

Friends Of Crab Orchard Refuge Quarterly Newsletter



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Volume 20, Issue III

July 2022

WELCOME NEW DATA ADMINISTRATOR!

Let Me Introduce to You: Wayne Allen!



We have a new Data Administrator for the Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge! Meet Wayne Allen. I met Wayne and his wife Ann through volunteer work on the Refuge. We were all gathering seeds for a multi-state seed collection project last fall. I asked him if he could or would be willing to be our Data Administrator, replacing Dave Estep. After contacting Dave, and performing his due diligence on the work to be performed, Wayne accepted the opportunity. I presented him to the Board of Directors at the April monthly business meeting and the Board accepted him for this role. Wayne brings a strong set of computer skills and cyber background with him. I will add his own words from his biography to allow you to see for yourselves. "Wayne Allen grew up in a small town in Southeast Iowa. He attended the University of Northern Iowa in 1973, and started working at John Deere Tractor works in 1976 as a second shift mainframe computer operator. After

graduating with a BA degree, he started working as a COBOL and Assembler language programmer at Deere & Co., Wayne moved to Palatine, Illinois in 1980 and started working at FMC Link Belt, Inc. as a programmer. In 1984, he started a Computer consulting business and worked as a system analyst and COBOL programmer for several Chicago area companies; McDonalds, Motorola, and American Hospital Supply. In 1990, he joined Motorola and started programming Oracle on UNIX operating systems and relational databases. In 1995, he was recruited to work with a venture capitalist who wanted to develop World Wide Web (now known as the Internet) software that would help small business create websites. After the venture capitalist job ended, he started a consulting company specializing in Oracle Enterprise Applications software development and implementation until he retired in 2018. In 2017, Wayne and his wife Ann moved to the Lake of Egypt area and built a house on the Lake. They became involved with Crab Orchard when attending an Illinois Butterfly Monitoring meeting and met lots of great people who were Friends of Crab Orchard." Wayne and Ann Allen are Friends Members. We all welcome Wayne to our team and look forward to great progress in our IT areas!

Article written by Rick Whitecotton and Wayne Allen

"The wild heart of Southern Illinois"

75th Anniversary Photo Contest Winners

MARCH WINNERS



MOST UNIQUE
Suzanne Asaturian
"Chorus Frog"



PLANTS AND TREES
Rhonda Barnum
"Hepatica or Liver-Leaf"



WILDLIFE
Vern Lemasters
"Kingfisher Feeding"



LANDSCAPE
Donna Denson -
"Bogard Point at Twilight"

APRIL WINNERS



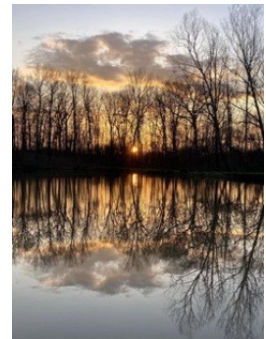
MOST UNIQUE
Suzanne Asaturian
"Spotted Salamander"



PLANTS AND FLOWERS
Kris Killman
"Blue-eyed Marys"



WILDLIFE
Tate Graham
"Yellow-throated Warbler"



LANDSCAPE
Rick Wright
"Tonight's Sunset"

MAY WINNERS



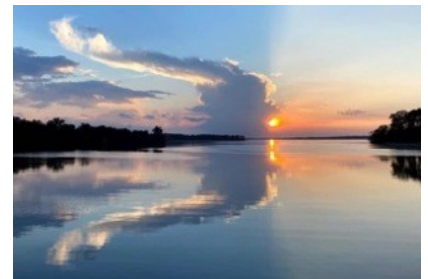
WILDLIFE
Dwayne Sheumaker
"Cedar Waxwing"



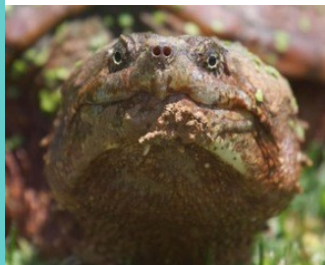
PLANTS
Amy McGlenn
"Red Columbine"



Pollinators and Insects
Suzanne Asaturian
"Eastern Blue Tail"



