



Audubon MISSISSIPPI

WINTER 2011

The Newsletter from the Mississippi State Office of The National Audubon Society

Save the Dates!



SPAC Davis House Christmas Tour: December 3-4

Audubon Christmas Bird Counts: December 14 - January 5

SPAC Winter Bird Count: January 14

Great Backyard Bird Count: February 17-20

Audubon Mississippi Chapter Retreat: TBD in March

Pascagoula River Nature Festival: April 14-21

Tara Spring Birding Weekend: April 27-29

SPAC Audubon Naturalist Course: Thursdays beginning in April

SPAC Earth Day Celebration & Volunteer Event: April 21

PRAC Edible Gulf Coast Dinner: "Buffet on the Bayou" April 14

SPAC Native Plant Sale: May 18 & 19

SPAC National Trails Day: Free Hikes June 2

PRAC Summer Camp: June 18-22

SPAC Summer Camp: TBD in June

PRAC Junior Naturalist Course: July 23-27

SPAC Hummingbird Migration Celebration: September 7-9

PRAC Edible Gulf Coast Dinner: "Fall Feast" October

CONSERVATION

Mississippi Birds in Decline

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius Ludovicianus*)

Book Review

"A Sand County Almanac With Essays on Conservation from Round River" by Aldo Leopold

Known today as the father of game management, Aldo Leopold's 1929 Report on a Game Survey in Mississippi noted that there must have been a peak in quail abundance as the state was first being cleared for the cotton boom. Erosion and one-crop farming had not yet depleted the soil and food plants must have been very abundant. His astute observation remains applicable today as other grassland species such as the Loggerhead Shrike experience serious declines.

Who are naturalists? Hikers, gardeners, hunters, accountants...all are naturalists to the extent they pay attention to the natural world. One such naturalist, Aldo Leopold, had an inflated naturalist intelligence that he keenly applied to his writings and work. A Sand County Almanac is a must read that will kindle your spirit much to the tune of Thoreau or John Muir.

Leopold provides eloquent mental portraits of the world's natural beauty and diversity. His spirit soars skyward as he observes the wild things that are much more acquainted with the world in which they live than us. The attitudes of wildlife are classified easily for each wears his heart on his sleeve.



John James Audubon "Loggerhead Shrike" -: Population decline (70%) of this species can be attributed to loss of grassland habitat.

Fortunately, no matter how intently one studies the hundred little dramas of the woods and meadows, one can never learn all of the salient facts about any one of them. Only those who know the most about it can appreciate how little we really know. Land grows corn, gullies and mortgages. A land's personality knows no mortgage and is calmly aloof to the pettiness of its alleged owner. Using land with love and respect is the only way it can survive mechanized man. Leopold knew the success of the conservation movement depended upon each of us becoming humbly aware of our signature on the land. Our land-use ethics

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Audubon MISSISSIPPI

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MISSION STATEMENT

Audubon's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Audubon Mississippi is published to report on the activities of the Mississippi State Office of The National Audubon Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1905 and supported by 500,000 members in nearly 500 chapters throughout the Americas.

AUDUBON MISSISSIPPI UPDATES

New State Director



Please welcome James "Jay" Woods, Jr. as our new Audubon MS State Director. Jay comes to Audubon by way of Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) where he last served as Acting Executive Director. His experience gained while serving as Chief Operating Officer and other administrative positions at MPB will be particularly helpful in developing strategic priorities and nourishing key partnerships to expand Audubon Mississippi's reach and impact. This valuable public-service experience came after his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law and work as a litigation attorney. In preparing for his career move to Audubon in November 2011, Jay has been reading the history of Audubon and doing some birding (which he admits has become quite addictive). Jay was raised in North Mississippi and now resides in Jackson. Look for Jay soon in Holly Springs, Pascagoula and everywhere in between. Welcome aboard Jay!

