations and lots of opportunities for students to participate. Students were treated to cookies like pioneers might have eaten and samples of genuine, hand-made soap.

Barrera adds that the Aransas Pass Juvenile Probation Department and the Chamber of Commerce each year sponsor a youth program, **Aransas Pass for Youth**. The program allows children to participate in an entire summer of activities that range from arts and crafts to swimming and bowling to visiting local museums.

Congratulations to these new **Certified Interpretive Hosts!** They attended training at El Paso State Parks Complex on June 8 and 9. They are: John Moses (El Paso State Parks Complex), Adrian Amador (Wyer Aerial Tramway), Esteban Macedo (Wyer Aerial Tramway), Danny Lee (Hueco Tanks State Historic Site), Nancy Scarentino (Wyer Aerial Tramway), John Nunez (Franklin Mountains State Park), Joyce Gaddis (El Paso State Parks Complex), Karen Villanueva (Wyer Aerial Tramway), and Peter Hall (Hueco Tanks State Historic Site).

A book just released this weekend through Texas A&M Press highlights the **Hummingbirds of Texas**. Rising out of the Texas Hummingbird Roundup and using material learned through this backyard survey, the book includes hummingbird habitat creation (gardening), human impacts and interaction, major hummingbird events in Texas, as well as the usual natural history and identification sections. All 18 species that have been recorded in Texas are included in the book, as well as the Plain-capped Starthroat and a photograph of the Cinnamon Hummingbird. Written by Clifford Shackelford, Madge Lindsay and Mark Klym, the book includes fantastic photography by Sid and Shirley Rucker and excellent artwork by Clemente Guzman III.

It’s not too late to get involved! If you would like to help out with **planning for the Region Six Interpreters’ Workshop in Houston**, Texas in March 2006, contact Tara Tucker at ttucker@houstonzoo.org.





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DEADLINES FOR VISIONS ARE::

Winter 05/06: November 20
Spring 2006: February 20
Summer 2006: May 20
Fall 2006: August 20

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