

Refuge Reporter

Volume 12, Issue 2

Spring 2009

Friends of the Refuge Now Offering Free Memberships

By Janet Martineau, Friends Board

(like our Muskrat Ramble in July).

Something's new for 2009 ... and unique as well. In this world of rising costs, the Friends of the Shiawassee National Refuge is making an offer we hope people can't refuse. After 10 years of collecting an annual Friends dues, we've decided to go free with our memberships.

Starting in 2009 and for a five-year trial period, all Friends memberships are complimentary. All we ask is that you fill out the membership form inside this newsletter and mail it to us. In return you get this quarterly newsletter, free admission to our *Nurturing Nature Wednesday Series* programs at Green Point, a 10 percent discount once we get our Friends store up and running, and invitations to special Friends events

Why free? Because we need to build our membership to become more effective in, one, seeking grant money for the refuge and its Friends group and, two, in serving the refuge advocacy part of our mission. Numbers count in those two fields; the bigger the membership the more clout. Wherever you live and are reading this newsletter, please join us. Friends board president Chuck Hoover explains it all in a letter on page 5 inside, with a membership form printed on page 6.

If you haven't already heard...

For a copy of this newsletter in color, log on to www.fws.gov/Midwest/shiawassee/ and, on the left hand side, scroll down to Refuge Reporter Newsletter and click.

Inside this issue:

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Special Points:

- *Help the refuge clean up the Backyard Habitat area near the refuge headquarters or Green Point on Saturday, May 2, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. It's a great way for youth to get community service hours! See article inside for more information.*
- *With near record snowfall this winter, expect muddy, wet, or even flooded trails this spring.*

Weekend Hours at Green Point Begin April 25

By Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

Green Point is closed all federal holidays.

Green Point will be open on weekends from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. starting Saturday, April 25. These weekend hours will continue through September 27. Week day hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday and 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Several family hikes and guided bicycle tours are planned throughout the spring and summer. Be sure to check out the calendar for more information.

Shiawassee NWR's Most Abundant Mammal

By Don Poppe, Biological Technician

Mammals frequently seen at Shiawassee NWR include white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), eastern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), common raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), and eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*). There is actually another mammal on the refuge that is rarely seen, but exists in higher numbers than any other mammalian species on the refuge. It lives on the ground and can occupy nearly any habitat type found on the refuge. It is the meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*).

Close relatives of the meadow vole found on the refuge include two members of the family Muridae: deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), and white-footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*); and one member of the family Dipodidae: meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius*). Though similar in appearance, it is easy to distinguish between a mouse and a vole. Picture 1-1 shows a deer mouse, while picture 1-2 shows a meadow vole. When comparing the two, note the difference in ear size, eye size, tail length, fur characteristics, and the lean appearance of the deer mouse relative to the plump meadow vole.

Meadow voles have a busy life. They are like a miniature version of the beaver. They spend summer and fall constructing tunnels throughout their home range (about 0.7 acres), which they maintain and defend aggressively. They have been called "little loggers" as they use their teeth to cut down vegetation to clear these tunnels. These tunnels lead to and from toilet areas, food caches, and their nest, which is a mass of vegetation about 6" high and 12" wide. The clippings of vegetation left behind from construction compose most of their diet. They remain active during winter, and well constructed tunnels allow for easy travel.

The importance of meadow voles as members of our refuge ecosystem cannot be overlooked. Through their tunnel making efforts they help slow the succession of woody plants into open fields, sometimes girdling and killing small trees when food is at a premium. By doing this, meadow voles help to maintain a diversity of habitat types for refuge plants and animals. They produce many young, many times throughout the year. This explains their high population levels. The lifespan of meadow voles is short ranging from a few weeks to nearly a year. Meadow voles are a key component in the diets of many refuge carnivores, including: American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), rough-legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*), barred owl (*Strix varia*), eastern screech-owl (*Otus asio*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*), eastern foxsnake (*Elaphe vulpina glouvi*), eastern milk snake (*Lampropeltis triangulum triangulum*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), long-tailed weasel (*Mustela nivalis*),

red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), and Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*). Without high numbers of meadow voles, many of these animals would have a difficult time hunting for food on the refuge.

Refuge areas where meadow voles are likely to be found include open grass fields, field edges, and trails. The next time you see a brown flash across one of our hiking trails, look closely, you may have just seen one of the most important, most abundant mammals in the entire refuge!



Picture 1-1: Deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*). Photo by Donald E. Poppe, USFWS.



