

Education a Part of Groundwater Remediation

Wichita's Challenge

In 1991, contamination was detected during routine testing of the groundwater in the vicinity of downtown Wichita. The 2,600-acre area discovered was dubbed the "Gilbert-Mosley Site" as these were the two streets that crossed at the point of first discovery of the contamination. Since then, investigations have broadened the site boundary to include a total of approximately 3,850 acres.

Preliminary tests found the groundwater was contaminated with varying concentrations of tetrachloroethene, trichloroethene (TCE), dichloroethene (DCE), vinyl chloride, and additional contaminants. Wichita's groundwater was contaminated with these chlorinated solvents as a result of historical industrial activities in the area.

A Unique Approach

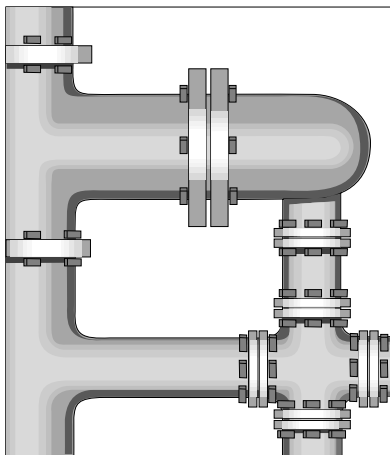
The City chose to take the initiative in the clean-up project. With innovative thinking and financing, the City of Wichita agreed to comply with all investigation and clean-up requirements of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, which was overseeing the project on EPA's behalf. It was a win/win proposition for EPA and KDHE. If Wichita succeeded, it could claim a victory, thus avoiding many problems associated with Superfund projects. If the City failed, EPA and KDHE could rely on Superfund authority to require cleanup in other ways.

The City of Wichita received the prestigious Ford Foundation's Innovations in State and Local Government Award from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, for forward-thinking leadership with the will to create revolutionary practices to accomplish community goals.

Implementing the Solution

On October 16, 2003, the Wichita Area Treatment, Education & Remediation (WATER) Center, the treat-

ment center for the Gilbert-Mosley Project, celebrated its grand opening. "The Gilbert & Mosley Project is considered to be one of the most innovative public/private partnerships ever created to solve the complex environmental problem of groundwater contamination," says Mayor Carlos Mayans. "This project has earned the City of Wichita national recognition for its development to avoid Superfund intervention and the impacts upon public health, environmental risks and the local economy." Mayans served on the State Legislature at the time forward-thinking legislation was passed to make the clean up a reality.



The facility houses the equipment, a hydraulic-venturi air stripper treatment system, needed to clean the polluted groundwater, and is designed to encourage public interest and observation on how groundwater is remediated. The other half of the remediation system consists of 5.5 miles of conveyance piping and 13 extraction wells, which extract and convey the polluted groundwater to the WATER Center treatment facility. The system is operated to limit the spread of and to remove the groundwater contamination.

Awareness and Education

A one-of-a-kind venture, the WATER Center offers a hands-on, interactive environmental center dedicated to the education and health issues caused by water and pollution. This facility has the potential to reach far outside the community affected by the Gilbert-Mosley contamination and to provide education for the understanding and prevention of many water pollution activities.

While exploring the treatment facility plaza, visitors learn the story of the Gilbert-Mosley Project and why the WATER Center was built. They learn how the local polluted groundwater is cleaned, how pollution can affect health, and what can be done to prevent future pollution. They can see a demonstration of various

Director's Report

Kelly Farrell

Hello, Region Sixers! This issue of *Visions* brings you a new slate of officers, but before I officially introduce them, I want to send special recognition and thanks to our outgoing officers, including Director **Pat Silovsky**; Deputy Director **Jodi Morris**; Secretary **Tiffani Addington**; and Treasurer **Sarah Keating**. These individuals donated countless hours and much energy to their duties in the past several years and leave our region in very good standing with NAI. Your new officers are: myself, Deputy Director (and immediate past treasurer) **Sarah Keating**, Secretary **Dana Hoisington**, and Treasurer **Jay Schneider**. Several committee chairs and state coordinators have agreed to stay on board, while other positions will be filled during or after the spring workshop.

Speaking of workshops, mark your calendars now for the National Interpreters' Workshop (NIW) 2007, which Region Six will humbly and hospitably host November 6-10, 2007, in Wichita, Kansas. (In case you're wondering, NIW 2006 is scheduled for Albuquerque, New Mexico, this November). The NIW 2007 committee is in place and has already started the planning process with NAI events coordinator **Deb Tewell** and other NAI staffers. They are: **Pat Silovsky**, chair; **Shea Lewis**, programs; **Jim Mason**, publicity/promotions; and **Amber Mascuilli**, volunteer coordinator.

