



DECEMBER MEETING

Boone's Lick Chapter of Missouri Master Naturalists will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, December 14. The evening will include a potluck dinner, a review of 2006 master naturalist activities, election of officers and a silent auction. Members are reminded to send photos of master naturalist activities to Don ASAP for inclusion in the 2006 review. Family members are welcome. Please bring food to share, items for the silent auction and money to buy auction items. There will be a signup sheet for committees for 2007 chapter events and for the State Missouri Master Naturalist Conference that will be in Columbia in spring 2007.

PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

Turkeys don't get much respect, largely because selective breeding of the domestic bird to be little more than a hunk of breast meat has created dimwitted creatures who can't walk and may drown as they stare up into the sky at rain (some turkey lovers have attempted to explain this protracted suicide as indicative of turkeys' high level of intelligence, claiming they are gazing at the sky in an attempt to decipher weather patterns and figure out just where all that water is coming from, but this is a pretty tenuous hypothesis). Even their species name indicates a certain level of confusion; the epithet *Meleagris gallapavo* bestowed on them in 1758 by Linnaeus carries the meaning of "guineafowl peafowl", suggesting he may have harbored some ambivalence about their classification.

However, the wild turkey has an ancient and respectable lineage. Turkeys are native to

North America and are thought to have originated in Mexico, where they were first domesticated by the Aztecs (who called them *xuehxolotl*). The Spanish took the domesticated turkey (plus a great deal of the accumulated wealth of the natives) from Mexico to Europe in the early 1500s. Turkeys were being bred in England by 1541, and European settlers disembarked in America accompanied by a few hardy birds who voyaged with them. Roast turkey became a popular holiday dish in England, a phenomenon that may have been furthered by Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, which is credited for popularizing turkey for Christmas dinner (not to mention being directly to blame for endless saccharine holiday utterances of "God bless us every one", the first repetition of which inevitably fills me with the burning desire to whack Tiny Tim soundly with his crutch until he shuts up).

Turkeys can inspire people with strange passions, as evinced by Benjamin Franklin's feelings about the choice our national symbol, writing to his daughter "For my own part I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen the Representative of our Country. He is a Bird of bad moral Character... the Turkey is in Comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America. . . He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on."

Not surprisingly, the advent of European colonists didn't benefit the wild cousins of their domesticated birds a whole lot. From 1840 to 1900, historians described turkeys as "so

MEETING MINUTES

numerous and easily obtained as to be scarcely worthy of consideration." (no doubt similar sentiments were expressed about the passenger pigeon). During the 1800s, some 10 million wild turkeys roamed the continent, but the usual plagues of habitat destruction and unregulated hunting reduced the population to less than 300,000 by the 1950s.

In Missouri, the wild turkey population hit an all-time low in the middle of the 20th century, with about 3,000 birds nervously hiding out in the more remote regions of the Ozarks. After World War II ended, Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) began a concerted protection and restoration program, buying land in the southern Ozarks that still supported wild turkeys and protecting them from hunting while restoring their food and cover. This increased turkey numbers to the point that they could be trapped and released into suitable sites within the state; MDC worked with people living in the area where birds were released, obtaining their cooperation in protecting their new wild neighbors. The restoration program was successful enough that the turkey population throughout the state supports hunting, with four turkey seasons per year. During the fall 2006 firearms season, MDC tallied 11, 927 birds harvested throughout the month of October. In fact, Missouri even has enough wild turkeys to share with other states, trading turkeys for ruffed grouse, pheasants, prairie chickens, and otters (uh, maybe the less said about the otters the better . . .)

And while it may not be the most natural history-oriented nugget of turkey lore to carry with you as we enter the official American holiday season of Over consumption, I leave you with my favorite piece of turkey trivia: Sesame Street's Big Bird, for those of you who have wondered, is in fact a gigantic turkey—his costume is made of nearly 4,000 white turkey feathers dyed a bright yellow. –Celeste Mazzacano

Present: Janine Gordon, Troy Gordon, Sharon Reed, Suzanne Wright, Sally Swanson, Angela Belden, Rebecca Allen, Carolyn Doyle, Gail White, Mary Jane Wheeling, Kirk Keller, Caroline Brown, Dan Reeves, Vanessa Melton, and Don Day.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by vice president Suzanne Wright, who introduced Dee Dokken and Muriel Stephenson, members of the Greenbelt Land Trust (GBLT), which is an organization that works with the city to preserve landscape around Columbia in a natural state. The Boone's Lick Chapter will look into volunteer opportunities to help GBLT with projects such as removal of invasive species and inventorying grasses and woodlands. Those who want more information should contact them by calling 442-4224 or e-mailing ddokken@centurytel.net. Their web site is greenbelt.missouri.org.

