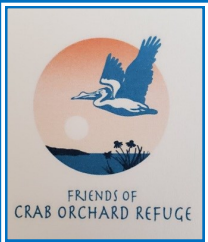


FRIENDS OF CRAB ORCHARD REFUGE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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Volume 22 Issue II

April 2024



A more beautiful day Southern Illinois could not have asked for! What a lovely day and a fantastic experience for all of our visitors! Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge was host to over 10,000

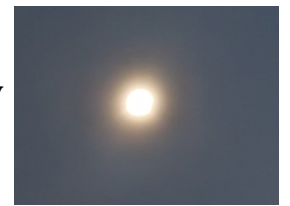
people! Visitors were from as far away as Great Britian, Canada, Australia, and almost every State



was represented. Even Georgia Tech students chose OUR Refuge to see the eclipse! Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge provided Food Vendors for Area 6, the main viewing Area. Ameritaco and Southern Illinois Snowie were on hand for the entire Eclipse weekend. We would like to thank the two Food Vendors very much for providing such service to our visitors.! A bunker tour was led by ESP Staff.



There were many viewing areas provided for on the Crab Orchard Refuge: The Visitor's Center, Prairie Creek Recreation Area, Area 6 by the bunkers, Crab Orchard Beach, Little Grassy Lake Area, Harmony Trail Head, West End Boat Ramp on Spillway Road, and Devil's Kitchen Spillway Overlook. Truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience that was made even more special by nature lovers gathered together!



Totality photograph in title by Jim Osborn. Photograph of Visitor's Center from the water by Kent Newton. Photograph of Bunker by Rick Whitecotton. Photograph of Georgia Tech Students at Area 6 provided by VisitSI. Photograph of people gathered at back of VC and photograph of coming darkness by Ruie Whitecotton. Photograph of totality by Rick Whitecotton.

"The wild heart of Southern Illinois"

A View from My Perch April, 2024 By President Rick Whitecotton



Spring! Early for us this year, always welcome any year. For most, this is the most hopeful time of year, it brings the promise of renewal, proof that we have indeed survived the long winter (hardly a winter to write about this year). As I write this, our spring ephemerals are in full bloom at Rocky Bluff. The Pollinator Team has been in action and cleaned up the Harmony Trail area for the eclipse visitors. We had the help of the SIU Honors Students. They are a great assistance to some old hands! Our Friends Board has finally set a full set of strategic goals and completed a budget. I wrote about the possibility that the new Visitor Center held for us in January. The space enables our Gift Shop to display and sell a wide variety of appropriate merchandise. The multi-purpose room and small conference room provide much needed meeting space for the Friends, and other users. This has indeed helped us get back on more solid footing.

The Eclipse! There are not enough superlatives to include to attempt to relate how positive this natural event was. You will find at least one article that addresses it in this newsletter. Last weekend saw a new Friends project from the Photography Committee; a Photography Symposium with Richard Day as keynote speaker. Mr. Day is a renowned world class nature photographer. Joining him in panels were local photographers who are members of our Photography Group. There were 54 attendees, and it was a wonderful experience. Look for an article with more detail within. We completed our Eagle tours in early February with eagles sightings on all tours, a big success.

Looking down the road a bit has Earth Day next week, with a large number of 3rd and 4th graders visiting the site. Many volunteers will provide several classes to introduce or reinforce nature for these youth. We can only hope there are many future Friends members present.

From the perspective of volunteering in our Gift Shop (and by the way, we can use a few new volunteers) we had about 6 weeks of relative quiet from post-Christmas until Easter then a slow but steady rise in business and activity across the Refuge.

I hope you enjoy the Spring; I always do. I hope you find your way out to the Refuge and enjoy Spring here; it is a great place to find that needed break from your normal schedule.

See you on the Refuge!
Rick Whitecotton

Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge Strategic Goals and Budget For 2024

By Rick Whitecotton

We have been struggling since COVID hit to establish a meaningful set of goals. We had goals, but they were not deep and were too simple. It has been a challenge to restart this process. We did it by organizing our Committee Chairs, writing some standard documents, and creating a few simple forms that aided in forecasting goals, expected outcomes, and needed budgets to support the work. So, it took a few months this year...we started work in January and completed it at our April meeting. I feel we will start earlier in 2025 and end with a set of goals and a budget one or two months earlier. It is a team process and sets us on a path to learn better how to operate year over year.