A full Region Six business update will follow the annual workshop and appear here in the summer 2006 issue. In the meantime, I want to share the following with you:

**If the day ever comes when they know
who they are, they may know better
where they are.**

—Robert Frost, *A Cabin in the Clearing*

Have you heard the phrase “sense of place?” It's a concept tossed around by conservationists, educators, poets, even trendy feng shui experts. *Sense of place* is what makes your environment psychologically comfortable. In other words, your emotional and spiritual bonds to places allow you to function effectively—with security, pleasure, and understanding.

Do you have a *sense of place* at your work site? If interpreters and managers don't have a strong sense of place, how can we expect to help our visitors do so? Look around at your office, exhibit area, historic structures, trails, and facilities. Do you have positive emotional and spiritual bonds with these places? If your answer is “yes,” then you are probably on the right track to helping your visitors forge similar connections, creating their own senses of place.

On the other hand, perhaps your answer is “No, I do not have a sense of place here.” Why? Is your sense of place stunted by negative feelings about the site itself? Or, are you comfortable with the site, but frustrated with your job duties or co-workers? It is crucial that you identify the factors influencing your feelings about your site, and that you do what you can to enhance your own sense of place. Of course, some of the potential negatives are out of your control; let those things go. Focus your energy on areas you *can* control:

- You *can* improve communication with colleagues, supervisors, and visitors.
- You *can* attempt to problem-solve personal conflicts with co-workers.
- You *can* liven up your office with colorful posters and other inspiring items.
- You *can* fix/clean/update aging exhibits, trails, and facilities.
- You *can* take it upon yourself to become more educated about your site.
- You *can* learn more about the profession we call interpretation.

In other words, you can do everything in your power to make your area psychologically comfortable. Be reasonable—if you share your office with others, take their needs into consideration, just as you would take visitors' needs into consideration when planning exhibits or programs. As you go about these tasks, you will learn more about yourself. You'll become more in touch with your likes, dislikes, communication styles, capabilities, and potential. It won't be long before you agree with poet Robert Frost that the better you know who you are, the better you know where you are.

This is my first *Visions* report as Region Six director. In the past month or so, I've reflected on my NAI journey to this position in order to grasp a “sense of place” about where I am right now as your leader. It started in 1999 when I was a green young seasonal interpreter, a new NAI member, and fortunate to attend the Hot Springs workshop in my hometown. At that time, my ultimate NAI goal in the world was to present at a regional workshop. Now, thanks to hard work, much guidance from mentors, and now your vote of confidence, I have reached that goal and others

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Call for Volunteers in Albuquerque!

Get your kicks from our 66 reasons to visit Albuquerque:



Reason #55

The Albuquerque Isotopes is Homer Simpson's favorite baseball team, and an episode of *The Simpsons* features his campaign to prevent the Isotopes from moving from the fictional town of Springfield to Albuquerque.



Reason #44

The Rio Grande Bosque State Park protects a significant part of the largest cottonwood forest (in Spanish pronounced BOS-kay) in North America, one of our most threatened habitats.



If baseball and bosques aren't enticement enough, we've got (easily) 64 more reasons to join us in Albuquerque this November 7-11, at the 2006 National Interpreters Workshop, whether you roll in on historic Route 66 or fly in to the celebrated Albuquerque Sunport. NIW is our annual gift to ourselves and to each other, and volunteering is an essential component of a successful workshop! Please sign up now and avoid the rush!

You can sign up online at <http://www.interpnet.com/niw2006/volunteer.htm> — it's quick and easy, and offers a full description of every job available. We'll make every effort to place the early sign-ups in your first choice of positions. If you don't have access to the Internet, you can contact the volunteer coordinator, Ellen Dornan, at 505-890-2937.

Albuquerque- it's a trip!



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within the association and my career. As I settle into the role of serving as your director, my "sense of place" is that this feels new, but also good and exciting. Know that I *will* work to keep you informed, I *will* remain conscious that this is a role of servant leadership, and I *will* do everything I can to work with the Region Six membership and board of directors to make this term of leadership a success.

I look forward to seeing those of you that I know at upcoming regional and national workshops, and also

am excited to meet those of you that I haven't crossed paths with yet. Please note that I am using a new email address (kelly.c.farrell@gmail.com) for all NAI business, and feel free to write or call anytime with questions, comments, and ideas.

Over and out.