The IRA Charitable Rollover



Are you age 70½ or older and receiving more income from your IRA than you can manage? Your IRA may be your most highly taxed asset. Your IRA Administrator can make a gift directly to Audubon MS. Time is running out ... December 31, 2011 deadline. Up to \$100,000 ... A non-taxable gift! Contact the Audubon MS State Office at 662-252-1155 and put Your IRA to work for Mississippi conservation!

Audubon Mississippi Education Endowment



"As one scientist put it, we can now assume that just as children need adequate nutrition and sleep, they may very well need contact with nature," Richard Louv, author of "Last Child in the Woods." Our education programs strive to change attitudes and promote environmental stewardship in a society that has grown up indoors.

We ask for your gift to the Audubon Mississippi Education Endowment Fund which is managed by the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi. Fund distributions will support important educational work.

Write Audubon MS Education Endowment Fund on checks made payable to the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi and mail to Audubon MS, 285 Plains Road, Holly Springs, MS 38635. To pay by credit card, go to www.cfnm.org. The Foundation will generate your gift/tax letter. Appreciated stocks, property and other assets are also eligible. Call 662-252-1155 for more information.

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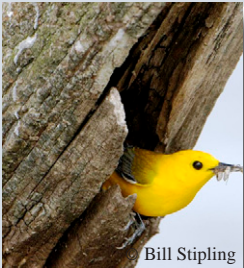
Foundations

Cortright Family Charitable Foundation
McKnight Foundation
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Walton Family Foundation

Lucy and John James Audubon Society Members

Dr. Wayne & Vicki Adkison	Paul & Donna Ingram
Dr. Scott Ash	Ted Laird
Jan Barlow	Suzanne Langley
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Strawberry Plains Memberships



Bill Stipling

Become a member and make Strawberry Plains YOUR nature getaway. A place where nature and history meet! All memberships are valid for a year from date of purchase and entitle you to newsletters and six Audubon magazines.

°Trails Pass (\$30) Admission to trails and grounds

°Trails Pass/Family (\$50) Cardholder & immediate family admission to trails and grounds

°Stewardship Pass (\$125) Admission to grounds and programs (some programs excluded)

°Stewardship Pass/Couple (\$200) Cardholder plus one admission to grounds and programs (some programs excluded).

Make checks payable to Strawberry Plains Audubon Center and mail to: 285 Plains Road, Holly Springs, MS 38635 or call 662-252-1155.

Pay online or download membership form: <http://strawberryplains.audubon.org>

Please sign up to receive future newsletters electronically! You may also receive e-newsletters that are specific to your region. Email Mary Lynn Riley (mriley@audubon.org) and help Audubon reduce paper use. This is another way that Audubon Mississippi can lead by example.

Hummingbird Celebration Sponsors



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Pascagoula River Nature Festival Sponsors

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Join the Nature Connection Project

Strawberry Plains is uniquely positioned to make a regional difference in conservation. Our education programs and collaborative work with landowners raise public awareness and lead to alliances that produce greater conservation outcomes. A \$100,000 Recreational Trails Program grant was received in Oct. to improve trail structures that will greatly enhance how our visitors are engaged with nature. These improvements will allow us to better demonstrate and interpret many aspects of nature and conservation management. We call this campaign our “Nature Connection Project.”



MSU school of Architecture rendering of bird viewing porch

However, another \$60,000 is required for grant match and to complete these elements of the Nature Connection Project:

- Plantation Office restoration into a new Trailhead Structure
- Elevated Walkway through storm water demonstration area
- Bird Viewing Porch in native grass/wildflower meadow
- Sharecropper House conversion to ground blind
- Trail foot bridges and crossings.

Become a partner in helping generations connect with nature! All levels of support are welcome for this important project. Send donations to Strawberry Plains Audubon Center, 285 Plains Road, Holly Springs, MS 38635 or call 662-252-1155 for more information. Donate online at <http://strawberryplains.audubon.org>.



Architectural rendering of new building

NEW PRAC Facility Approved!