LANDSCAPE
Donna Denson
"Angelic Sunset"



MOST UNIQUE
Vern Lemasters
"What A Beauty"

Article submitted by Photography Chair
Don Mullison

Woodland Gift Shop Update

If you have not been to the new Headquarters building at the Refuge, then you haven't visited the new Woodland Gift Shop. The permanent location of the gift shop will be in the new Visitor's Center when it is completed, but in the meantime, the Refuge carved out some space in the lobby of the Headquarters building to allow the Friends organization to sell merchandise. We continue to acquire new merchandise every month and put older merchandise on sale. New clothing includes



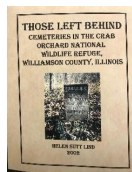
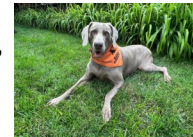
75th Anniversary of the Refuge T-Shirts, 50th Anniversary of Deer Hunting on the Refuge T-shirts, and other attractive T-shirts that highlight the Refuge.

Other new non-clothing items include jewelry (earrings and pins) that accurately depict wildlife found on the Refuge, and Bark Ranger bandanas for your dog.



More items are expected any day now and old favorites like Junior Ranger hats and T-shirts are on order.

The bookstore has had trouble keeping copies of "Those Left Behind: Cemeteries in the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Williamson County, Illinois" on the shelves; however, we just received 5 more copies. With any luck there may



still be one or two copies on the shelf at the time you receive this newsletter. Come visit us and see what's new! Remember, members of Friends of Crab Orchard

Refuge receive a 10% discount on purchases of non-sale items.

Article submitted by Woodland Gift Shop Manager Jim Osborn

Crab Orchard Photography Group Update

After 2-years of missing in-person meetings, the Crab Orchard Photography Group (COPG) is once again getting together! COVID necessitated a change in the way this group interacted. To maintain enthusiasm for photography, a Facebook page was created called "Friends of CONWR and Photography." The Facebook group remains active and currently has 267 "members" who post and comment about pictures taken on the Refuge. Each month judges select



"Pictures of the Month" in several different categories and post the winning images on the Facebook page as well as in the Headquarters building at the Refuge.....However, in May the group began meeting together again.

The absence of meeting rooms at the Wildlife Refuge meant going to a Plan B. Fortunately, Giant City State Park was willing to host the COPG in the meeting room in their Visitor's Center.

Two meetings have been held there so far and the COPG will continue to meet there until the Visitor's Center at the Refuge is completed and open for business. Anyone interested in participating in this group can join us on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8:30am. In case the Giant City Visitor's Center is not open, the COPG will convene in the parking lot and drive to a location to take pictures. Photographers of all skill levels are welcome to participate. For more information contact Crab Orchard National Wildlife Center, Visitor Services.

Article submitted by Jim Osborn

Girl Scout Troop 8093 Earn Garden Patch

On Saturday, May 7, 2022, Pollinator Project volunteers and former Ranger Kimberly Lily supported five young ladies of Troop 8093 of Carterville in their effort to earn a patch for gardening. To earn the patch, they had to learn about pollination, plants, soils, and garden design. Kimberly Lily led this effort, as it was one program that she had not been able to accomplish before, due to Covid. Rick Whitecotton instructed the Troop on habitat. Aimee Hemphill instructed them on native plants and garden design. Pat Dunbar led the class in soils, and Sam Spiller taught them about the parts of a plant and the relationship of plants and animals. Ron Marshall and Ruie Whitecotton also attended and helped. You can visit the garden Troop 8093 designed and planted near the Harmony Trail parking lot. They named their garden "Juliette" in honor of Girl Scout Founder Juliette Gordon Low. It was a great day spent working in the garden with some fine young ladies. [Article and Photographs by Ruie Whitecotton]



Water Safety Tips

Below are a few handy tips to keep you and yours safe this summer. With a little bit of planning you can enjoy swimming and boating safely.