The goals I am listing are selected as representative of the overall goals. I have called them many things, but likely will settle on High Level Goals. They are as follows:

High Level Goals for Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge 2024

- 1. Review By-Laws**
- 2. Eclipse Event**
- 3. 6 Nature Dialogues**
- 4. Photography Symposium**
- 5. Increase Membership to 275 by year end**
- 6. Increase sales by 15% over 2023-year end**

These six goals have been chosen to represent the whole scope of work we are undertaking for 2024. Our standing committees each developed around 5 goals, some more than that. You see a review of the By-Laws, this is a major effort that will take many months to complete, this was developed by the Executive Committee.

The Eclipse Event likewise was touched on by many committees but recorded by the Executive Committee. The Nature Dialogues goal was written by the Interpretive and Outreach Committee. It serves as a direct contact to you the Friends members and the community at large. The Photography Symposium was a new goal written by the Photography Committee. The Membership goal is an increase of over 25 from last year's total membership and was developed by the Media, Marketing, and Membership Committee. Lastly you will see a goal to increase sales in the Gift Shop from our Merchandise Committee.

You are welcome to attend a committee meeting or get engaged with any that are of interest to you.

As I noted above this list is representative of a much larger set of goals. To accomplish our whole set of goals we developed a budget simultaneously. This is by far the largest budget we have ever put together. As I noted earlier, COVID has

Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge Strategic Goals and Budget For 2024 (Continued)

hampered our ability to meet and develop any meaningful budget since 2020. This year, however, we have a decent budget. We recognize that we are likely to miss a few items, we will improve the work year over year.

Our budget request is: \$49,093.59.

Our expected revenue is: \$64,450.

AS we are a nonprofit organization this means if all goes as planned, we will be able to provide more support for Crab Orchard next year! Most of the budget provides direct support for Refuge projects and events. We have no paid employees, and the bulk of our internal expenses are for mailing and office supplies. Our Gift Shop operation has a large budget, but it is our main source of revenue.

It was tough work to bring this together, but I am pleased to write this article and proud of our work.

Upcoming Sunday Nature Dialogues

Call 618-997-3344 Ext. 1 to reserve your seat.

Sunday, May 19

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

“Attracting Ruby-throated Hummingbirds
To Your Own Backyard Pollinator Garden”

Presented by Horticulture Educator Kim Rohling

Sunday, June 14

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

“Attracting Native Bees To Your
Backyard Pollinator Garden”

Presented by Horticulture Educator Kim Rohling

Sunday, September 8

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

“Sharing, Adapting, and Living With Wildlife”

Presented by ESP Monty Tyner

Sunday, November 10

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

“Christmas Bird Count Workshop”

Presented by Horticulture Educator Kim Rohling

MAKING PROGRESS!



Opening of the Visitor's Center, that beautiful building we are so proud of, was like the breaking of dawn. The experience of Covid, of course, was like a huge cloud we could not wait to walk through. Honestly, we all had become lethargic. We yawned, stretched, and awakened slowly at first, then hit our stride and a very exciting future appeared! The New Visitor's Center was officially opened at a ribbon cutting with US Fish and Wildlife Services Deputy Director Siva Sundaresan and our Refuge Manager Justin Sexton on August 10, 2023.

The year began with very successful Eagle Tours. Every group was able to observe the eagles! Some of our progress has occurred due to an increase in exposure to the public by our Data Administrator Wayne Allen updating our Friends website, friendsofcraborchardrefuge.com. He was able to offer the ability for visitors to the site, to be able to view our Facebook page, even if they have not joined Facebook! This alone has increased our reach and kept our Membership and Visitors more informed of current events and programs. We now have a following of 1734 people on our Friends Facebook page! Beautiful photographs shared by the Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge and Photography Facebook page have given people a new vision of our Refuge.

The opening of the Meeting Room has been such a gift. Our Sunday Nature Dialogues and other Interpretive programs have opened new opportunities for our Community. Friends purchased 24 easels to display interesting artwork and photographs for the public to enjoy; thus, making our empty Exhibit room come alive.

We now have an actual Gift Shop! The updating of the Woodland Gift Shop has afforded us the privilege of offering more items to the public. Since its opening, the Gift Shop has been a great success and is providing us with much-needed revenue to offer our Refuge partners more and more services, and that is our goal! The week of the Eclipse, the shop sold over \$7000! Membership of our Friends organization is increasing. There are more exciting events and programs to come this year!