Plans for a new facility for the Pascagoula River Audubon Center in Moss Point got a boost in October with the approval of a revised Business Plan by the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society. The new Center will be built over the coming year at a new location within the City of Moss Point where it will continue to focus on the Pascagoula River, and the promotion of nature tourism as a viable form of economic development for the region and

state. Apart from a change in location, the key focus of Audubon’s business model remains the same, namely that the Center will serve as the gateway to the last, large, free-flowing river system in the lower 48 states.

The proposed location for the Center is situated near the heart of Moss Point’s downtown area, providing direct access to the business center of the community as well as to the Pascagoula River through Rhodes Bayou and Escatawpa River. Visitors to this site will experience a unique feel of nature in the midst of a small city, have opportunities to experience the nearby Pascagoula River through boat and guided tours, and be connected to the nearby business and community resources that can work together to support economic and community development

This new site will serve to highlight and promote Audubon’s conservation goals within two designated natural areas of which it is a part, including Audubon’s Pascagoula River Marsh Important Bird Area (IBA) and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MS-DMR) Escatawpa River Coastal Preserve. The Center is also poised to serve a key role in the evolving science-based conservation and restoration strategies being developed for the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Flyway.

Sewanee Student Interns at Strawberry Plains

Suzanne Langley, a loyal alumnus of Sewanee, The University of the South, found a great way to give back to her university and at the same time invest in the future of conservation. By funding Andrew Walters' summer internship, the educational mission of Sewanee and conservation mission of Strawberry Plains were advanced. Andrew helped create a butterfly nursery garden as well as the fencing surrounding it. He assisted with summer camp and worked on trail/campus maintenance. A bout with poison ivy and the heat of summer did not deter Andrew's great attitude. Staff also appreciated him being so gracious with the cookies and brownies he baked! Andrew's work lifted the spirit of conservation then and for our future guests.



Andrew Walters, summer intern, works on butterfly garden



Erin Kirk volunteers for Buffet on the Bayou

When Erin Kirk volunteered to help with the Pascagoula River Nature Festival, we had no idea that she would turn out to be such a "gold mine." Since that time, Erin has rarely missed a Saturday volunteering at the PRAC and she has organized and helped with numerous programs over the past two years. She even helped volunteer this past year for SPAC's Hummingbird Festival! In addition to volunteering, she also gives lectures on various marine subjects as a part of our weekend lecture series. Erin is an honors graduate of Coastal Carolina University in Conway, South Carolina and she received a BS in Marine Science and a minor in mathematics. She is originally from Delaware, but has been a resident of the Mississippi Gulf Coast since 2002 and she is an avid sport fishing person. Erin has been instrumental in helping maintain our aquaria and cataloging the data associated with our Pascagoula River Organism Inventory. The staff of PRAC can not thank Erin enough for all her hard work and dedication. We are lucky to have her!

Local Photographer Has an Eye for Strawberry Plains

Curt Hart loves Strawberry Plains. More specifically, he loves capturing the diversity of life found there through the lens of his camera.



Curt Hart at his day job



© Curt Hart

Curt was a professional broadcaster for 38 years and has been a photographer for over 35 years. His photos frequent Audubon's newsletters and website. Cardinals, Prothonotary Warblers and, of course, Hummingbirds all seem to be unique individuals when seen in Curt's pictures. And the butterflies! The abundance of butterflies is amazing at Strawberry Plains. In Curt's photos, you not only see the butterfly's beautiful coloring and wing patterns but also the personality of the insect! Curt has been gracious enough to share his wonderful pictures so that we can give people a better, more beautiful, sense of nature. He, along with Allen Sparks, taught a very successful Wildlife Photography Course in November at the Center. He is generous with his time, his work and his enthusiasm for nature. Look for his pictures in our newsletters, website or in the Visitor Center. He also has images in Butterflies of North America. If you see him shooting at Strawberry Plains one Saturday, stop and take a look at his photos for the day – You won't be disappointed. Thank you, Curt!