1. Never swim alone.
2. Always Supervise children in and around the water.
3. Always wear a Coast Guard approved life vest (or PFD , Personal Flotation Device).
4. Don't jump in to save a friend . **REACH OR THROW, DON'T GO!**
5. Enter the water feet first .
6. Stay away from drains and dams.
7. No breath-holding games in the water.
8. Protect yourself from sun burn.
9. Watch out for waves, currents, and underwater obstructions.
10. Know how to contact emergency personnel.
Contact the American Red Cross for more information on swimming and boating safety at americanredcross.org

Article submitted by Kathy Renfro

A View From My Perch

Summer has just arrived, wow it has made a hot entrance! Just as a reminder that Covid has not fully passed, we had a brief restriction of mask requirements at the HQ last week. It just lasted a few days. We may feel we are done with the disease, but it has other ideas.

If you drive by the Pollinator Habitat Project on Pigeon Creek Road you will find the “demonstration garden” is blooming quite well, and the field across the road was “reset” to its beauty due to the great work of the Fire Team at Crab Orchard. Several people asked about the white flower which dominated the field in May, that is Beard-tongue (*Penstemon digitalis*), a desirable native plant. The gardeners took a detailed plant identification walk through the 2 acre plot recently and we have many plants preparing to bloom in their succession. Speaking of growing things, have you seen the progress on the new Visitor’s Center? I cannot tell you what percentage of completion the contractors would claim, but it is changing every week.

Summer is the time of year that the pace changes, school is out, vacations happen. I recall that old song noting the “Lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer”. I cannot comment on the crazy aspect, but hazy we have aplenty and personally, let’s just say I would prefer the term “laconic” to lazy, it just sounds more positive.

Here is a quick wrap up of the hectic spring events we saw in the months of May and June:

Migratory Bird, night event – a big success, it included a night kayak event, night hike, live music, telescope for sky viewing, and hot dogs made on our new grill! This event was developed and led by Intern, Olivia Barragan-Velasquez. It was the first time since 2011 this event was held.

Kid’s Fishing Derby, The first time we have been able to hold this event in 2 years due to the pandemic. Peter Fox was the leader, with the help of 20 volunteers we had 263 participants, fun, food, fishing, a good time was had by all.

Cemetery Tour, on Memorial Day, I had the privilege to lead a tour of Hampton Cemetery on Crab Orchard. We had 25 participants, Interns Peter Fox and Haley Olson, and my wife, Ruie supported this event.

I had a unique opportunity to read some books for the Carnegie Library Summer Reading Program. 143 participants, I read them “Monarch and Milkweed” and “Where the Wild Things Are”.

This is a sample of some of the activities on Crab Orchard. Volunteers were critical for the success of each of these and are always welcome.

One of the recent significant, in my opinion, activities I developed was a Senate Sub-Committee testimony. This was a written input, space allowing, you may find it in this edition. I feel it is a snapshot of the purpose and significance of Crab Orchard to our area. You will find some stories about these and other events in this edition.

One final thing to note, a future activity. I was selected to participate in the first Friends Academy in 2 years (again, postponed due to the pandemic). This is at the expense of Crab Orchard and the U.S. government. I am looking forward to learning new aspects of creating and maintaining a healthy Friends/Service partnership. There are always new aspects to consider which open new opportunities. There are 23 refuges and Friends organizations represented. That signifies a large amount of experience and potential helpful contacts as we continue our progress. This occurs on July 25 through 29 at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia. I will update you in the next edition of all the great learnings.



Rick Whitecotton

President

June 21, 2022

- Pollinator Habitat Project
- Fire Team Prescribed Burns
- Visitor’s Center Building
- Migratory Bird Nighttime Event
- Kid’s Fishing Derby
- Memorial Day Cemetery Tour
- Carnegie Library Summer Reading Program
- Senate Sub-Committee
- Friends Academy

Leave No Trace on The Refuge

With summer in full swing, many folks want to get out and enjoy the beauty of nature. Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge offers many fantastic opportunities to enjoy some of Illinois' finest natural ecosystems. With ever increasing amounts of visitors, some may wonder "How can we protect the beauty and wonder that exists at the refuge?" One of the best ways that visitors can do this is by following the seven principles of Leave No Trace. Leave No Trace is a non-profit organization that provides education, skills, research, and science to help people protect and nurture the natural landscapes that they love. The organization developed seven principles, or guidelines, to help lessen the impact that we have when we visit natural places.