Kelly Farrell
CHI, CIT

A Purdy Good Group of People Won a Purdy Good Number of Awards! Workshop 2006- Houston, TX

Bob Jennings Meritorious Service Award

John Miller, Missouri Department of Conservation

Distinguished Professional Interpreter Award

David Owens, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Richard Baldauf/Outstanding New Interpreter Award

Michelle L. Soenksen, Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Outstanding Special Event

Andrea Anders, Docent Programs Coordinator, Houston Zoo, Texas

Outstanding Interpretive Site Publication

AMigo, John Miller, editor

Outstanding Interpretive Written Article

Kathryn DiFoxfire, Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Outstanding Interpretive Program

"Border Disorder," Prairie State Park, Missouri

2006 Brian Barnette All American Interpreter's Quiz

Jodi Miller, Arkansas

Best Workshop Presentation

***How Do They Grow Sausage?* Janet Price, Jamie Hubert, and Andrea Putman**

Mini Grant Awards

Martha Lafitte Thompson Nature Center, Missouri, Tri-Fold Display

Dillon Nature Center, Kansas, Water Testing Kit

Education a Part of Groundwater Remediation, continued from p. 1

water-dependent landscapes as well as xeriscapes. The cleaned water supports all kinds of aquatic wildlife that can be viewed through "windows" in the outdoor fish observatory. A series of paths and bridges lead visitors along an artificial creek and eventually to the Arkansas River, where the treated groundwater will join the river. The paths provide visitors viewing opportunities for other wildlife attracted to the creek as well as demonstrative exhibits on buffer strips and non-point source pollution.

education building, which houses a classroom, an aquarium, and exhibits focused on the Gilbert-Mosley project, pollution, and the unique and life-supporting qualities of water. The aquarium is home to native species such as minnows and offers information on why these small creatures are so dependent on water quality. In addition, the relationships between the geology and geography of the area, groundwater and surface waters are also explored. Visitors to the WATER Center walk away with an understanding of water and groundwater, water pollution and its prevention and the cleanup process.

Purt-Near Perfect Poet

by Janet Price, Missouri State Parks

When the day is finally over, and the darkness starts to fall,
there's finally time to set a spell...hear the mournful coyot' call.

When the night is big and lonesome, and the night guard sings his song,
he'll look up at the sky and know he's right where he belongs.

He spent the day communing while commutin' in the saddle.
He heard the bird song. Felt the breeze. He called out to his cattle.

This life is purt-near perfect. Texas country's great to ride.
He's glad that he's a cowboy, and he feels a twinge of pride.

Well... OK, he's not a cowboy, though he might like to be.
But he's got a story he wants to tell ... a bit of history.

This cowboy hat's his trademark, and with that Texas drawl,
he'll weave a web of cowboy life, his audience to enthrall.

He started back in high school, discovering the ranger way.
He honed his research skills real fine, still honing to this day.

He's got a reputation that's carried 'cross state lines.
His mentoring skills with others open up inquiring minds.

He helps them to discover the unique talents they hold,
and visitors' lives are changed with every story that he's told.

With a satisfaction rating of 98%,
you see the people love him. That rating, he can't lament!

I'd say he's purt-near perfect! He dazzles! He delights!
He leads them by example, and takes them to new heights.

Best Workshop Presentation. Certified Interpretive Guide.
His achievements are too long to list. He fills Texas with pride.

His personal style, his unique way, have touched so many lives.
He entertains. He educates. But mostly, he inspires.

David Owens has made a difference, with both visitors and peers.
We're honored we can share in the wisdom of his years.

So when you see that lonesome cowboy just settin' 'long the way,
pull up a chair and set a spell. Hear what he has to say.

He might tell a story of horse poop, talkin' bout reincarnation.
Or the feller who done took a drink below a cow. Tarnation!

He'll tell about a horse pawin' the white outta the moon.
He'll tell all night, and still you'll think he'll end it all too soon.

When he's done, you'll think, "Well, I ain't changed all that much."
But don't be fooled. You just can't help but be changed by his touch.

And so, to David Owens, NAI gives this award...
Distinguished Professional Interpreter. You've made our spirits soar.

Congratulations, David. For this, you're our first pick.
And we, like many others, think you're purt-near perfect.



ARKANSAS State Report

Jay Miller

Crappie are biting like crazy at Moro Bay.

The discovery of the **Ivory-billed Woodpecker** in the big woods and backwater rivers of eastern Arkansas have awakened a powerful interest in birding. Agencies are banding together in joint ventures for promotion of Arkansas as a birding destination, a birding trail is being considered, and locations across the state are publishing bird checklists, T-shirts, and more. Signs welcome you to "Ivory Bill" country and you can even get an "Ivory Bill" haircut!