The December meeting will include a potluck dinner, an opportunity to review 2006 master naturalist activities, election of officers and a silent auction. Members are reminded to send photos of master naturalist activities to Don ASAP for inclusion in the 2006 review. Members are encouraged to bring family members to the December meeting, as well as food to share and items for the silent auction (and money to buy auction items). There will be a sign-up sheet for committees for 2007 chapter events and for the State Missouri Master Naturalist Conference that will be in Columbia in spring 2007.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Swanson



'TIS THE SEASON... TO BUY

If you're looking for a "naturalist" type gift for someone on your Christmas list, browse through these offerings that are available from the Missouri Department of Conservation Nature Shop.

* **Show-Me Bugs (\$7.95)** - Vibrant color is the hallmark of this guide to 50 cool insects. Macabre burying beetles, scary scorpion flies, terrifying tiger beetles and heroic-sized Hercules beetles inhabit this 132-page, hand-sized book, which also tells each species' life history. Buy this book at a Conservation Department gift shop during November or December and get a 20 percent discount.

* **Central Region Seedling ID Guide for Native Prairie Plants (\$6)** - This pocket-sized book's pages are made of heavy card stock. It has photos of 40 prairie plants, plus notes about habitat. Seven pages are devoted to seed photographs.

* **Trees of Missouri Field Guide (\$7.50)** - Color illustrations help you identify hundreds of trees. The backpack-sized book groups trees by leaf shape.

* **Echoes of Outdoor Missouri (\$8)** - Experience the sounds of Missouri's natural habitats with this 70-minute CD. You will hear everything from the soothing sounds of an Ozark stream to the eerie dance of the prairie chicken on your auditory journey along rivers, prairies and forests.

* **Leaf Note Cards (\$4.50)** - Detailed drawings of oak and sumac leaves silhouetted against a soothing pastel green background create a beautiful package for whatever greeting you choose to pen inside. Ten cards and envelopes per package.

Also on sale is the **2007 Natural Events Calendar (\$5)**. The lavishly illustrated 10x14-inch calendar covers Missouri's natural year in detail, with notes about outdoor occurrences from meteor showers to mink kits' birth. Photos range from spectacular seasonal landscapes to intimate nature details from every corner of the state.

These are only a few of the items available from The Nature Shop. To shop and order online, visit www.mdcnatureshop.com. Call (877) 521-8632 to order toll-free and request information about sales tax and shipping costs. You also can request a printed catalog from MDC Nature Shop, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, or by e-mailing publications.staff@mdc.mo.gov. If you prefer to shop in person, visit the MDC Central Regional Office at 1907 Hillcrest in Columbia, or the Runge Conservation Nature Center, 330 Commerce Drive, (Highway 179) Jefferson City.

'TIS THE SEASON TO EAT

By popular request, here is Carolyn Doyle's recipe for Pecan Pie Muffins

Pecan Pie Muffins

1 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup flour
1 cup chopped pecans
2/3 cup real butter melted
(no substitutes)
2 eggs, beaten

In a bowl, mix brown sugar, flour and pecans: set aside. Combine melted butter and eggs (pour melted butter slowly into beaten eggs) and mix well. Stir into flour mixture just until moistened. Fill greased and floured miniature muffin cups 2/3 full (do not use larger muffin pan). (I use a non-stick pan and don't need to grease and flour). Bake at 350 degrees for 18 minutes. Remove immediately to cool. Makes about 30 or so mini-muffins.

From Martha Carter, Auxvasse, via the April 2006 Rural Missouri





EAGLE DAYS
SET FOR
DECEMBER
THROUGH
JANUARY

The biting cold of winter is just around the corner for Missouri, and that means the Show-Me State soon will be mobbed by bald eagles, creating spectacular opportunities to view the national symbol.