Jimmy Krebs is Audubon. He exemplifies Audubon's mission of "connecting people to nature" whether that be watching the hummingbird feeders with his grand kids, taking a group out on a kayak tour of the Pascagoula River, or conducting an Audubon Coastal Bird Survey with his team. Jimmy was at the frontline of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Disaster. He volunteered countless hours at the Audubon Volunteer Response Center, and was always up for a new challenge no matter how complex or tedious the task. This led him to volunteer for the Audubon Coastal Bird Survey, to coordinate the Singing River Bridge Run for the Pascagoula River Nature Festival, and to always be on call for a helping hand. The most amazing thing about Jimmy is his selfless service. Sure, he's coordinated and led a plethora of events and projects that speak volumes to his commitment, but it's the things he does behind the scenes that really characterize Mr. Krebs—like helping move the Volunteer Response Center, helping to make the awards for a big event, but, most of all, making himself available as an indomitable resource.

When Jimmy's not volunteering with Audubon, you can find him riding his bike, spending time with his family, taking a run through the community, or participating in a triathlon in our nation's Capitol. Jimmy is the epitome of an Audubon volunteer, and Audubon would not be the same on the Mississippi Gulf Coast without him. The next time you see Jimmy, thank him for everything he does to support Audubon and its mission.



Jimmy Krebs during Audubon's Coastal Bird Survey

Ray Emmons Receives Volunteer of the Year



L to R: David Person (SPAC Board), Ray Emmons, Peggy Linton (CFNWM), Bubba Hubbard (SPAC Director)

Ray Emmons received Volunteer of the Year from the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi. Ray's work includes untiring construction of chimney swift towers at Strawberry Plains and the Hummingbird Festival. When asked what Strawberry Plains meant to him, Ray responded, "When Jeanette and I moved to Mississippi we knew we wanted something to replace the enjoyment we had at our weekend lake house in Wisconsin. After purchasing our 80 acres in Mississippi we realized we were still missing what we had in Wisconsin and needed to learn more. I attended different seminars trying to figure out how we could change our property. I decided to give the Naturalist Program at Strawberry Plains a try. It opened my eyes to the beauty that was already on our property. I just couldn't see it. If it wasn't for you guys we would still be running in circles trying to fix something that wasn't broken."

What a lucky break for Strawberry Plains when Linda Hottel and her husband Tim moved from Florida to Tennessee. Linda is the kind of volunteer that non-profit organizations dream about – She is smart, flexible and committed – Plus, she is easy-going and spunky at the same time. Linda is a fast learner and her background in teaching, both professionally and home schooling her three great kids, is obvious. She has put in an incredible amount of time and effort getting to know Strawberry Plains so that she can share this place with others. She gives house tours, leads hikes and field trips, works at camp, helps in the greenhouse, pulls invasive plants – You name a need and Linda is at the top of the list of people we call to help. Linda is an all around asset to Strawberry Plains but has been especially important in education. We look forward to seeing her work in the future and thank her immensely for her dedication and effort so far! You're the best, Linda – Thanks!



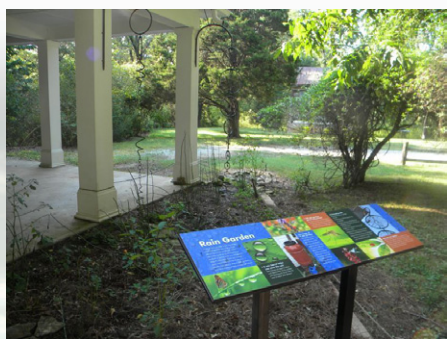
Linda Hottel volunteering at SPAC summer camp

Together Green Dauphin Island Restoration

The Pascagoula River Audubon Center (PRAC) together with staff of the Audubon Volunteer Response Center (VRC) implemented a Toyota and National Audubon Society Together Green grant to restore important bird habitat on Dauphin Island, Alabama. Dauphin Island is located a short distance from the Mississippi Coast and is an important bird habitat for neotropical migrates during the Spring and Fall migration. PRAC partnered with the VRC, Weeks Bay Foundation, Mobile Bay Audubon Society, and the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary Group to remove invasive species such as Cogon Grass, Chinese Tallow, and Privet. The restoration was implemented on three different bird sanctuaries by volunteers, and roughly covers about six to eight acres. Cogon grass was the main targeted invasive species throughout the sanctuaries. This spring we will be planting native plant species that will help provide food and cover for birds and other wildlife. In addition to the native plant restoration, the partners will be building a bird blind and water dripper for birders and other wildlife enthusiasts to use and enjoy. If you're a birder and find yourself in South Mississippi during migration, Dauphin Island will be sure to please.