Thanks to the Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge, this year is shaping up to be the most successful and exciting year yet! Keep up the good work and don't forget, Crab Orchard is "The Wild Heart of Southern Illinois!"

Photograph of Visitor's Center by Kent Newton. Article by Ruie Whitecotton

DECEMBER 2023 THROUGH MARCH 2024 PHOTO CONTEST

Landscapes



December - January
"Boathouse at Night"
Suzanne Asaturian

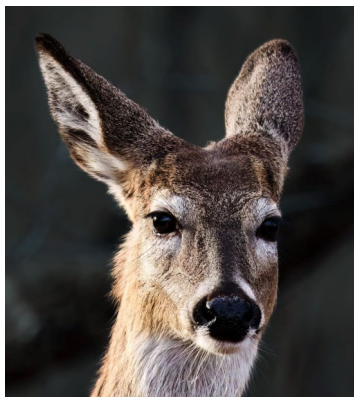


March
"Lake Reflection"
Dwayne Sheumaker



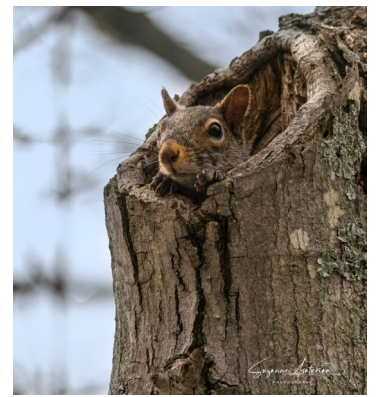
February
"Sunset at the Causeway"
Peggy Jarvis

Other Animals And Other Wildlife



February
"Deer Close-up"
Mike Ladd

March
"Peekaboo Squirrel"
Suzanne Asaturian

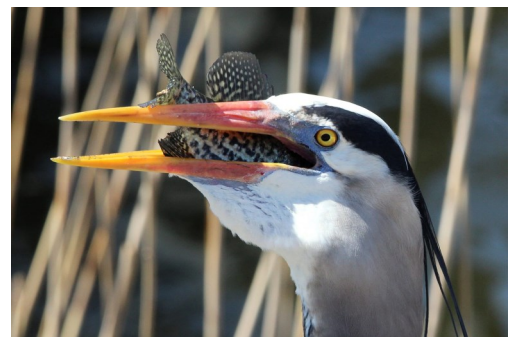


Photographs judged by Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge
Photography Committee Members
Don Mullison, Miriam Link-Mullison, and Jim Osborn

"The wild heart of Southern Illinois"

DECEMBER 2023 THROUGH MARCH 2024 PHOTO CONTEST

Birds

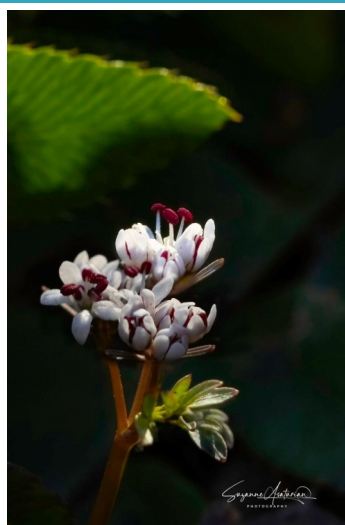


December - January
"Ring-Billed Gull Breaking
the Ice For fish"
Julie McDaniel

February
"Barred Owl In Snow"
Matt Eisenhauer

March
"Great Blue Heron
With Crappie"
Travis Shaulis

Plants



December - January
"Backlit Leaf
With Fungi"
Suzanne Asaturian

February
"Harbinger Of Spring"
Suzanne Asaturian

March
"Backlit Poeticus Daffodil"
Shelly Volkert

DECEMBER, 2023 THROUGH MARCH 2024 PHOTO CONTEST

Most Unusual

Pollinators



December - January
 "Sunrise Illuminating Ice Ridge"
 Byron Hetzler



February
 "Floating Feather"
 Rhonda Branum



March
 "Bee On Spring Beauty"
 Suzanne Asaturian

Visit the Woodland Gift Shop

By Jim Osborn

Did you remember that your membership with Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge entitles you to a 10% discount on non-sale items purchased in the Gift Shop? Many folks have discovered that the Woodland Gift Shop stocks a wide variety of t-shirts, books, and gifts suitable for birthdays, anniversaries and just for fun.