Picture 1-2: Meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*). Photo by Laurie Smith, USDA.

Reference: Kurta, A. 2005. *Mammals of the Great Lakes Region*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Shiawassee NWR—A Year in Review and Challenges Ahead

By Steve Kahl, Refuge Manager

The beginning of a new year is always a time of reflecting upon the year prior. Shiawassee Refuge experienced many successes in 2008, but faces significant challenges in 2009.

The refuge learned a great deal about its wild inhabitants in 2008. With the help of Genoa and Jordan River National Fish Hatcheries, Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (ANWCO), East Lansing Ecological Services Field Office (ELFO), and The Nature Conservancy we conducted our first survey of freshwater mussels. This group has a highest percentage of extinct and endangered species of any other form of life in North America. This survey increased our list of species from five to twenty-three, including three state-listed species.

In cooperation with Central Michigan University, Potter Park Zoo, the Friends, and volunteers, the first year of a radio telemetry study of the refuge's eastern fox snakes was completed. This snake is one of the most imperiled reptiles in the Midwest. We have already been stunned at some of the insights this study has revealed. For example, we learned that most of the tracked snakes migrated to just three specific sites on the refuge to winter, often crossing the Shiawassee River to get there.

Another radio telemetry study has helped us learn more about our Blanding's turtle population. This species is state-listed as endangered or threatened in virtually every part of its range. The refuge collaborated with University of Georgia, ELFO, the Friends, and volunteers to track our turtles and we were able for the first time to pinpoint some locations where these turtles are trying to nest.

Lastly, the refuge teamed with ANFWCO and volunteers to compare the success of northern pike spawning in the refuge's wetland impoundments versus unmanaged wetlands. We were concerned that our dikes impaired passage of pike between our wetlands and adjacent rivers. However, we found reproductive success was much greater in our impounded wetlands.

All of these investigations reinforce an important principle of the refuge. The refuge was established because of the land's value for migratory birds, especially waterfowl. However, our management efforts provide excellent habitat for the whole spectrum of plants and animals drawn to this riparian wetland ecosystem.

Public use opportunities continued to grow at the refuge in 2008, in particular at our Green Point Environmental Learn-

ing Center. For the first time since 1996, the center was staffed on weekends. A new program was initiated with the Boys and Girls Clubs to reach the children that live right next to Green Point. These kids had their eyes opened to the natural wonders just down their street. We opened the pond up to fishing and it will be stocked this spring. Further, the sidewalk was replaced and we installed air conditioning so that visitors will feel more welcome and prolong their stay.

The refuge and the Friends organized the first annual Wild Goose Chase 5K Run and Walk. The event was a terrific success, drawing 112 participants from all over Mid Michigan. For many race participants, this was their first time on the refuge and many said they were intrigued by the notion of having a running and walking race in the "wilderness."

We also continued to develop the engineering and design for our new Wildlife Drive or auto tour route. We hope for this phase to be complete in time for the refuge to begin construction this year. Currently, visitors mainly have access to four trails situated on the edges of the refuge and relatively few get to see the wildlife spectacle that makes the refuge unique. The 7.5-mile Wildlife Drive will meander past forests, grasslands, marshes, open water pools, and the Shiawassee River and will enhance the ability of visitors to see waterfowl, herons, eagles and a great diversity of other wildlife. Further, visitors will be able to see the management practices the refuge uses to attract this abundance of wildlife.

The refuge had many other wins in 2008. The decaying wood bridge over Bullhead Creek was replaced with a steel and cement structure. We replaced the old T-111 siding that was riddled with woodpecker holes with attractive new vinyl siding on the maintenance building. We insulated the check station which just had a furnace installed in 2007. Consequently, the goose hunters and nonambulatory deer hunters are much more comfortable and we are saving energy. Also, rehabilitation of 5,700 feet of dike along the Spaulding Drain finally commenced in December.

The overarching problem on the down side, is that it looks as though as though our base budget will decline again in FY2009. The Refuge System actually received a significant boost in FY2008 thanks to the Friends, the National Wildlife Refuge Association, Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. This was the first year since FY2003 in which our budget increase exceeded our increase in costs. The increase did not bring us back to 2003 levels, but it helped. Unfortunately, it appears we will have exactly the same base funding this year, while our costs have increased approximately eight per cent. It is extremely difficult to maintain existing facilities and programs for wildlife and visitors when budgets essentially decrease.