Cogon infested site on Dauphin Island



New Interpretive Signs for Rain Water Garden

Rain Garden Upgrades at Strawberry Plains

The Together Green Fellow's Grant awarded to Kristin Lamberson has helped Strawberry Plains expand its Audubon at Home messaging. In addition to a new rain garden which includes unique sculptural rain chains, six interpretive panels allow visitors a self-guided educational experience. Garden displays focus on garden diversity and the importance of water management for wildlife and humans. This project is part of the "larger garden" enhancement taking place within the main campus area.

PRAC leads National Campaign "Pennies for the Planet"



Least Tern on Biloxi Front Beach IBA

This past year the Pascagoula River Audubon Center (PRAC) was one of three centers that had a leading role in the National Audubon Society's classroom education program "Pennies for the Planet." This program helps young people become involved in wildlife conservation. It started in 1994 to let kids know how they could make a difference by collecting, saving, and sending in pennies for national conservation projects and by taking part in conservation action in their own communities.

In this year's campaign, young people learned about three different fragile habitats -The Mississippi Gulf Coast's front beach, Nebraska's Platte River, and the Rio Salado Restoration Habitat Area in Arizona. Because PRAC is situated on the coast and has implemented many programs to help protect the least tern and black skimmer nesting populations, their involvement was logical and well matched. During the course of the program, Mozart Dedeaux and Dustin Renaud initiated several volunteer programs to monitor the status of the nesting terns along the three coastal counties and reported findings to participating classrooms across the country. This was done through National Audubon's website and social media sites.

Funding from the program will help support public awareness campaigns, beach stewardship programs, and educational programming with the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society and science/environmental clubs throughout south Mississippi.

Earth Day Celebration at Strawberry Plains

A day of fun and concern for the earth took place on Earth Day last April as Strawberry Plains hosted various events to educate and conserve. One of the events involved local boy scouts, Marshall County Supervisor Eddie Dixon and concerned citizens who got after some trash at Duck Pond, a local getaway for fishing and hiking. The site is particularly known as a waterfowl paradise, especially during winter and is becoming a popular hiking spot for locals who enjoy the outdoors while they walk. Eagles and ospreys are also seen at Duck Pond on a regular basis.



Volunteers clean up Duck Pond



Swift tower and video setup

Moss Point Library Chimney Swift Tower

VISIONS volunteers from all over the country helped build a new Chimney Swift tower for the Moss Point Library. The “friends of the library” volunteer group and PRAC funded the project and the tower was completed this past summer. In September, Mozart Dedeaux, education coordinator for PRAC, installed two video cameras for library patrons to take part in a surveillance/citizen science program. The data will be collected by library patrons and staff by monitoring the multiple camera video set up. This information will be sent to Driftwood Wildlife Association in Texas which will help with their on going Chimney Swift research.

Forestry Series – Strawberry Plains

A three-part series on forestry was conducted at Strawberry Plains last spring to offer perspectives not always considered by landowners. Dr. John Hodges spoke on many aspects of sustainable forest management. Dr. Jeanne Jones from the School of Wildlife Resources at Miss. State Univ. brought a perspective of human enjoyment of forest habitats. Dr. Steve Brewer from the Univ. of Miss. spoke on the plant community of southern forests along with his research underway at Strawberry Plains. The more open, grassy forest shown in the picture is believed to be more prevalent of our historic upland forests in north Mississippi.



