



FRIENDS OF SQUAW CREEK REPORTER Mound City, Missouri

Fall 2008

Volume 9 Number 3

SQUAW CREEK CALENDAR:

- September 6 Habitat Restoration Workday**
- September 13 Refuge Volunteer Workday**
- September 27 Habitat Restoration Workday**
- Oct 11-Nov 30 Refuge Office open on Weekends**
- October 11 Refuge 5K Fun Run**
- October 12 Big Sit**
- October 13-18 National Wildlife Refuge Week**
- October 18 Volunteer Recognition Picnic**
- October 25 Habitat Restoration Workday**
- November 8 Deer Count/hayride**
- December 5 Eagle Days School tours**
- December 6-7 Eagle Days**

VISITOR OFFICE COMMITTEE

Vic Miles 816-444-2459
Amanda Griffin 660-572-0267

REFUGE WETLAND COMMITTEE

Vic Miles 816-444-2459

EAGLE DAYS COMMITTEE

Amanda Griffin 660-572-0267

PLEASE give the above committee chairpersons a call to assist them.

Time to start signing up for duty in the bookstore during the Fall Migration weekends. Please contact Amanda or Vic if you can help.

Visit our website at www.squawcreek.org for recent bird surveys, events, etc.

Items for the newsletter must be sent to George W. (Bill) Scheil at 7311 Ditzler, Raytown, MO 64133 or to him at gwsch@juno.com. The deadline for the next issue will be November 10.

Junior Naturalist Program

The Junior Naturalist Program, developed and run by Friends of Squaw Creek member Amanda Griffin, has been very successful this summer. This was the second year and interest continued throughout the summer. The program began May 29 and will end August 28. However, there will be several additional programs scheduled for this fall. There has been an average of approximately 25-30 kids attend (not counting adults) each Thursday evening. Amanda has been doing a great job with the 4 to 14 year olds, has developed all of the programs and has even had several guest speakers and helpers. All of the activities center around the George L. Scheil Outdoor Classroom. Some of the programs included live animals such as snakes, frogs, insects as well as guest appearances from biologists and archeologists. All of the children (and parents!) that have attended these

programs have enjoyed each session and have learned a great deal about the refuge and the wildlife and habitat found at Squaw Creek. Amanda has done a great job and we hope she will continue this program next year.

Boardwalk

During the week of July 14-18, 9 youth and 3 adults from the McKnight Church of Christ, St. Louis, worked on the boardwalk just north of the Davis Creek Observation Tower. This group wanted to work on an outdoor project somewhere in Missouri and after contacting the refuge during the winter, decided this was a project they would like to attempt. The group stayed in the motel at Big Lake State Park during the week. Some of the youth had never used a drill but by the end of the week, they had plenty of experience! By the last day, the deck was finished, they did an outstanding job and were all hard workers. The only thing left to accomplish was the platform at the west end in Eagle Pool, portions of the rail and the last 2 sections of boardwalk to tie into the parking lot on the auto tour route. The platform is being completed this week and additional materials had to be ordered to complete the rails. Hopefully, the rest of the materials will arrive before this fall and will be completed before all of the snow geese show up this fall. We hope to attach a floating dock into the pool as well as a photo blind in the near future.

Habitat work

Thanks to the dry weather during July, a great deal of habitat work was accomplished in refuge pools and moist soil units. Mowing and/or disking was accomplished in the Rice Paddy and Davis Creek moist soil units as well as some in south Mallard Marsh and in Snow Goose Pools B, C, D and E. This work was completed to open up dense stands of vegetation, set back undesirable plant species and prepare each of the units for the fall shorebird and waterfowl migration. Flooding in the Rice Paddy moist soil units and several of the Davis Creek units has begun and early shorebirds and a few teal have already begun to utilize the areas. So far, there has been an adequate amount of water in both Davis and Squaw Creeks to flood the units. In addition, Chip Lehmer and Daryl Walker have repaired and/or replaced several water control structures that rusted

out over the years with new culverts and controls. Temporary employee Rod Reeves has been rehabilitating a number of the refuge dikes and roads that were in dire need of repair. The Mallard Marsh Road and a portion of the auto tour route through the north woods has a new layer of gravel and an additional gravel contract will be awarded soon to cover the rest of the refuge roads before the fall migration.