To make eagle viewing as easy as possible, Missouri Department of Conservation sets up telescopes at strategic locations. Nearby buildings allow visitors to warm up between eagle-watching stints. Also indoors are naturalist programs featuring live eagles. This year's Eagle Day events are scheduled for:

--Dec. 2 and 3 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge near Mound City.

--Jan. 6 and 7 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Wilmore Lodge at Lake of the Ozarks.

--Jan. 13 and 14 from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Little Platte Park Course Complex, Smithville.

--Jan. 13 and 14 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge, St. Louis.

--Jan. 20 and 21 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center, Springfield.

--Jan. 27 and 28 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Apple Shed Theater and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Lock and Dam 24, Clarksville, and Ted Shanks Conservation Area near Louisiana, Mo.

--Feb. 3 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Mingo National Wildlife Refuge near Puxico.

For more information about Eagle Day events, call (573) 522-4115, ext. 3289, or visit www.mdc.mo.gov/events/eagledays/.

KNOW MORE

You likely are aware of the bush honeysuckle menace that exists at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park and throughout the state. For an

interesting report on this menace, check out www.misterhoneysuckle.com. Be sure to click on the link to "The Trouble with Honeysuckle Bushes." (It's on the left.) I'll think you'll get a chuckle or two as you learn about a serious problem for natural communities.

STATE FOREST NURSERY
TAKING ORDERS FOR 2007

Now is the time to order tree seedlings from the Missouri state forest nursery for delivery next spring. Early ordering is advisable, since supplies are limited.

George O. White State Forest Nursery near Licking supplies millions of tree and shrub seedlings annually to Missourians who want to improve their land for wildlife. Greg Hoss manages the 748-acre facility near Licking for the Missouri Department of Conservation. Workers under his supervision begin digging up seedlings early in December and continue stacking the plants up in huge coolers until spring. Then, just in time for spring planting, the bundles are shipped all over the state.

This year's catalog lists dozens of species, including 13 oaks, six pines, black walnut, pecan and more than a dozen shrubs. Other tree seedlings available this year include tulip poplar, sweet gum, bald cypress, silver maple, river birch, black cherry and Kentucky coffee. The state forest nursery is offering extra-large white ash seedlings for the first time. These are approximately 3 feet tall. Other first-time offerings include serviceberry and nannyberry, a large flowering shrub that does well in shade or sun and produces fruits relished by birds. The shrub selection includes flowering dogwood, smooth sumac, deciduous holly, redbud, wild plum, ninebark, elderberry, arrow wood, false indigo, witch hazel, blackberry, buckbrush and slender and round-headed bush clover.

Plants come in bundles of 25 seedlings for \$3 to \$24, depending on species. A \$5 shipping and handling charge is added to each order,

plus 5.725 percent sales tax unless the order is accompanied by a tax-exemption certificate.

The state forest nursery also sells bundles with plant assortments for specific purposes. These sell for \$12 to \$16. Special bundles include:

- The Conservation Bundle, with five seedlings of each of six species.
- The Wildlife Cover Bundle, with 10 seedlings of each of five species.
- The Large Nut Tree Bundle, with 15 large seedlings each of pecan and black walnut.
- The Quail Cover Bundle, with 15 seedlings of each of five species.

A full list of trees and shrubs available through the state forest nursery is available at www.mdc.mo.gov/forest/nursery. Or, you can call 573/674-3229 and request a catalog by mail.

NOVEMBER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Here are the volunteer opportunities for December. Contact the person indicated for more detailed information on any of the projects.

**Wetland Restoration at Baltimore Bottoms
Saturday, December 2, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

Friends of Big Muddy will be planting southern blue flag at the Baltimore Bottom Unit of the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The group will carpool from the Big Muddy Refuge office, leaving at 8a.m. and returning at 4:30 p.m. at the latest. Volunteers should dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes that can get muddy. Bring a sack lunch for the lunch break. Planting equipment will be supplied. Note: Planting may be cancelled if weather conditions are not favorable, so please let Troy know if you are planning to participate.

Contact Troy Gordon at friends@friendsofbigmuddy.org or 573-424-9051.

Project is approved.

**Explore Rock Bridge
Audubon Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, December 16**

Volunteers are needed to help count birds seen in a portion of the Rock Bridge Memorial State Park. Dress warmly. Binoculars and/or a spotting scope are helpful, but not essential. Bird identification skills also are helpful, but not essential. People without experience can help spot birds and record numbers seen. Further opportunities may be available in other areas around Columbia through the Columbia Audubon Society.