Brewer research plot

Friends along the Bayou



© Sandy Ford

A fresh look at the world of the bayou through the eyes of a child is the theme of a new children's book written by Betty Oswald and illustrated by Sandy Ford. Not often is a book published and the proceeds of which will be used for the preservation of the area.....all proceeds from sales of “Friends Along The Bayou” will go to Audubon for the Pascagoula River Audubon Center. The author consulted with PRAC staff on the accuracies of the flora and fauna present in the book and their uses by Native Americans. The book is for sale at PRAC and SPAC.

Coldwater Prescribed Burn Association

Landowners near Strawberry Plains have stepped up in 2011 to form the first prescribed burn association in the Southeastern U.S. Thanks to eighteen members and an Advisory Board consisting of Logan Bailey, Dan Gaw (Treasurer), Joey McAlexander (Vice Pres.), Shannon McGee and Dr. Thomas Morgan (President), the CPBA has taken very important first steps toward major conservation actions in the region. The first burn school in north Mississippi took place at Strawberry Plains last spring and seven members of the CPBA became certified burn managers. Next steps are to foster membership, purchase equipment to share among membership and put more all-important fire on the ground to improve wildlife habitat.



PRAC Junior Naturalist



Junior naturalist on Horn Island

PRAC initiated a new revised Audubon Junior Naturalist course targeting kids ages 14-18. The program consisted of half day excursions focused on the flora and fauna of the many habitats that exist across the Mississippi Coastal Plain. Trips included journeys through the old growth swamps and tidal marshes of the Pascagoula River, the specialized habitat of Horn Island, mixed hardwood and bottom land forest, wet pine savannas, oxbow lakes, and bayous of the river basin. Students had the opportunity to explore these habitats and discover what makes them unique. Audubon Junior Naturalist will help serve as ambassadors to local schools and help implement educational programs and volunteer at the center.

Katie's Farewell to Strawberry Plains... Well, Not Really!



Katie and Eamon Boyle

I thought it was time to move on as my husband Bill finished school in December, right? I put in my notice, started organizing my files and office... Then I thought, are you crazy, Katie? So, we will stretch out our stay for a few more months and I will be working part-time. I just wanted to say thanks while I have the chance. From my first day of work, I thought that I have to be the luckiest person around. The generosity and graciousness of the people I have come to know here (yes, YOU) has been overwhelming. With faith, you have encouraged me and made this a true home for us. Wherever we go, Strawberry Plains will always be a touchstone. Thanks especially to Bubba "Best Boss Ever" Hubbard and the staff (particularly Kristin, my total BFF). They are smart, talented and kind. Truly, I have never worked with better people.

There is something profound at work at Strawberry Plains that even I have a hard time naming. It goes beyond the obvious beauty and lies somewhere deep in the roots of the place. Our work here is about healing the landscape but I know that this place is really healing us. Strawberry Plains needs people to be fulfilled – Visit often and you'll feel renewed too, I promise. My Dad always said that it is a long road that has no turning – I pray to turn back this way one day! Till we meet again, Katie.

Eagle Scout Builds Bird Blind

Bird watching is a favorite pastime for visitors to the Pascagoula River Audubon Center, and thanks to the work of a local scout, it has become easier to see a larger variety of birds.

Kevin Stachowski, a Boy Scout with Troop 230 in Pascagoula, approached Dr. Mark LaSalle, director of PRAC, and asked what projects he might like done around the center that could serve as his Eagle Scout project. LaSalle asked for the construction of a Bird Hide, a covered platform with bench seating so bird watchers aren't detected by the various avian species.

A Dripper station is located near the hide and is a bird bath above which a small hose provides a slow but steady stream of water that attracts birds to the bath. The water source is from a cistern that is connected to the roof of the blind. The bird hide and dripper are located in the wooded area just south of the center. After nearly two years, from design to completion, the Bird Hide is being enjoyed by Audubon Center visitors.

"Guests to the bird hide have enjoyed the comfort that it provides while they watch and photograph the many species of birds that use the dripper," LaSalle said. "This has been a wonderful success for the Center and the people that visit."



