



AUGUST MEETING

The Boone's Lick Chapter of Missouri Master Naturalists will meet from **6:00-8:00 p.m.** on Thursday, August 9 at **Lick Creek Conservation Area**. The program will be given by Morgan Wehtje, who will present a field session on "Tracking, Sign and Scat ID 101, 205 and possibly 440".

We've all seen the usual critters that live around us and we all know them by sight. We all know what an opossum looks like, raccoons, skunks and foxes too. But what if you wish to know "what was that noise by the wood pile last night?", or "who's been eating Fee Fee's dog food while Fee Fee sleeps?" The critter may be long gone, but the clues are there if you know how to find and decipher them.

This month an expert in the field will be here to help us unravel clues we may find as we wander the hills, valleys and back yards of Missouri. Morgan Wehtje is currently a graduate student in the Wildlife and Fisheries Department studying the changes in spatial and social behavior in raccoons when a clumped continuous food resource is provided. Prior to moving to Columbia she was a wildlife biologist for the California Department of Fish & Game for 19 years. She has been involved with everything from endangered species, permitting, land acquisition and conservation to oil spills. One of her specialties is dealing with animals, especially carnivores, along urban/wild land interfaces. She has spent much time tracking bears, mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats and once even a tiger!

So attend the August meeting/field session and

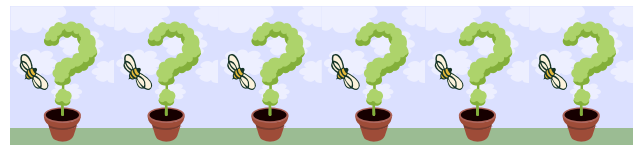
learn or hone skills of animal tracking, scat identification and animal sign interpretation from an expert. We will do some field exploration, identifications, deduction and reasoning, all under the watchful eye of a true expert. Field samples and other items of interest shall be provided by Mrs. Wehtje. Dress for the field and bring water bottles and bug spray. You will not want to miss this opportunity!

Directions to Lick Creek CA: Lick Creek Conservation Area is 9 miles north of Columbia on Highway 63, then 3 miles west on Highway 124, and 1.8 miles north on Oak Grove School Road. This area is mostly forest.

For everything else you wanted to know about the area, visit mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/applications/moatlas/AreaSummaryPage.aspx?txtAreaID=9228&txtUserID=&txtAreaNm=s

Anyone wishing to carpool should meet **at 5:15 pm** in the parking lot of Patricia's Foods at 900 N. Keene St.

submitted by David Silvey



PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

Suzanne Wright

Life on the River

Certainly high summer is upon us. With the Show-Me games, Columbia has become inaccessible to the locals as the eating establishments are packed and the streets jammed with Missouri youth and their parents.

I'm sad to say the MAPS bird banding has only one more session and it unfortunately appears the mosquitoes have vacated Eagle Bluffs for my front yard. The thick growth of poison ivy has made a walk in the woods as hazardous as a trek up Mt. Everest to those who are highly allergic. And I feel that I have personally donated enough to the tick population of mid-Missouri and will delay my honeysuckle abatement until a more auspicious time. With the passing of July fourth, I've heard several people mention that fall is coming; however this speculation seems premature to me.

It seems a perfect time to spend time on the water. And with the upcoming Missouri River 340, I find myself more captivated by the mighty Missouri. When we first arrived in Missouri in 1973, I was highly suspect of the big river that spanned my new state. Although we would stand on its banks, I judged it to be highly dangerous and to be avoided by those with sense. But now I find myself "sitting" on it in my yellow kayak as I paddle its every moving water. (I picked that color for its high visibility...easier for rescue if the need arises.) I do not take its power lightly but I am intrigued and find myself wanting to explore it more than I could have ever imagined.

Although I have powered up the River in a motor boat, spotting eagle, deer and turkey on its shore, the impression is much different when you are using only the force of the water and your own power to propel yourself along. The slower pace allows you to catch the details of the great blue herons standing on the wing dams or the deer backlit with the green of leaves. Without the noise of a motor you hear the birdsong coming from the trees and the sound of the water itself.