Waterbird nesting

For the first time in the history of the refuge, a colony of cattle egrets nested on the refuge. The colony was found in the buttonbush in south Pintail Pool. The birds could be seen from the auto tour route. The exact number of nests were not known but several hundred birds were counted following the tractors that were mowing and disking vegetation in the pools and moist soil units in July. There were also several black crowned night herons and great egrets utilizing the buttonbush and were suspected of nesting there as well.

YCC

The refuge hosted another Youth Conservation Corp camp this year with 4 youth (14-18 years old) and 1 leader. They worked 8 weeks from June 2 through July 25. They accomplished a number of projects besides maintaining the refuge headquarters lawn. They also assisted in the boardwalk construction. The 4 youth were from the local area and left at the end of the program with a better understanding of the refuge and the environment. Besides completing intensive labor projects, they received 8 hours of environmental education each week and were rewarded with a trip to the Henry Doorly Zoo and a visit to DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge.

Fall Interns

During the spring weekends when the office was open, the refuge was able to have 2 interns from Missouri Western State University present programs every Saturday and Sunday to refuge visitors as well as talk with visitors they encountered on the auto tour route. Though the numbers were small during the spring, they were able to reach and to educate a number of refuge visitors. They were paid a small stipend by the

Friends of Squaw Creek to help pay for gas and other expenses incurred driving to and from St. Joseph. A similar program will be accomplished this fall with stipends paid by the Burroughs Audubon and Midland Empire Audubon Societies. They will have an opportunity to meet a larger number of visitors this fall. This has been an excellent opportunity for students to utilize their education while providing a service to visitors and to promote the refuge at a very minimal cost. We hope to continue this program next year.

Ducks on a Stick

As mentioned in the last newsletter, this project has not yet been completed. The sliding glass case in the display room has not yet been finished. We plan to work on it this fall once the weather is too wet to work outside. This is one of the projects funded from donations for the Gerald Ragsdale memorial. When completed, it will contain 16 dabbling ducks (8 male and 8 female) on a stick. The birds will be housed in the case but can be taken out and utilized when needed for interpretation and education. Maintenance Worker Chip Lehmer is responsible for designing and completing this project.

Schedule of Events

The schedule of events from September 2008 to May 2009 has now been posted on the refuge website. There will be 7 habitat workdays, The biannual volunteer workdays will be September 13, 2008 and April 18, 2009. The office refuge office will be open on weekends from October 11 to November 30 and March 14 to May 2. Eagle Days is December 6-7. The Volunteer Recognition Picnic is scheduled for October 18. Check the refuge website for all of the other scheduled events.

Wetland Conditions

Refuge wetlands and moist soil units are already looking good. Flooding of 7 of the 8 Rice Paddy moist soil units and the Davis Creek #1 moist soil unit has been completed. Water will be moved into unit #2 this week. Snow Goose Pool B and C contain water and flooding has begun in D. Early migrating shorebirds have already been seen as well as a few teal and wood ducks. North Mallard Marsh, Pintail Pool, South Pintail Pool, Pelican Pool, Bluff Pool and Cattail Pool were not drawn down this year and contain water for early migrants. Flooding will continue throughout the rest of the summer and fall.

Cabins Suites

Motel Rooms

Open through Thanksgiving

Restaurant

Sat. 11-1 Lunch,

5-9 Dining

Sun. 8-10:30 Breakfast Buffet

11-2 Dinner Buffet

Wed.-Fri. 5-9

Convenience Store

Open Daily 9-6

Call for Lodging Reservations at (660) 442-5432



Friends of Squaw Creek
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FRIENDS OF SQUAW CREEK NWR

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& appreciate your membership and donations.

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Send form and your remittance to:

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