Kevin Stachowski and Friends

Hummingbird Migration Celebration Great Success at Strawberry Plains



Close Up Look at Hummingbirds

National Audubon Society's largest nature festival held annually on the weekend after Labor Day, celebrated nature and sustainable living with around 7,500 guests. After twelve consecutive years, 76% of the guests were there for the first time. Visitors came from Mississippi (43%), Memphis area (31%) and from other states (26%).

Speakers and presenters were probably the highest quality to date. Exit surveys were very positive with 78% indicating the event inspired them to make life style or behavioral changes that benefit nature and sustainability. In between inspiring outdoor presentations, guests watched hummingbirds dart among wildflowers, admired beautiful native

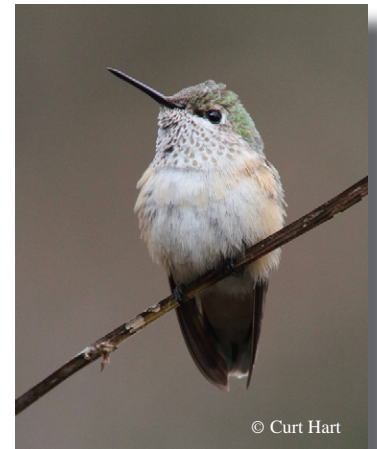
gardens and restored habitats during guided nature walks and wagon rides at the old cotton plantation.

Volunteers from all walks of life helped make the event possible, including college professors, naturalists, Holly Springs Rotary Club, students and many others who simply enjoy helping people learn about nature. Sustainability was focus as Memphis 4-H groups led the charge to recycle the events refuse. Suzanne Langley, Director of Seine Marketing Communications, Inc., conducted sessions on sustainable living.

Bob Sargent's Bird Study Group had plenty of birds to band and ended up putting bracelets on 388 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Sugar water feeders along with an abundant supply of insects in the native plant gardens and natural habitats provide the nourishment needed for the migration underway to Central America and Mexico.

Birders Flock for Rare Sighting at Strawberry Plains

A Calliope, the smallest of hummingbirds in the U.S., made an unprecedented appearance to north Mississippi in November during the Strawberry Plains Wildlife Photography Workshop - What Luck! Instructors Curt Hart and Allen Sparks both photographed the tiny bird. Notice the brown feathers, spotted neck and if you look closely, you may notice a splotch or purple on the neck – a telltale feature of the Calliope which typically inhabits northwestern mountain states and winters in Mexico. It is the smallest, long-distance avian migrant in the world. Bob Sargent (Hummer/Bird Study Group) rushed over from Alabama to put the tiniest of bands on the bird. As Bob told us, "Calliope is super rare here but they have wings and don't read field guides, so they go where they jolly well please!" The word was out and birders from all around came for a chance to add a species to their life lists! We hope it decides to winter at Strawberry.



Audubon Promoting Wildlife Forestry with Mississippi River Landowners



© Bruce Reid

Audubon is reaching out to Mississippi River landowners who want to be good stewards of all wildlife. In a pilot project of the Mississippi River Field Institute, Vicksburg-based staff members are working with Catfish Point hunting club near Greenville and Anderson-Tully Co. of Vicksburg to develop a model forest management plan. The project is supported by the Walton Family Foundation and seeks to expand the use of forest management practices that benefit non-game songbirds and deer and other game species and well as promote sustainable timber harvesting. The practices, called Desired Forest Conditions, were developed by the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture, a regional habitat conservation cooperative. Anderson-Tully, an established forest products company, is developing ways in which other large private hunting clubs can adopt similar practices.

are still governed by economic interests. An ethical obligation of private landowners is the only remedy, not government programs.

American conservation today seems to be concerned for the most part, with show places such as parks. We must learn to see our own backyards and create outdoor satisfactions. Wildlife is a social asset and we must somehow extend the social conscience from people to the land.

Native Plants that Feed the Wildlife Masses

Using native plants in the landscape may often prove itself challenging. Resources for the plants themselves are a bit slim as are the people who can advise or help the gardener who wants to create a healthier landscape. When conjuring up ideas for a garden/landscape design there are questions we should ask ourselves.