It is important to remember that the principles are not rules. They are only meant to guide our actions. The seven principles are as follows:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

© Leave No Trace: www.LNT.org

The first principle, Plan Ahead and Prepare, is simply about planning out the details of your trip and gathering all of the materials/equipment that you might need. This step is important because it will help ensure your safety, prepare you to have minimal impact on the natural resources you plan to visit, and help you to achieve your goals for the visit.

Next, Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces, guides us to only use designated trails and campsites. When we travel off trail or camp outside of established campsites, we can cause damage to plants or soil compaction. Damage to plants can lead to soil erosion and soil compaction can keep plants from regrowing. Trails and campsites are built to concentrate the impact that will occur when we travel into nature. Using the trails and campsites that are already established can significantly decrease the impact that we have on natural spaces.

The third principle, Dispose of Waste Properly, involves dealing with our trash and going to the bathroom. The refuge often must deal with large amounts of litter and waste. Volunteers are the main workforce that pick-up litter and keep the refuge looking pristine. There is simply not enough staff to deal with all the trash. It is extremely important to place trash in appropriate trash cans that are placed throughout the refuge grounds and please do not litter! With the abundance of visitors that come to the refuge, it is also of great importance that visitors use the established bathroom facilities that are available. Human waste can quickly build up to unpleasant and unsafe levels if the available facilities are not used. This can seriously degrade natural habitats, creating unsafe conditions for wildlife and people.

To Leave What You Find is to ensure the quality and natural beauty of the area for wildlife and for future visitors. You can equate this to leaving an area better than, or at least as good as, you found

it. If you are just hiking this would mean not pushing over dead trees, not breaking branches, not carving into trees or signs, and leaving all natural objects such as wood, rocks, or insects where they are. For camping, this would mean using established fire pits, avoiding damage to live trees and plants, and picking up all your trash when you leave. Following this guideline will help keep your impact minimal and will ensure that others can enjoy the area to the fullest.

The fifth principle, minimize campfire impacts, concerns if you should have a fire, what wood to use for firewood, and how to have the least amount of impact when having a campfire. When considering whether to have a campfire it is always good to check the fire danger of the area. If the fire danger is high, it is best not to have a campfire and to use a camp stove for cooking. According to the rules and regulations of the refuge, you can bring firewood that is purchased in the area or collect small woody debris from the ground around your campsite. Please don't use wood from larger trees that have fallen, or are still standing, as these are great habitat for many amphibians, reptiles, birds, and other wildlife. If the fire danger is low and you choose to have a campfire, the best way to enjoy a campfire is by using a fire ring that is already established at your campsite. Escaped fires can cause great amounts of damage to nature or to property. It is our responsibility to use it wisely and respectfully.

The sixth principle is Respect Wildlife. When you visit the refuge, you are visiting the home of many wildlife species. To show our wild friends respect, observe them from a distance, don't disturb them, and please don't feed them. If you get too close to wildlife, they may use valuable energy to run away from you. They may also carry diseases that can be transmitted to you. Feeding the wildlife is never a good idea. When you feed wildlife, they will begin to develop a habit of approaching people for food. This may keep them from getting the proper nutrition from their natural food sources and will create more opportunities for disease transmission. It is wonderful to observe animals in their natural habitat and we can make sure that others get to experience these wonders by respecting wildlife.

The seventh, and final, principle is Be Considerate of Other Visitors. The previous six principles all add up to this principle. In addition, this principle also means being quiet so that others can enjoy their experience with nature, and controlling your pets. Dogs are allowed on the refuge but must be on a leash. Also, please pick up waste from your dog when on trails, in campgrounds, and on beaches and boat landings. Another way to be respectful to other visitors of the refuge is by not playing loud music. People often enjoy the peace and tranquility of nature, and it is kind to allow them to do so.

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge is the perfect place to experience the wonders of the natural world. By practicing Leave No Trace when you visit, you can ensure that you are having the least impact on the land and that you can experience the refuge to the fullest. In doing so, you will support the health of the ecosystem and help preserve the wonderful natural experience for future visitors. Give the Leave No Trace principles a try and see how they can improve your visit to the Refuge!