Occasionally the river will create an unexpected rush and slurping sound which prompts me to do a quick look over my shoulder, ever expecting to see Moby Dick surfacing on my right and about to overtake me. Moments like that remind me of the first time I kayaked on the Missouri. It was my husband's suggestion to my brother that after my one day of basic training he and I should do

a short float on the river. As we prepared to launch from Franklin Island I pointed out the two symbolic white crosses at the boat ramp. My simple question of "do you think this is a good idea?" was answered by vigorous nods from the two men I trust most in my life.

All was going smoothly until I spotted something ahead, a great disturbance in the water. I attempted to point it out to my brother but it seemed to come and go and I cautioned him about large snags that can get hung up on the wing dams. Dusty seemed to think I was delusional until it again surfaced and we realized it was the dorsal fin of a fish flailing against one of the red buoys on which it was obviously snagged. He suggested that we should "go around". Since the fish looked like it could have outweighed me, I agreed.

The second Missouri River 340 will begin in Kansas City with the Kansas River as the launch site at 8:00 AM on July 24th. The participants will have until noon on July 28th to reach mile marker 29 in St. Charles, Missouri. There are nine check points on the 100 hour race which must each be reached by a designated time. Failure to make two consecutive check points within the time allowed is grounds for disqualification. Cooper's Landing will be check point number five and it the closet check point to Columbia. Paddlers must reach it by 9:00 PM on Thursday. There are 74 boats entered in the race this year; last year there were only 15. Two thirds of the teams entered were unable to finish within the allotted time, and one third of the boats had to drop out.

The Missouri River typically flows at three mph. This is measure at the center of the channel which is marked by the U.S. Coast Guard with green and red markers. You are not required to stay within the channel as the river meanders back and forth; you can take a straight line but the waters will be slower and there are obstacles such as wing dams that must be avoided. Race strategies, training, equipment and the mental toughness required for an endurance race such as this, will be determined by each competitor.

Although the race will be history by the time this article goes to print, one fact is certain today. This event will raise awareness of the river—and if you can connect people with the river, they will take care of it. Maybe the racers themselves will not be picking up trash along the way, but someone that watches the race may assist in a clean-up sometime in the future.

On Thursday, I hope to find myself at Cooper's to cheer on any competitors that happen to stop at the checkpoint. And the next time I'm out for a paddle on the river, I will have a bag stowed in my aft bulkhead to pick up trash on the sandbars.



MEETING MINUTES

The July meeting of the Boone's Lick chapter of Missouri Master Naturalists took place on July 12 from 6:30-8:30 pm and was attended by 15 members and 1 guest.

Troy Gordon and Don Day presented an expanded version of the pictures taken at the 2007 State Conference and other recent Boone's Lick Chapter volunteer activities.

The business meeting was brief and to the point so that there was more time for socializing. It was decided that we should send get well cards to two of our members who have been ill recently.

Agenda Items included:

- Upcoming events for the Dog Days of Summer – no new events scheduled
- New Volunteer Activities – Troy made announcements – also check newsletter and website. There was a special request for additional help with the Henslow's Sparrow project at Tucker Prairie.
- New Advanced Training Opportunities – None at this time – Please notify Mary Jane

Wheeling if you learn of advanced training opportunities.

- Committee Reports were given.
- The presenter for the August meeting will be Morgan Wehtje on the subject of Animal Tracking
- Don't forget to LOG YOUR HOURS!

Submitted by Buffie Balling

LEARN MORE ABOUT...

...**raptor awareness** at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, Friday, August 24, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Sponsored by the World Bird Sanctuary. Look into the eyes of an owl, feel the breeze of a hawk's wing and watch a raven recycle. This World Bird Sanctuary program will feature live birds, including a hawk, vulture, falcon and owls, and will focus on what makes them special. Located in St. Louis, the World Bird Sanctuary's mission is to preserve the earth's biological diversity and to secure the future of threatened bird species in their natural environments. They work to fulfill that mission through education, captive breeding, field studies and rehabilitation.

