



# Spring 2021 Newsletter



*Please visit [friendsofthecache.org](http://friendsofthecache.org) for past newsletters and more information about the Cache River Watershed.*

## **News from Cypress Creek Wildlife Refuge**



The Refuge is reforesting 100 acres of bottomland hardwood forest this spring. One of the sites being reforested is a newly acquired 70-acre agricultural field. The USFWS, in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, has been awarded a grant from the Arbor Day Foundation to purchase the seedlings for the project. A variety of bottomland oaks and hickories, persimmon, and bald cypress are among the species being planted on these sites.



# What's Next

## **Nature Movie Topic: *Squirrels***

*Thursday, April 8, 2021.*

*Two showings: 2-3 p.m. and 6-7 p.m.*

*Cache River State Natural Area,  
Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands  
Center. Call 618-657-2064 for additional  
information.*

The nature movie *A Squirrel's Guide to Success*, which introduces the whole family of squirrels from tiny chipmunks to big prairie dogs with their amazing abilities to make a living, will be screened.

## **Learn to Fish With Us on Thursdays in June & July**

*Thursdays, 10-noon, June 3, 17, July 1, 15, and 22, 2021. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources will offer a series of FREE youth catch-and-release clinics at Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center.*

The instructor will present information on fish and other aquatic life; fishing rules and regulations; and basic instructions on baiting a hook, tying a knot and casting, tactics for catching fish, and how to handle and return fish to the water. The clinics are targeted towards children 16 and younger, but anyone interested in learning basic fishing techniques can attend. Parents and other adults are not required to have a fishing license to assist during this program. The public is encouraged to fish the river, ponds, and swamps at Cache River State Natural Area any time with proper license and following state fishing guidelines. Participants may bring their own

equipment, or it will be provided, including rods, reels, bait, and tackle for 90 minutes of catch-and-release fishing. **Please register for fishing clinics in advance by calling the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.**

## **Free fishing days - June 18-21, 2021.**

*During the period of June 18, 19, 20 and 21, 2021, it shall be legal for any person to fish in waters wholly or in part within the jurisdiction of the State, including the Illinois portion of Lake Michigan, without possessing a sport fishing license, salmon stamp, or inland trout stamp.*

Take this opportunity of Free Fishing Days to fish the waters at the Cache River State Natural Area. Use your own pole and tackle or borrow a pole and tackle from the Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center; you supply the bait.

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## **Who Am I?**

*I'm small, but well adapted to life in the Cache backwaters. Do you know who I am?*



See page 8 to check your answer. *Photo by Tony Gerard.*



## **Happy Retirement, Liz!**

From Tony Gerard, President of the Friends of the Cache River Watershed:

*I can well remember when Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge and the Joint Venture Project were in the early stages. Locally there was a lot of distrust and misinformation floating around. I vividly recall bumper stickers that said something to the effect of "Save family farms - stop Cache River wetlands." I remember having a conversation with a local guy who was convinced that the federal government would use eminent domain to take all the land it wanted forcibly.*

*Once the Refuge was established, things were not much better. I often had local folks ask me about various things the Refuge was doing or planned to do. I could not answer their questions - I had no clue myself. It seemed the refuge employees did their jobs and kept to themselves.*

*That all changed when Liz Jones came onto the scene. In graduate school, I once had a professor say, "The most important aspect of resource management is people management." Liz understood that principle and believed it. Liz immediately began to build bridges between the Refuge and the local community. She let folks know what was going on, what was planned, and, more importantly, asked how they felt about it. Liz was always friendly, open, transparent, and honest. Even when confronted with hostility, she could always retain her cool and sense of humor.*

*Liz also worked tirelessly in other aspects of her job. She was a person who got things done. Education was an essential priority with her. She believed that scientific research and student involvement were crucial to maintaining the wetlands. Many Shawnee College Students served internships under her guidance. One of the last official conversations I had with Liz was arranging things so that canoe tours for visiting classes would continue.*

*I have been speaking of Liz in the past tense like she has passed away. She has not; she only retired. Those of us that have worked with her will miss her, but we also agree that nobody ever deserved a break more. Whoever follows her will have some big shoes to fill, and if they find local folks a bit more trusting and open than they expected, they have Liz Jones Shaffer to thank.*

# Around the Cache



The IDNR is proposing the addition of approximately 1000 acres of state-owned land into the Cache River Land and Water Reserve. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission will meet in May to decide whether or not to grant preliminary approval for the expansion of this conservation easement, which offers permanent protection of these lands from future development. This marks another step forward in the IDNR's mission to acquire, protect, and manage land within the Cache River watershed.