Article submitted by Raymond A. Bieri III

Grant Projects Update

Though Pandemic restrictions have slowed or halted many Refuge programs, activity is re-suming on a few. Here is an update on the status of our grant and donor funded projects:

Pollinator Habitat Project -

Refuge workers were able to control burn the Headquarters Prairie restoration field this Spring, which aided in invasive control. Some native plantings there have put on a Spring show.

Pictured: Beardtongue, Penstemon digitalis).



A small group of dedicated Friends volunteers continue to maintain and add to the demonstration wildflower gardens, and new identifying signage has been added to many species. Come see! Scan the QR Code with your phone for more information on the plant. The project gardens and field are located on Pigeon Creek road just west of the turnoff to the new headquarters and construction of the new Visitor's Center. Come see those too!

The Amenities Grant -

All requirements for award of this grant are now met, and a reimbursement request has been submitted. The funds were used to purchase new environmental education signage, 2 new picnic tables, a bench and a large outdoor gas grill that will be used for many Refuge events.

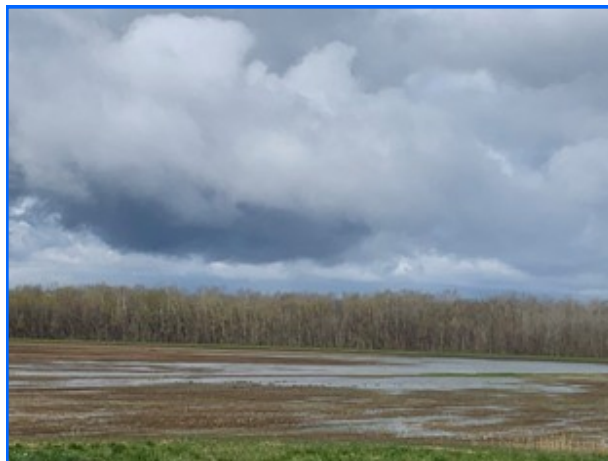
Pictured: New grill being used at Kid's Fishing Derby



Wetland Habitat Restoration Project, Heron Flats -

Thanks to our wonderful donors, we have received the full donation match portion of this grant. Though pandemic restrictions have long delayed the start of work at the site, Friends and Refuge staff are working out final details of the work plan, and expect contractual dirt work to begin this fall when the field has fully dried.

All of these projects are funded by grants from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and wonderful local donors.



Pictured: Heron Flats this spring

Article submitted by Judy Groskind

"The wild heart of Southern Illinois"

Every Kid Outdoors Day May 17, 2022

Refuge Manager Justin Sexton welcomed 75 4th Graders to “Every Kid Outdoors Day”. This event, when completed, earns the 4th Graders a pass that gives 4th Graders and family members free access to over 2,000 Federal lands for one full year.

The students had training on birds, pollinators, nature journaling and art, fishing, and leave no trace. Volunteers providing training were Aimee Hemphill, Sam Spiller, Kathy Belletire, Rick Whitecotton, Peter Fox, and Raymond A. Bieri III.

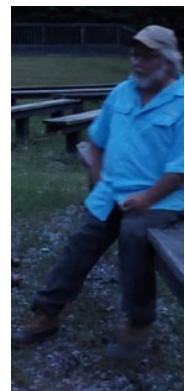


Article submitted by Ruie Whitecotton Photographs by Jim Osborn and Ruie Whitecotton

Migratory Bird Nighttime Event May 14, 2022

This is the first time this type of event has been held since 2011. The organizer was intern Olivia Barragan-Velasquez. The elements of the event included: night kayaking on Crab Orchard Lake, a night hike on Harmony Trail, night sky viewing through telescopes hosted by the SIU Astronomy Club, an overview of the negative effects of light pollution on bird migration, food, and entertainment by Curt Carter. Overall, we had about 40 participants and volunteers at this event. It was a wonderful night to get out of the house and enjoy spring weather at Crab Orchard.

Olivia has completed her assignment as an intern, we hope to see her around Crab Orchard in other roles in the future. This event was the first of its kind for her to organize and it went very well. An enjoyable and educational opportunity that could not be beat!