The state park winter interpretation workshop jumped on this bandwagon and opened with a presentation by **David Luneau**, a member of the research team and the man who took the now famous video of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker as it flew from tree to tree in the Cache River Bottoms. It's fascinating to see pictures of this bird, and likewise amazing to learn of the magnitude of resources pouring into the area for research and for land preservation. This is a reminder that CONSERVATION WORKS, and the biggest piece of the conservation pie is simply the act of setting aside large tracts of land for habitat. It's amazing what might turn up if there's just a place for it to live.

Molly Postlewait and **Scott Mair** received rave reviews at the interpretation workshop. Both did day-long workshops and were their usual impressive and expressive selves. New state park interpreter **Mary Ann Parker** said, "The words *Shock and Awe* come to mind." **Gina Root** said, "I was totally inspired by both of the guest speakers and Tina Wilcox too." Steve Paul wrote, "Scott Mair really opened my eyes. When Jay said we weren't ready for Scott, he couldn't have been more right. He was incredible."

Little Rock's **Old Statehouse Museum** has announced several new programs. The opening reception for their latest exhibit, *Sam Dellinger: Raiders of the Lost Arkansas*, is scheduled on April 7. The exhibit features prehistoric vessels made by some of Arkansas's earliest inhabitants. Then they will welcome country music singers/songwriters by way of Nashville's legendary Bluebird Café. On May 20 the Saltillo Sojourn (Mexican War Reenactment) will transport visitors to Saltillo, Mexico, a city frequented by Arkansas troops during the U.S.-Mexican War. Saltillo's central plaza reminded them of home, with its row of columns similar to the [Old] State House, as one soldier described it. The event will feature a variety of living history performances and demonstrations throughout the day, as well as traditional Mexican food, music, and dance. Their Youth Summer Fun Program is titled *History Commandos*. Children in grades 3-8 can join an elite squad of History Commandos and explore the role of Arkansans in arms! Recruits will investigate the changing roles of men and women during war time through conflicts like the U.S. -Mexican War, the U.S. Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. Activities include daily drills; camp life activities; info on military tactics; and activities exploring the meaning and creation of battle flags.

The **State Park Lodge** on **Mount Magazine** will be opening in April. Exhibits will be installed in the restored courthouse at **Powhatan Historic State Park** in late April. The interpretation center/visitor center at **Bull Shoals-White River** will be opening in September, ground has been broken on the interpretation center/visitor center at **Lake Fort Smith**, and ground will soon be broken for construction of the new interpretation center/visitor center at **Hobbs Conservation Center**.

A good friend, excellent interpreter, and formerly active member of Region Six, **Karen Westcamp**, has been hired as education specialist for the Game and Fish Commission's **Janet Huckabee Nature Center** in Fort Smith. I hope to see Karen active in NAI once again.

In January, **Jay Miller** and **Kelly Farrell** led a CIG course for the interpretive staff at **Old Washington Historic State Park**. **John Morrow**, Chief Interpreter there, wrote that the workshop motivated his staff and set new standards for excellence. They are proceeding to develop themes for each of their historic properties and weave interpretation throughout the site around those themes.





KANSAS State Report

Schanée Anderson

Events and Brag Bag

Konza Prairie

- The Konza Environmental Education Program started its 2006 Docent Training Program on February 25. The docent program offers specialized training for those interested in Konza Prairie and tallgrass prairie ecology. The first orientation session is followed by several field trips and interpretive learning experiences on Saturday mornings February through May. After completion of training, observation of experienced docents, and graduation in September, volunteer opportunities include guiding hikes, guiding van tours of the bison enclosure, educational in-services, work days, and special events. At present, approximately 100 docents guide educational programs and tours for school groups, organizations, families and other groups while supporting the three-fold mission of Konza Prairie Biological Station: research, education and conservation.

Ernie Miller Nature Center

- La Grande Birding Fiesta, Saturday, April 29 from 9-1: It's springtime, so let's celebrate! Join us at Ernie Miller Park for a south-of-the-border fiesta to welcome back hummingbirds, orioles, warblers, and other feathered friends from their winter vacation in Latin America. Take a guided bird hike through the park and learn the basics of birding. Participants may also visit bird-related information booths and children's activity stations at their leisure. See live birds of prey! Make a recycled bird feeder to take home, and find out how to attract birds to your yard. In the event of rain the booths and stations will be moved indoors. Appropriate for school-age children and beginning birders. Great activity for small scout groups! For more information, contact Chris Pistole, Park Naturalist at (913) 764-8580 ext. 23.