Several projects to manage the unique natural resources in the Cache have been in progress or completed since the fall. For example, staff have been busy planning and preparing for prescribed burns before the emergence of plants and animals in the spring. The prairie plantings at the Wetlands Center were burned in November to control invasion by trees, and the west side of Wildcat Bluff was burned in early December to maintain the high-quality limestone glade and open woodland communities. Burns are also planned at Marshall Ridge and Glass Hill to improve the upland forest communities. A wetland construction project was completed on the Owens Tract off Porterhouse Road in collaboration with Ducks Unlimited and NRCS. Hydrological restoration was also implemented at Heron Pond to maintain water levels. Vinyl sheet pile was installed 10-12' deep to hold water in this iconic cypress-tupelo swamp that was draining out from three main gullies. This was incredibly important for the health of the swamp but has resulted in a temporarily messy trail. Please be patient while we work to get the trail back to form.

Additional updates:

1. New gauges have been installed along the Cache channel by Long Reach Road, IL-37, and Tunnel Hill State Trail. They are an easy way to keep an eye on water levels. *(Continued on the next page.)*



2. Plans to dredge silted-in portions of the channel are progressing. This process is necessary to maintain deep water habitat in the river, which become especially important as refugia in drought/low-water conditions.
  3. IDNR is working with the University of Illinois Extension to set up several volunteer work days throughout the Cache. One of these will be to help reforest a relatively new tract of open land near Cave Creek Glade Nature Preserve this fall.
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We are saddened to hear of the death of Alice Wyeth Barkhausen, widow of Henry Barkhausen, in December 2020, at age 101.

She and Henry raised 5 children, Sarah, Joan, Henry, David, and John in Lake Forest. Alice was a largely self-taught naturalist whose civic pursuits included work with the Shelter Club of the Allendale School, the Lake

Forest Garden Club, service on the board of the Illinois Nature Conservancy, and assisting with the planning of Ryerson Woods.

Throughout their married life, Alice shared Henry's love for cruising the northern Great Lakes on their wooden sailboats. From a summer home in Harbor Springs, Michigan, they would head north and east to the beautiful Canadian waters of Lake Huron's North Channel and Georgian Bay and occasionally to Lake Superior.

After Henry started a limestone quarry business in Anna in 1962, he and Alice built a small house on a hill farm near the Shawnee National Forest. Alice enjoyed all aspects of the outdoor life and the people and special characters of this very different part of Illinois; she was seldom without binoculars in her search for birds. It was during their time here that they worked on preserving and helping to restore the Cache River Wetlands in southern-most Illinois, a wetland region which boasts the greatest biodiversity found in Illinois.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Cache River Fund of the Illinois Nature Conservancy, 8 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603 or a charity of choice.

## ***From my 3x5 notebook by Susan Post: A Golden Discovery***



Despite few observations due to COVID stay-at-home orders for much of 2020, a few days spent experiencing the magic of the Cache in late August yielded almost a full notebook of observations! The three days we spent rivaled any foreign trip.