Article submitted by Rick Whitecotton Photographs by Rick and Ruie Whitecotton

A Lesson From A Master

GREAT BLUE HERONS are often seen year round on the shores of our waterways and occasionally even hunting in backyard Koi ponds. They will easily make off with an expensive oriental Koi. In colder climates they migrate, living anywhere in North America, Central America, South America and parts of Europe where there is open, fresh water, vegetation and trees. Their diet is mainly fish but also amphibians, turtles, snakes, small rodents and small birds. I was surprised to learn the male builds a nest of sticks 20-60' high in a tree since I assumed, being so large with legs and feet not made for perching, they'd nest on the shore. Another unexpected fact: when raising young this solitary hunter prefers the company of other herons in a colony called a "heronry".

I recently had the privilege to watch a Great Blue Heron demonstrate her fishing abilities in the shallows of our pond. I'll call my bird a female, identical to a male in appearance but slightly smaller. One of the world's biggest herons, males can be 4' tall with a 6' wingspan and weigh 6-8 lbs. Herons are a two-tone blue gray enhanced by an orange bill, black eye stripe and black plume draping over the back of their white head. An edge of black can be seen when wings are folded and in flight. These features, along with an elegant long neck and small ruff of curving feathers decorating their chest, give them a regal appearance.

As I watched the Great Blue Heron slowly striding in the shallows, a second one landed on the pier with an awkward flapping. Was this a youngster along with mom for a hunting lesson? Besides the clumsy landing, I got a look at his blue-gray bill, mottled gray feathers, and white and brown striped breast and belly. The mother bird peered intently into the water. Suddenly, she launched her head and long neck forward, pinning a fish between her dagger-like bill, then quickly lurched up the bank to shore. The struggling fish was a sizable bass at least 10" long and 3" wide. She dropped it on the ground then picked it up and repositioned it head first, opened her bill wide, tilted her head back, and swallowed the fish with its back half protruding and tail twitching. With her neck bulging, all it took was a few more swallows before the whole fish was on its way down to being her breakfast. It was a lesson by a true master!



Article submitted by Kathy Belletire

"The wild heart of Southern Illinois"

Kid's Fishing Derby

May 21, 2022 was the first time in two years this fun, family event could be held. 263 people participated with 20 volunteers. Many children caught their first fish. The children were awarded prizes by age groups for catching the biggest fish, the most fish, etc. They received a fishing tackle box and rod and reel. Families were served hot dogs and snacks. A beautiful day to catch fish!



Article by Ruie Whitecotton Photographs by Rick and Ruie Whitecotton

Friends Of Crab Orchard Refuge
6987 Headquarters Road
Marion, IL 62959

Website:
www.friendsofconwr.com

Facebook:
Friends of Crab Orchard
National Wildlife Refuge

Friends of CONWR and
Photography

Instagram:
friendsofcraborchardrefuge

Membership Matters



On June 11, 2022 the National Get Outdoors Day event was held at Giant City State Park. We held a raffle for a free Friends Of Crab Orchard Refuge membership that will last through December of 2023. The lucky winner was Jennifer Randolph. Congratulations Jennifer! It was a great day to see old friends and make new acquaintances, and to inform the visitors of the programs and volunteer opportunities currently at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.



Members added this quarter

D. J. Bandy
Brian Corder
Kimberly J. Holman
Ron Marshall
Joe Niederhoffer
Kris Pociask
Justin Sexton
John Wohlwend

Holbert Boyles
Rebecca Davis
Tricia Kelly
Trisha Morelli
Melodie Penrod
Jennifer Randolph
Lindy Sexton
Laraine Wright (through 2024)

A Friends Of Crab Orchard Refuge Membership provides you with a Quarterly Newsletter, monthly Board Minutes, right to vote at our Annual Membership Meeting in October, and a 10% discount at our Woodland Gift Shop. Mark the Membership you desire and send this form and a check made payable to:

Friends Of Crab Orchard Refuge, 6987 Headquarters Road, Marion, IL 62959.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

- Annual Single Student (age 16 and above) \$ 5.00
- Annual Individual \$ 10.00
- Annual Family \$ 20.00
- Annual Business \$100.00
- Lifetime \$250.00



“The wild heart of Southern Illinois”