Sedgwick County Zoo

- The Cargill Learning Center officially opened in March. This 23,000 square foot facility houses four permanent classrooms, three transitional classrooms, a 350-seat auditorium, as well as many behind the scenes amenities.
- Sedgwick County Zoo in partnership with the Wichita WATER Center was chosen to participate in Project POWER, a wetland training program for teens and adults. Staff from each institution will be involved in a two-day training program at the Bronx Zoo in March.

Conference/Meetings/Workshops

Konza Prairie

- Konza Environmental Education Program (KEEP) is gearing up for "Prairies Across Kansas," a new teachers' workshop promoting systematic comparison of Kansas' three prairie types. Science teachers from across the state are being recruited to participate in the workshop at Konza Prairie Biological Station June 19-28, 2006. "Prairies Across Kansas" will allow teachers and students to collect data at their own native prairie site near their school based on existing KEEP science protocols. From their classroom the data will be entered into KEEP databases via the Internet. Data from various sites in different prairie ecosystems will be compared. In 2005 ten teachers from Sharon Springs to Stilwell participated. For more information, visit www.ksu.edu/konza/keep.

Wonderful staff and volunteers

- Naturalists **Andrea Johnson** and **Chris Pistole** from the **Ernie Miller Nature Center** began the process of becoming CIT's (Certified Interpretive Trainers) after attending a week-long workshop Jan. 9-13 at **Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center** in Blue Springs, MO. (We both REALLY enjoyed the workshop. We got so much out of it! It was wonderful!)
- **Chris Pistole** has started a first-person presentation of John James Audubon. People can contact Chris if interested in booking it for their site or for a meeting.
- **Kathy Sexon**, former curator of education at Garden City Zoo, was named zoo director of Garden City Zoo. Congratulations Kathy!
- **Andrea Smith** was named curator of education at Garden City Zoo.



LOUISIANA State Report

David Latona

Things are really “swimming” at **Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge**. Aquaria exhibits in the Conservation Learning Center, which opened in October, are currently being completed. In addition to a 1,300-gallon corner tank and the 20 foot, 1,200 gallon wall divider tank, a large pool in the center of the exhibit room will soon house three young alligators.

Audubon Nature Institute facilities will soon be expanding days of operation for **Audubon Zoo and Audubon Park Golf Course**. Special event venues are available for rental at the zoo, golf course and **Audubon Aquarium of the Americas**. Chase Zoo To Do is scheduled for Friday, May 5. Zoo To Do For Kids Presented by Humana is scheduled for Friday, April 28. For information on both events, call 504-861-6160. **Audubon Aquarium of the Americas and Entergy IMAX® Theatre** are expected to reopen in summer 2006. Also coming this summer, catch the premier of “Hurricane On the Bayou,” the powerful emotional story about Louisiana’s vanishing wetlands and the storm’s dramatic impact on the Gulf Coast region and the entire nation at Entergy IMAX® Theatre. **Audubon Louisiana Nature Center** is located in New Orleans East and remains closed due to damage to the buildings and grounds.

After the hurricanes of 2005, life is slowly returning to normal at **Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve**. Five of the six sites are up and running, although one boardwalk trail is still closed at the Barataria Preserve due to hurricane damage. On January 7, Chalmette Battlefield reopened for one day to commemorate the 191st anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans. Park staff gave history talks and ran a kids tent where children could try on uniforms, play with old-fashioned toys and games and create a puppet show about the battle. There had been serious discussion on whether to stage the event, but requests from local government leaders and enthusiasm from living history reenactors carried the day. Despite a lack of power, gas, sewer, phone, or 911 service, over 100 living history volunteers and over 1,000 visitors agreed that it was one of the best anniversaries ever. Many visitors were pleased to have a “normal” event to attend, noting the parallels between 1815’s battle against overwhelming odds and the current difficulties south Louisiana is facing.

Chimp Haven, Inc., located in **Eddie D. Jones Park** in Caddo Parish, held their first open house for visitors to view chimpanzees in October 2005. Thousands of visitors from the Ark-La-Tex region took advantage of this opportunity to view the first 32 chimpanzees housed at the facility. Learn more about Chimp Haven and the public viewing days at www.chimphaven.org.

Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site was lucky (and grateful!) to avoid much damage from the hurricanes. Rita did make a bit of a mess, downing some trees and damaging the old barn and the roof of the kitchen at the plantation; however, the new Visitors Center and the Olivier Plantation House survived well.

Following Katrina and Rita, volunteers helped **Port Hudson State Historic Site** clean up their trails at a Hurricane Clean-Up Day on October 1. The Louisiana Hiking Club, a Zachary girl-scout troop and other volunteers worked for approximately three hours and eliminated the majority of the debris covering the trails. The groups cleaned areas of Fort Desperate and the Alabama/Arkansas Redoubt, which were hit hardest by the storms.