If you haven't visited the Gift Shop in a while, come back and check it out! The Gift Shop is open Monday through Saturday from 8:30am to 3:30pm and from 11am to 3:30pm on Sundays. By the way, we are always looking for additional volunteers to help in the store. If you can commit to at least ½ day a week, come talk with us!

Poet's Corner

PELICANS

by Ruie Whitecotton

White pelicans, 250 strong or more performing their whirlwind dance. Slowly drifting down to the water. Maintaining this funnel of whirling white for a bit.

Corporate meeting over, they float away in clumps of 5, 10, 15, or 20. Beaks pointing this way or that. "All to the left now!" "All to the right!"

A flotilla of white.



"The wild heart of Southern Illinois"

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY SYMPOSIUM

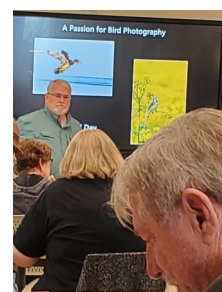
BY JIM OSBORN



A Nature Photography Symposium was held at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, April 13th. Fifty-four avid photographers and artists attended the half-day event. Professional nature photographer, Richard Day, was the keynote speaker. Since 1984, Richard has been publishing photos and teaching



photography workshops. Specializing in birds, butterflies, and dragonflies, Richard has had his work appear in magazines such as *National Geographic*, *Audubon*, *Birds and Blooms*, *National Wildlife* and many more publications, including calendars and books. His talk was titled “A Passion for Bird Photography.” Richard also shared photos that he has



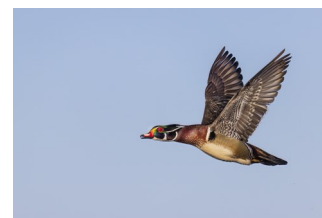
taken over the years and discussed them with the group. His presentation was followed by 3 panel discussions that included some of Southern Illinois’



top nature photographers: David Hammond, Kris Killman, Suzanne Asaturian, Bob Steele, Peggy Jarvis, Jim Osborn, Don Mullison and Miriam Link-Mullison. Topics discussed were (1) Seasonal Photography on Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge; (2) Favorite Locations for Nature Photography in Southern Illinois; and (3) Creating Award Winning Nature Photographs.



The Facebook Group, “Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge and Photography,” currently has more than 700 members. Physical meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8:30am at the Visitor Center. No reservations are required, and participation is free.



All Nature photographs by Richard Day. Symposium audience photographs by Rick Whitecotton

Current Friends Membership for 2024

Lifetime Members

General Dynamics	Southern IL Bass Busters
Southern IL Hunting and Fishing Days	Take Pride in America
Jill Adams	Kathy Belletire
Steve Belletire	Colleen Bogard
John Brewster	Lewis Fosse
Kathleen Gaare-Wiese	Judy Groskind
Hill Printing	Dwight Hoffard
Kimberly J. Holman	Gene Honn
Anita Hutton	Cathy D. Jennings
Melanie A. Kasson	Nancy Nowak
Jim Osborn	Randy Osborn
Paul Restivo	Marlene Schaeede
Meg Simmonds	Cheryl Stein
Kathryn Stevens	Bill Thomas
Rick Whitecotton	Ruie Whitecotton
Laraine Wright	

Allen Ahner	Lorie Allen	Howard Allen
Bruce Anderson	Grant Anderson	Tom Anderson
Vicki Armstrong	Daniel Armstrong	Colette Arnold
Lisa Arview	Suzanne Asaturian	Anna Baczewski
Steve Bailie	Jim Barron	Tricia Barron
Barbara Becker	Dan Besque	Fran Besque
Tim Berger	Tom Bik	Gayla R. Borgognoni
William F. Borgognoni	David Bork	Donna Bowlby
Rick Bozada	Don Brownlow	Charles Burnett
Tana Burnett	Hannah Bushur	Kathy Carstens
Doug Casada	Ed Cayot	Kimberly Clark
Michelle Clark	Mike Clark	Jeanie Conklin
Kim Conley	Tricia Conley	Ruben Cordova
Sylas Cruse	Nicholle Curby	Mary Davis
Mike Davis	Mary Beth Defauw	Matt Dillon
Janet Donahue	Tim Draper	Dawn Dueker
Patricia Dunbar	Jayne Durham	Phyllis J. Elders
Claudia Enberg	Vanessa Enriquez-Rios	Logan Evans
Arthur Fager	C. M. Fager	Diane Falk
Mervin Falk	Cynthia Fields	David Freeman