We decided to spotlight (using our small flashlights to examine brush, brambles, trunks and tangles) the area around Wolff Wetlands. We find a shrub with eight ravenous walking sticks—and when we checked the shrub the following morning it is leafless. During our hour of

spotlighting we discovered a resting black swallowtail butterfly, a pink underwing moth, a slug caterpillar, and an adult antlion whose wings and eyes sparkled in our spotlights. While Michael was photographing what we thought was the final prize of the night—a saddleback caterpillar—I am playing with my spotlight—much like my seven-year-old nephew—shining it here and there, ready to call it a night. Suddenly, my light illuminates a golden blob ringed with white, nestled in a tangle. I first think fungus, but I see ears and eyes. Maybe it's some type of giant frog sitting on a branch? “Michael, get over here quick and take a picture!” I shout in a loud whisper. Whatever it is, it's alive, and I don't want to scare it. Getting closer, I manage a phone picture; it looks like a male golden hamster. Suddenly, it wakes up, scurries down the branch and disappears into the darkness.

Back at the field station I consult our trusty *Field Guide to Illinois Mammals* by Joyce Hoffman. We had discovered a sleeping Golden Mouse, a state threatened species found in far southern Illinois. It is an excellent climber that scurries along thin branches and vines, using their semi-prehensile tails to help with balance. They are nocturnal, so our poking around and excitement aroused it from its slumber and off it went. Finally, we had seen this rare curiosity of the Cache.

*Photos by Michael Jeffords.*



# Dutchman Lake Trash Blast Success

Illinois Master Gardeners and Friends of the Shawnee worked with their local Extension Program Coordinator to collect litter at Dutchman Lake in the Shawnee



National Forest on March 5, 2021, from 1:00-3:00PM. Six participants covered 3.72 acres at the site and removed 240 pounds of trash! Volunteers prevented trash from entering Dutchman Creek which flows into the Cache River near Heron Pond Nature

Preserve. With their eyes focused on the ground, participants noticed the first wildflowers of the year in bloom, the Harbinger-of-Spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*). This event was supported by a partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Friends of the Shawnee; and University of Illinois Extension. A special thanks to all the participants who made this trash blast success. *Photos and article by Kimberly Rohling, University of Illinois Extension.*



Volunteers are needed to help with the pollinator gardens at the Cache River Wetland Center. Please e-mail Anne at [anne.parmley@gmail.com](mailto:anne.parmley@gmail.com) or contact Molie Oliver at the Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064, if you can help with maintaining these gardens.

**From Rhonda Rothrock, Southern Illinois Audubon Society:** *The Annual Birding Blitz is cancelled for April, 2021. The plan is to have a big, 20 (less 2) year anniversary Blitz in 2022! And we're discussing having it on April 29, 2022, the 5th Saturday in April rather than the 4th Saturday. Editor's Note: This birdwatching contest fundraiser for Friends of the Cache supports habitat preservation and restoration in the Cache River Wetlands.*

**Answer to Who Am I? from Page 2:** I'm a Central Mudminnow (*Umbra limi*). I rarely get more than a few inches long, but I've got some great adaptations! I can burrow into mud, tail first! I can also breathe directly from the air, allowing me to live in low-oxygen water that other fish can't tolerate. Perfect for the warm, oxygen-poor backwaters of the Cache in the summer!



**Correction from Fall 2020 Newsletter:** The last 2 lines of the page 4 article, *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge AmeriCorps Members 2020-2021*, were truncated in the final version of the newsletter. Here is the article as it should have been published: *We are happy to welcome AmeriCorps member, Hannah McCoy, to the Refuge team. Hannah graduated from SIU in 2019 with a degree in Forestry; Hannah stated "I love being in nature and working outdoors so I am very excited to be working at Cypress Creek for the next year!" Hannah is involved with forest management planning and coordinates intern/volunteer involvement as well as overall operations and education outreach.*

*Because of COVID-19, we have not had outreach events.. Therefore, please consider renewing your membership at this time if you have not done so in the past few months. We always welcome new members as well.*

## Become a Friend of the Cache River Watershed

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|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Family     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Supporting  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Lifetime  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member      | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Member    |   |

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Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

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To remain budget and environmentally friendly, most communications are by e-mail.

Check here if you need to receive information by U. S. Mail.

All contributions are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to Friends of the Cache River Watershed and mail to 8885 State Route 37 South, Cypress, IL 62923.

OR go to our website: [friendsofthecache.org](http://friendsofthecache.org) and click "join" to become a friend online.