Progress is being made in the endeavor to rebuild **Fontainebleau State Park**. One major difference will be in the skyline, as many trees were knocked over by Hurricane Katrina’s winds. The trails still have many trees down, making them impassable, and there will be no marsh boardwalk programs until the boardwalk is rebuilt. The bathhouse that was being built in the campground has been repaired to pre-hurricane condition, while the one that it was to replace has been torn down.

Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site and Winter Quarters State Historic Site were named Southern Travel Treasures by AAA’s magazine, *AAA Southern Traveler*. Featured in the November/December 2005 issue of the magazine, the article calls Longfellow-Evangeline SHS “a blend of history, legend and natural beauty,” while citing Winter Quarter SHS as “a rare survivor of the ravages of the Civil War.”

Over 1,200 girl scouts attended **GIRLfest 2006 at Bayou Segnette State Park** in Westwego on Saturday, January 14. In addition to providing a host site, Bayou Segnette SP staff provided demonstrations and activities for the Girl Scouts. Site personnel continue to make progress every week with cleaning and improving the park, hoping to have the day use areas open as soon as possible. The Nature Trail is open again, but a lot of the wood duck boxes came down along with the trees, and the staff is working on getting them put back up again.





MISSOURI State Report

John Miller _____

The Association of Missouri Interpreters (AMI) will conduct their annual AMI Conference September 25-28 in Cape Girardeau, MO. The theme for this year's conference is, **"Only through our connection to the resource will we connect visitors to our unique sites."** For more information about this conference or AMI go to www.mointerp.net

Lynn Youngblood (Blue Springs) reports that **Burr Oak Woods** was host to MDC's first ever Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) workshop the week of January 9 - 13. Twenty-three NAI members from MO, KS, and IA attended this 40-hour training and began in earnest to complete their certification. We would like to thank **Lorna Domke** and the O&E Division Administrators for their vision in taking this diverse interpretive group to a new level of professionalism. The certification and training will not only benefit the staff directly involved, but they in turn will be able to train other staff and volunteers in the Certified Interpretive Guide program. The end result is that a more professional interpretive staff statewide will provide more professional level programs to our public! A fine collaboration between NAI, O&E Administrators, and MDC interpretive staff. Go Team!

George Kastler (Jefferson City) reminds everyone that the Division of State Parks hires about 70 people each year for summer positions across the state. Applicants are required to attend a 40-hour training course May 21-25. Anyone interested in working as an interpreter in Missouri State Parks this summer should contact George at george.kastler@dnr.mo.gov for application information (they are not on line).

Janet Price & Reenie Sailer (Middlebrook) want to say thanks to all of you who thought of them and wished them well during the Taum Sauk dam crisis. On Dec. 14, the Taum Sauk Reservoir near Lesterville failed, sending more than one billion gallons of water into **Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park**. The flooding caused extensive damage to the area of the park along the East Fork of the Black River where most of the park's facilities are. The devastation made national news.

Steve Juhlin (Cape Girardeau) welcomes new part-time hourly Naturalists **Scott Kelley** and **Julie Beardslee** to the creative interpretive team at **Cape Girardeau Conservation Campus Nature Center**.

Tiffani Addington (Leasburg) asks for thoughts and prayers to go out to **Cyndi Cogbill** (formerly Evans) and her family. Cyndi's sister, **Julie Knost**, passed away on December 31 after a long and difficult battle with liver disease. Cyndi's address for cards, etc.: Prairie State Park, P.O. Box 97, Liberal, MO 64762.

Wayne Grein (Kirkwood) reports that **Amy Anderson** is the new Naturalist at **Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center**. She previously worked as a part-time naturalist for MDC at the Forest Park office. Amy also worked as an interpreter with the St. Louis Zoo, St. Louis Science Center, and South Carolina State Parks. The staff at Powder Valley is excited to have Amy as part of their interpretive team!

Brian Stith (St. Louis) reports that **Jamie Hubert** has been promoted to the position of Interpretive Resource Coordinator at **St. Francois State Park** as of December 16th, 2005. Jamie had been working as an Interpretive Resource Technician at the Missouri State Museum. Prior to working for the Museum, Jamie served as a seasonal naturalist at Onondaga Cave State Park and Sam A. Baker State Park.

