

summer
2014

friends

Photo by Chris Benda



Visit us on FACEBOOK and enter the "Prettiest Box Turtle" photo contest! The photo with the most "likes" by September 20 wins!

of the cache river watershed

Field Notes

Three questions for **Mike Brown**,
Wildlife Refuge Manager,
Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge

What are your biggest challenges for the upcoming year?

Federal budget cuts will definitely impact Cypress Creek, as they have wildlife refuges throughout the country. We will most likely lose one of our two full-time maintenance positions, and have already lost our administrative assistant, at least temporarily. As a result, there may be fewer programs, and visitors might notice that some of the trails and parking areas are not as well-maintained.

What are your key outreach priorities?

Nature Fest, our biggest public event of the year, and wetland canoe tours. We typically offer free canoe tours three times a year – at Nature Fest, Cache River Days in Ullin and during National Wildlife Refuge Week — plus a limited number of special outings for school and church groups, serving an estimated 1,500 participants annually. I learned from Neal Needham a long time ago that there is simply no substitute for getting folks out on the Cache to experience the beauty and mystery of the wetlands for themselves.

How can the public help?

"Eyes on the trails," letting refuge staff know about any problems, such

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Nature Fest 2014

, held on May 10 at the Henry Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, was a tremendous success, attracting approximately 1,200 attendees from throughout Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky and Indiana. Visitors, who included many children and families, munched on fried Asian carp and enjoyed exhibits and special programs on salamanders, warblers, birds of prey, swamp rabbits, frogs and toads, turtles, snakes and much,

Photo by Jan Sundberg

much more. Canoe trips, guided hikes, a bicycle tour, and a variety of special kids' activities were all well-attended. Almost every child was sporting a "Cache Challenge" card (a challenge to visit at least five stations and redeem the card for a "Friends of the Cache" patch) and wearing a fish print or animal track bandana.

Special kudos go to Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Shawnee Community College and IDNR for their many support services, and to the dozens of hard-working volunteers, exhibitors and associated organizations. Thanks to your enthusiasm for engaging our visitors and sharing the beauty and uniqueness of the Cache, the 13th annual Nature Fest was the best yet!



Want to volunteer? Contact Molie Oliver at 618-657-2064 or Molie.Oliver@Illinois.gov

What's Next



Photo by Jodie Delaney

Friends of the Cache River Watershed

recently sponsored three complimentary **members-only events**. On March 23, John and Martha Schwegman led a hike at Heron Pond (pictured) focusing on the history and biodiversity of the Cache. A members-only canoe tour was offered on May 10 during Nature Fest, followed by the ever-popular Moonlight Paddle on June 13 – a guided canoe tour of Buttonland Swamp by the light of the full moon, serenaded by tree frogs and owls. Invitations to events like these are a key benefit of membership in the Friends, and our way of saying thanks for your support of the Cache River Wetlands!

Friends' members also receive the quarterly newsletter and calendar of events, and a 10 percent discount on Cache River Nature Fest apparel, available for purchase at the Cache River Wetlands Center. Please use this form to join or renew your annual membership.

Become a Friend

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporting | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Lifetime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Member | |

Name _____		Date _____
Address _____		
City _____	State _____	ZIP _____
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Phone _____	Email _____	

All contributions are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to **Friends of the Cache River Watershed**. Mail membership dues to: 8885 State Rt. 37 South, Cypress, IL 62923.

Cache River Junior Naturalist Day

Sunday, July 13, 10am-3pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

For children ages 7-15 and their parents. Hands-on learning about the ecology and history of the Cache River Wetlands — kids who complete the program become Cache River Junior Naturalists and receive a patch and certificate. Bring your own lunch. To register, call 618-634-2231.

Cold-Blooded Creatures of the Cache

Saturday, August 23, 1pm-4pm
Cache River Wetlands Center & Heron Pond Trailhead

Find out more about the fascinating reptiles native to southernmost Illinois – and then take a guided hike to look for cold-blooded creatures at Heron Pond. For details, call 618-657-2064.

Cache River Days-Ullin

Saturday, September 6, All Day
City Park in Ullin, Illinois

Food, music, exhibits, family activities and free guided canoe tours through the Cache River Wetlands. Reserve your spot for canoe tours beginning August 6; call 618-634-2231.

Mike Brown, cont.

as fallen limbs, dumping, etc. Volunteers can help plant trees in the spring, and are always needed to help staff the Cache River Wetlands Center and assist with programs. And, of course, when you join Friends of the Cache, you are directly supporting the educational and restoration missions of both Cypress Creek and the Cache River State Natural Area. Whether it's by writing a check, picking up trash from a hiking trail, or serving on a Friends' committee, there is something everyone can do to help, and your support makes all the difference!