Sponsored by Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park and Columbia Audubon Society. Contact: Meredith Donaldson at Mjdonlson@aol.com or 815-9255.

Project is approved.

Ongoing Opportunities

**Fire Line Installation at Grand Bluffs
Conservation Area**

Flexible hours until completed

Sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation

Volunteers needed to run a leaf blower for at least six hours to install fire line in forested landscape. Work will be physically demanding as it will be on uneven terrain with a 20-pound backpack blower.

Contact Josh Stevens at

Josh.Stevens@mdc.mo.gov or 573-592-1412.

Project is approved.

**Fire Line Clearing at Rock Bridge Memorial
State Park**

**Late October to early November on your
own time or during office hours if using
park tools**

Volunteers will remove branches and wood debris from fire lines along the Grassland Trail area in preparation for fall and winter burns.

Project should take one to three hours to complete. Contact: Kathryn DiFoxfire at rock.bridge.memorial.state.park@dnr.mo.gov

or Roxie Campbell at 573-449-7402 or roxie.campbell@dnr.mo.gov. Project is approved.

**Prescribed Burns at Rock Bridge
Memorial State Park**

Select weekdays between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. (call for specific dates)

Volunteers will assist in prescribed burns in restored native grassland or in woodland units within the park. The exact dates are determined by weather, wind direction and staff and volunteer availability.

Contact: Kathryn DiFoxfire at rock.bridge.memorial.state.park@dnr.mo.gov or Roxie Campbell at 573-449-7402 or roxie.campbell@dnr.mo.gov.

Project is approved.

**Prairie Fork Conservation Area Field Trip
for Naturalists**

Sponsored by Missouri Department of Conservation, the University of Missouri and the Prairie Fork Trust.

Prairie Fork CA has a need for volunteer naturalists to staff environmental education stations during field trips for school students. Programs take place between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. Most programs will be Tuesday or Friday.

Contact Benedict Nagy at (573)254-3262, or benedict62@yahoo.com.

Project is approved

**Prairie Fork Conservation Area Program
Development**

Program development for fall semester

Sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation, the University of Missouri and the Prairie Fork Trust.

Prairie Fork needs volunteer naturalists to help develop exciting and innovative outdoor environmental education programs. These programs *must* be designed to help teachers meet goals described in State of Missouri and national educational standards. Emphasis is being placed on elementary students, particularly fourth graders.

Contact Benedict Nagy at (573)254-3262, or benedict62@yahoo.com.

Project is approved.

**Landowner Contacts Database
Flexible hours until completed.**

Sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation

Volunteer needed to log landowner contact folders by location. Files date back to the 1940s. By recording the assistance provided on specific properties in the past, MDC will have an account of historical management and will be better able to assess the needs for the property. Location: Fulton.

Contact Josh Stevens at Josh.Stevens@mdc.mo.gov or 573-592-1412.

Project is approved.

Friends of Big Muddy Activities

Ongoing dates throughout the year.

Most opportunities are on the units of the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, projects are sponsored by Friends of Big Muddy.

Check <http://www.friendsofbigmuddy.org> for current opportunities or sign up for list serve announcements of activities by e-mailing FriendsofBigMuddy-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Contact Troy Gordon at friends@friendsofbigmuddy.org or call 573-424-9051.

Projects are approved.

**Raptor Rehabilitation Project
Ongoing**

Sponsored by Raptor Rehabilitation Project
Volunteers need to care for sick or injured raptors, to feed and provide activities to captive animals, to create, improve and deliver excellent presentations about these feathered wonders.

To learn more about the project or to start training, contact: Erin West at eed76@mizzou.edu.

Project is approved.

2006 OFFICERS

President	Celeste Mazzacano (573) 499-1913
Vice-President	Suzanne Wright (573) 446-2217
Secretary/Treas.	Sally Swanson (573) 874-2043

COMMITTEES

Program	Suzanne Wright
Communication	Barb Fairchild
Project Approval	Carolyn Broun
New Class	Vacant

NEXT MEETING

**Thursday, December 14, 6:30 p.m. at the
Boone County Extension Center**

Potluck, families welcome, year in review, election of officers and silent auction!!
Send pictures of year's activities to Don.



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