John Miller and **Leah Eden** (Branson) wish to thank everyone who came out and supported the Tenth Annual Vulture Venture event at the **Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center** on February 25. In addition to the live vulture presentations by **Julie Eulinger** (Springfield Nature Center) there were vulture games and outdoor vulture watching opportunities. The highlight of the event was the presenting of an original commissioned artwork print to **Bryon Putman**. Bryon was the 'instigator' of the event, which won the 1994 NAI Region Six Best Interpretive Program award.

Mardi Arce (St. Louis) reports that the **Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (JNEM)** welcomed a new permanent Park Guide to its interpretive staff in December. **Anthony Bates**, a graduate of Western Kentucky University, spent two summers at Mammoth Cave National Park. He is excited about working with visitors at the Gateway Arch and Old Courthouse. JNEM celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the completion of the Gateway Arch on October 28 and 29, 2005. The celebration began on October 28 with a day-long series of commemorative events, starting with a reception for dignitaries and an "anniversary tram ride" to the top of the Arch for toasts to the past and to the future. The events received a large amount of local and national press attention, and were exceptionally well-attended. The successful 40th anniversary events were made possible by the generous assistance of JNEM's partners, Metro and Jefferson National Parks Association.





OKLAHOMA State Report

Neil Garrison _____

Eddie Reese of **Oxley Nature Center** in Tulsa reports that it is loud and dusty around the nature center these days. Their interpretive building was on the verge of being condemned. Twenty years of a leaky roof, carpenter ants and termites has had its toll on the structure of the facility. Fortunately, the squeaky wheel got some grease this time instead of being replaced. So, they are looking forward to getting rid of their stack of buckets to catch the dripping water, squirrels no longer able to chew their way into the offices, a new building and some peace and quiet. Well, except for the school groups that come through, but they welcome that.

Oklahoma City was the site of the 25th annual **WinterTales Storytelling Festival** February 23-26. One of the featured storytellers was Bill Harley of Seekonk, Mass. A special interpretive exhibit on Native American beadwork is on display through May 14 at the **National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum**. It features beaded items that were made by the Columbia River Plateau tribes. The grand opening of the Oklahoma Historical Society's brand new museum, the **Oklahoma History Center**, took place in November. The admission fee is \$5.00 a person...unless, that is, you are one of the 100,000 students that are expected to visit the museum each year. Student admission is free. (The new museum is right across the street from the state capitol.)

Our congratulations go out to **David Walker**. He is the Senior Naturalist/Naturalist Supervisor at the Oklahoma City Zoological Park and Botanical Garden. He was the recipient of the "Outstanding Classroom Teacher of the Year" Award in February 2006 from the Oklahoma Association of Environmental Educators (OKAEE). A big WELCOME goes out to **Teresa Randall**. She is the new face at the **Oklahoma City Zoological Park and Botanical Garden**. She was recently hired to be the Education Director.. **Wanna go to Costa Rica?** If so, Holbrook Global Field Expeditions and the Oklahoma City Zoological Park and Botanical Garden will be hosting a trip to that country on June 10-19, 2006. For further information: e-mail trandall@okczoo.com.

The **Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge** hosted a bird identification workshop for adults in February.

An event entitled "No Moms Allowed" was conducted at Oklahoma City's **Martin Park Nature Center** on Saturday, February 11. Dads, daughters and sons were encouraged to attend...but no moms. The focus of the activity was to dig native clay out of the park's streambed...and then fashion mud pies and mud dinosaurs out of this natural modeling clay. Moms can be such "killjoys" at muddy events such as this...so they were not invited.

Kim Knife Chief and **Austin Real Rider** were the instructors at a two-day pottery workshop in mid-February at the **Pawnee Historical and Cultural Museum** (Pawnee, OK). On the day prior to the pottery workshop, a Pani Arts Exhibition and Reception was held at the same location, and Grammy-nominated musicians Alex Smith and Cheevers Toppah performed.

The volunteer support group at **Lake Eufaula State Park** (Checotah, OK) is currently raising funds for the purpose of building an amphitheater in the park. In addition, the group held its annual "Wild Game Dinner" in January. The meal was designed as an appreciation event for all of the park's volunteers.

Just when you thought that it was safe to go back in the water!...da dum...da DUM!...DA DUM!!! An Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation employee shot and killed a 12-foot-long American alligator in southeastern Oklahoma in November, 2005. It weighed 500 pounds. It was removed from the private property farm pond because it was suspected of killing and eating the rancher's calves.

Probably the most noteworthy news in Oklahoma here of late is the extreme drought that we are currently experiencing. Wildfires have become an almost constant menace statewide. In fact, the "Amber Alert" message boards suspended over the interstate highways are currently being used to issue warning messages to drivers about the red alert fire danger statewide. Despite this proactive stance, it still seems that a trip on any major Oklahoma highway reveals a blackened and scorched area alongside the roadway every couple of miles or so where some careless smoker (?) has tossed out a cigarette butt (?).