What does the site dictate? Is it full sun, shade, wet, dry, etc., and what plants or plant communities best serve that site? What are the individual characteristics of the plants I want to use? What is their growing pattern, when do they bloom, who will the flowers attract, who will eat the seeds, what do they look like in winter, what color is their fall foliage, do they have fruit, when is that fruit ripe, what entities will eat that fruit, is it a host plant for insects?

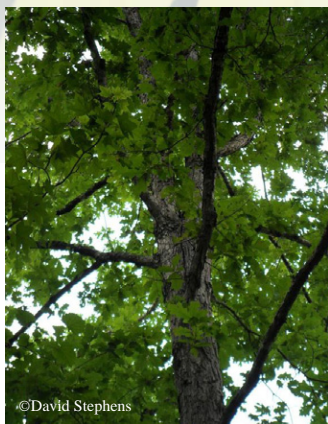
Now let me focus on that last question concerning host plants. Most commonly in the garden world when we mention host plant we are referring to the preferred plant of butterflies or moths on which they lay their eggs. The eggs hatch and the caterpillar eats the foliage of its host plant till it leaves that plant to form a chrysalis or cocoon. These unique relationships between host plant and insect have been finely tuned through the evolutionary process; to the point where some species, like the monarch butterfly, will only lay its eggs on plants in the milkweed family.

We normally think of the host plant/insect connection only in terms of a place for those insects to procreate for the sake of those insects alone, again using the monarch example; planting milkweeds for monarchs (by the way, keep planting milkweeds for the monarchs). But after reading Doug Tallamy's book, *Bringing Nature Home*, I now think of those host plant/insect relationships as blueprint for the grand food chain web. Our native plants support the insects that feed other wildlife and if we change our example to birds, most birds rely on insects for food, especially when feeding their young during breeding season.

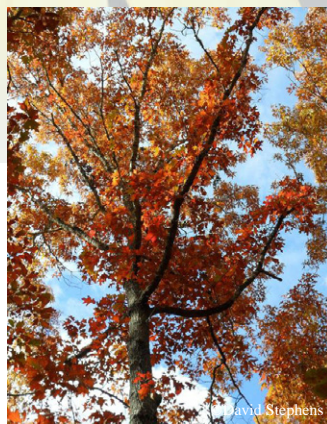
Keeping that whole idea in our mind we now want one of our plant characteristics to be, the plant that will support the most insects. Doug Tallamy includes in his book a great chart listing plants by Family, with the number of Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies) species that each plant Family supports, or are host plant to. *Quercus*, or the mighty Oak, is the number one host plant thus far in Tallamy's research, supporting over a whopping 500 lepidoptera species. This basically means more food for the wildlife masses, and a lot of bang for your buck! So, not only do we benefit wildlife by using natives, we can fine tune that native list so that our plant choices support/benefit or feed the most critters possible with each new addition we place in the soil.



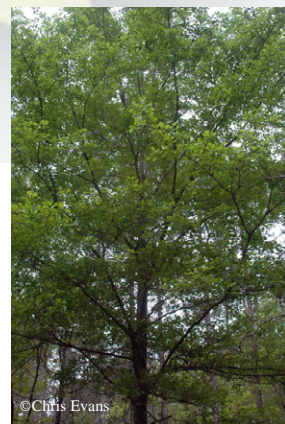
Live Oak, *Quercus virginiana*



White Oak, *Quercus alba*



Southern Red Oak, *Quercus falcata*



Water Oak, *Quercus nigra*

Susie Murphy Joins Audubon

Susie began as Operations Assistant at Strawberry Plains in February, 2011. Prior to becoming full time at the Center, she worked part-time for the last two years as the volunteer coordinator for the Annual Hummingbird Migration Celebration. Susie received a B.B.A. in Marketing from Mississippi State University and is also the bookkeeper for her husband's business. She brings with her great people skills and experience working in the community. Susie's skills have paid off with volunteer coordination and assistance with office management and a host of other Center functions. In her spare time she enjoys going to the lake with her family, football and walking the trails at Strawberry Plains!



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