Angelina Garrison	Cay Gerlock	Liz Gersbacher
Shirley Goins	Hazel Grant	David Gray
Paul Grear	Gary Greener	Jim Grove
Darlene Hancock	James Hancock	Maryliss Hanser
Steve Hartsock	Sharen Harvey	Angela Hazelwood-Frankel
Deb Henman	William Hespern	Angela J. Higgins
Randy Higgins	Dennis Holtzclaw	Nancy Houk
Richard Houk	Donna Humphrey	Mark Humphrey
Erin Hussey	Bethany Ingram	Barbara Innis
Jeffrey Isbell	Ruth Ann Isbell	Peggy Jarvis
Karen C. Johnson	Leann Johnson	Make Kamer
Andrea Kappler	Patricia Kelly	Bess Kershnik
Kris Killman	Tauna Kobler	Donna Kretsch
Joseph Kretsch	Christine Ladwig	Joel Lantz
Hila Leenerts	Joe Leenerts	Danell LeMasters
Scott Lewis	James Loepker	Carolyn Loving
Ken Loving	Theresa Madel	Brittney Mallen
Patrick Malone	Erica Marks	Ron Marshall
Linda Martin	Susan Mays	Bob McCan
Sue McCan	Sara McCrocklin	Julie McDonnel
Jackie McFadden	Barbara McKasson	Steven McKasson
William McKinney	Courtney McKowen	Kerry Meyerhoff
Nellie Moore	Don Mullison	Miriam Link-Mullison
Michael Murray	Susan Murray	Becky Nation
Sara Neighbors	Kent Newton	Joe Niederhoffer
Mary Jo Osborn	Tim Parli	Jennifer Pearce
Scott Pearce	Mark A. Pederson	Janie Pettigrew
Rex Piper	Caroline Price	Benieta Powell
Rich Powell	Michelle Puckett	Randy Puckett
Jean Ann Ray	Tim Rice	Sarah Richards
Jim Rury	Alan Rushing	Mike Ryan
Barbara Sallee	David Sanders	Elisha Sanders
Selena Sasser	Sandy Schlager	Dana Schroeder
Tiffany Schroeder	Ernest Scott	Breht Sellew
Justin Sexton	Dan Shannon	Darlene Shannon
Sharon Smaga	Christian Smith	Francine Snider
Ashlee Spiller	Sam F. Spiller	Nikki Staley
Judy Stewart	Tom Stewart	JoAnne Swafford
Ron Swafford	Debbie Tedfork	Dick Terry
Kim Terry	Lisa Thomas	Marcia Thompson
Donna Smith Throgmorton	Phillip Toon	Regina Toon
Laurel Toussaint	Geo Trammell	Sue Trammell
Brenda Tripp	Monica Tyner	Monty Tyner

Current Friends Membership for 2024 Cont.

Friends Of Crab
Orchard Refuge
6987 Headquarters Road

Website:
friendsofcraborchardrefuge.com

Facebook:
Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge

Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge
and Photography

Editor in chief -
Secretary Ruie Whitecotton

Contact:
Secretary@
friendsofcraborchardrefuge.com

Kenneth Veil	Jenny Volkert	Jenny Walker
Christy Walsh	Dan Walsh	Carol Warriner
Fred Warriner	Anthony Webster	Lyle J. White
Sondra Wise	Jan Wohlwend	John Wohlwend
Sandy Youngstrom		

If you did not find your name on the previous list, please renew now!

Memberships run from January through December 31st of each year. Because we have our Annual Membership Meeting in October, that is a great time to renew your membership. If you renew your membership in October, we extend your membership through December 31st of the following year.

Please renew this month to continue receiving your Newsletter, Board Minutes, and other Correspondence.

You may use the form below and mail it with your check. You may also renew or join on our Website at: friendsofcraborchardrefuge.com or come by the Woodland Gift Shop and fill out a bookmark with your information and you may pay by credit card, cash, or check.

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.** You may also join online, just go to: **friendsofcraborchardrefuge.com** and select donate or swing by the **Woodland Gift Shop.**

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