TEXAS State Report

Tara Tucker

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Interpreter **Carolyn Rose** says that there's a lot going on at **Caprock Canyons State Park and Trailway**. The spring interpretive season will begin the first weekend of March and continue through the last weekend of May, with programming offered on Saturday mornings and evenings and Sunday mornings. Staff has moved three bison bulls into the box canyon below the new viewing platform, so visitors now have the opportunity to see several members of the Texas State Bison Herd. Visitors can park at the Prairie Kiosk and then follow the bison hoofprints across the road to the viewing platform. Carolyn says they are also producing an educator's resource packet, which will be distributed to local and regional public, private, and home school educators early this spring. Please call the Park Interpreter for more information at 806-455-1140 or 806-455-1492.

Congratulations to the **College of Forestry and Agriculture at Stephen F. Austin State University!** According to **Dr. Mike Legg**, they received an \$83,453 grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife to build two miles of accessible nature trail at their **Piney Woods Native Plant Center**. They also received contracts to develop accessible interpretive trails in the Angelina and Sabine National Forests. The Angelina trail will be a Forest Heritage trail and interpret pioneer uses of the forest. The Sabine National Forest trail will interpret the forest's role in water conservation. The student chapter of NAI will be working on both trail projects to earn money for the Regional and National NAI meetings.

Also at **SFASU**, **Dr. Pat Stephens Williams** has just been added as a permanent tenure track member of the Faculty of the College of Forestry and Agriculture to teach in the on-line Master's degree program. She has worked the last year as an interim faculty member until the position could become permanent. Congratulations, Dr. Williams! **Zaina Farrar**, the NAI Student Chapter President, and other members are worked diligently to put together questions for the Interpreters Quiz in Houston as the student chapter volunteered to run the quiz this year. The student chapter is also planning a field trip to visit **Kristina Hardwick**, the Education Director of the Offshore Energy Center.

Exhibit and Collections Coordinator **Clark Hancock** reports that the **Austin Nature & Science Center** opened the Naturalist Workshop & Trade Counter in November, with support from the Junior League. The Naturalist Workshop is a perfect place to explore the natural world: use microscopes and magnifying glasses to get a close-up view, a balance to check the weight, and field guides and touchable specimens for identification of your finds. Kids of all ages (including grown-ups) can bring their favorite rock, fossil, seedpod, sea shell or other cool natural object to the Trade Counter. The shelves of the Trade Counter are brimming with treasures from Mother Nature: sparkling minerals, exotic sea shells, animal bones, fossils, polished rocks and much more. Best of all, these items are available for trade and can be taken home by visitors who earn enough points. The Naturalist Workshop Trade Counter is open Wednesday through Friday from 10am to 1pm and Saturdays from 10am to 4pm.

Kristi Payne of the **River Legacy Living Science Center** in Arlington says their organization is "Bridging the Gap" by helping students achieve scientific literacy, an important goal of our school districts. The purpose of the RUS Grant is to expand experiences for rural school children who have limited opportunities for interaction with experts in various fields. River Legacy provides real time videoconference classes to children from kindergarten through 12th grade. Naturalists present interactive science lessons about reptiles, opossums, creatures that live in the soil, composting with worms, thinking like a scientist, and more. All of these lessons are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards, along with the National Science Education Standards. Participating teachers are provided with pre-conference investigations and post-conference activities to extend the lessons and provide a depth of knowledge.

Also going on at the **River Legacy Living Science Center**.....staff is partnering with **Fort Worth Audubon Society** to offer an exciting new event this spring. **International Migratory Bird Day** celebrates the incredible journeys of migratory birds. The free event on April 22 encourages bird conservation and increases awareness of birds through hikes, bird watching, art exhibits, featured speakers and live raptor programs. For more information, visit www.riverlegacy.org. And lastly, after-school programs....the River Legacy Living Science Center is one of 15 science centers across the country to partner with the Education Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts and the University of California Lawrence Hall of Science to help community-based organizations implement science and engineering activities and lessons for their after-school programs. The Science Center's professional development staff members are currently working with after-school teachers at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington, Girls Inc. of Tarrant County, and the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that the children enrolled in their programs experience extended and meaningful science and engineering programs. This effort is being funded by the National Science Foundation.





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DEADLINES FOR VISIONS ARE::

Spring 2006: February 20

Summer 2006: May 20

Fall 2006: August 20

Winter 2006: November 20

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