...**orienteering** through Lost in the Woods at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, Sept. 8, 12-4 p.m. Learn basic map, compass and navigation skills, then venture out in small groups to test your new skills on and off-trail on our orienteering course. Bring water and a sack lunch or snacks. Reservations required; contact Kat DiFoxfire at 573-449-7402 or kathryn.difoxfire@dnr.mo.gov

UPCOMING EVENTS

Water, Whiskey and Hogs. Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, Sept. 15, 1-4 p.m. Join a park naturalist on a hike through the hidden remains of the once-thriving 19th and early 20th century town of Rockbridge Mills! Hear stories of the rich, the poor and the enslaved! Visit the whiskey distillery site, the ruins of a southern-style mansion house, and other historic building ruins! See Hog's Graveyard Cave! Climb inside an old grain silo! Dance the

Virginia Reel! Learn to "read the natural landscape" and discover the stories behind the scenes! Hike is 1.5 miles; reservations required. Contact Kat DiFoxfire at 573-449-7402 or kathryn.difoxfire@dnr.mo.gov .

ONES, an alliance of local outdoor, nature, environment, and sustainability groups will meet Wednesday August 22 at 6:30 PM at the Daniel Boone Public Library at Broadway and Garth. Individuals from Master Naturalists, Friends of Rock Bridge, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Missouri River Communities Network, Hawthorn Native Plant Society, Hinkson Restoration Project, Greenbelt Land Trust, Friends of Big Muddy, and related organizations are invited to attend. For more information, contact Celeste Mazzacano at 573-239-4267.

MEET A MASTER NATURALIST

Meet...Carolyn Doyle, class of 2005

Reason you become a Master Naturalist: I love being outdoors, am restored by being out under the trees or on a hill, just absorbing nature. My family is nature-oriented, so it's partly genetic, I guess. I enjoy learning more and more, and think it's important to be able to pass on the love and appreciation of the natural world to others, especially kids.

Most amazing, bizarre, disgusting, odd, or awe-inspiring thing you have ever seen or experienced in the course of Master Naturalist-type activities: I rather concur with Steffanie, that seeing Troy dash headlong down a steep embankment at Overton Bottoms, in pursuit of a butterfly, was pretty awesome. I think the enthusiasm of fellow MN's is impressive, and contagious. So far, knock on wood, I haven't been really grossed out.

Favorite service project: I've enjoyed all my service projects; I like Bats on Parade, and the butterfly census at Overton Bottoms.

Favorite natural history-related book, and why: One of my favorite books is 'The Natural

History of Selborne' by Gilbert White. He was a Church of England parson in the 18th century and an excellent observer of the natural history of his small village of Selborne in Hampshire, England.

Favorite Missouri native, and why: I love the early spring wildflowers, and each as it comes into bloom is my favorite.

One thing that people who know you would NEVER guess about you: I have over a hundred vintage dollhouses on shelves in my basement.

AUGUST VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

New volunteer opportunities were not available at publication time, but will be posted on the website Volunteer Opportunities link at <http://extension.missouri.edu/masternaturalist/columbia/> as soon as they are available.

Please contact the person indicated for more detailed information on any project. If a project is listed as "not yet approved," you will need to fill out a Service Project Form (at <http://extension.missouri.edu/masternaturalist/columbia/Projectapproval.htm>). You will be notified via e-mail of the project's approval or if there are any questions. Once approval is granted for any person, it is approved for everyone, so it is only necessary to submit one form per project.

"Nature is by and large to be found out of doors, a location where, it cannot be argued, there are never enough comfortable chairs."

Fran Lebowitz

2007 OFFICERS

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Chapter Co-advisors:

University of Missouri Extension: Don Day, daydr@missouri.edu

Missouri Department of Conservation: vacant

NEXT MEETING—NOTE CHANGE IN TIME AND PLACE!!!!
Thursday, August 9, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Lick Creek Conservation Area

Program: Morgan Wehtje, University of Missouri-Columbia,
"Tracking, Sign and Scat ID"

Refreshments: Suzanne Wright will send reminders to those who signed up for August.
Please bring anything needed to serve and consume your dish or drink.



*To promote awareness and citizen
stewardship of natural resources
through science-based education and
community service*