Thirty-six Species Added to the “Shiawassee Ark”

By Steve Kahl, Refuge Manager

In many respects, Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge is like an ark for wildlife in Mid Michigan. Indeed, an aerial view of the refuge reveals a large patch of habitat bounded by a sea of agricultural fields and residential development. Staff, volunteers, and cooperative researchers found thirty-six species previously unknown on the refuge in 2008. These plants and animals will continue to have a place to live as surrounding areas become less suitable to survive.

Many species were found incidentally while conducting refuge operations. However, the refuge made a targeted effort to learn more about its freshwater mussels. This effort yielded eighteen new species for the refuge, including lilliput (state-listed endangered), pink papershell (state-listed threatened), and ellipse (state-listed special concern).

Perhaps the most unusual new species was the black-bellied whistling duck. One was seen for three days at the refuge by staff. This is only the second record for this species in Michigan. The very northern edge of its range is typically in southern Texas and Arizona. The bird may have been caught in the remnants of Hurricane Ike which traveled from the Gulf Coast to the Midwest just prior to the bird being found.

One new species was found as a direct result of habitat restoration efforts on the refuge. Two singing male grasshopper sparrows set up territories in a 110-acre field restored to native prairie vegetation. This site was previously a soybean field. The restoration was completed via a North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant in partnership with Ducks Unlimited.

Most new discoveries were welcome additions to the list of plant and animal species that use the refuge. However, five are nonindigenous invasives that compete with native species and degrade habitats. The emerald ash borer has colonized the refuge and its impacts on green ash and forest health are spreading rapidly. Two aquatic invaders, rusty crayfish and round goby, were found during a study of northern pike use of wetland impoundments. Only one crayfish was found, but several gobies were captured, indicating they are here to stay. Two other aquatic nuisance species, zebra mussel and Asian clam, were found during the mussel survey.

Altogether, 1,006 species of organisms have been identified on the refuge, including 27 fungi, 292 vascular plants, 311 invertebrate fauna, 47 fish, 10 amphibians, 10 reptiles, 280 birds, and 29 mammals.

Volunteers Needed to Help with Refuge Clean-Up Day on May 2

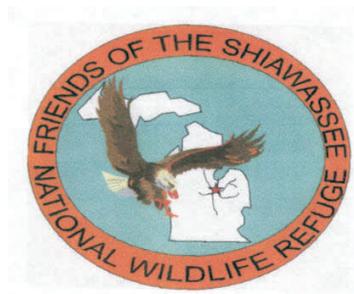
By Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

The refuge is hosting a “Clean-up Day” on Saturday, May 2, 2009, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at two locations, possibly more, depending upon the number of volunteers who sign up. The two focus sites are the Backyard Habitat area near the refuge headquarters on the corner of Curtis and Mower Roads, south of Saginaw, and Green Point Environmental Learning Center at 3010 Maple Street in Saginaw.

At the Backyard Habitat area we will work in the flower gardens and surrounding short, trails. At Green Point, volunteers will be working on the trails (if flooding is not a problem!), the butterfly garden, and landscaping around the building. Gardening experience and plant knowledge is helpful, but not required.

The refuge has a limited supply of gardening tools, saws, rakes, shovels, and loppers at each site. Volunteers should be prepared to get dirty and bring their own gloves. Volunteers are welcome to bring their own tools, too.

This is a great opportunity to work on community service hours for Girl and Boy Scouts, high school students, and Master Gardeners. Please call Becky at Green Point at (989) 759-1669 to get more information and to sign up to help.



Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

P.O. Box 20129

Saginaw, Michigan 48602

AN OPEN INVITATION TO BECOME A FRIEND OF SHIAWASSEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

NEAR SAGINAW, MICHIGAN

The refuge is close to 10,000 acres in the eastern half of the Shiawassee Flats and includes the junctions of the Saginaw, Tittabawassee, Shiawassee, Cass and Flint Rivers. All this is located adjacent to the south edge of the City of Saginaw. The refuge provides a managed wildlife sanctuary for almost every bird, fish, and animal native to our area.

This is also a refuge for the people of our community. It provides walking trails, observation sites, a boat launch, and upcoming auto tour drive, and an educational center at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center.

The Friends of Shiawassee NWR is a group of hundreds of local citizens who promote and support the operation of this refuge. They have programs and do projects to better enjoy and understand wildlife and the management requirements of refuge operation.

Funding for this refuge operation is from a budgeted allocation of Federal funds (which has diminished in the last decade) and Special Project Grants. Our Friends Group is active in both promoting and increase in those funds, and in producing such Special Grants. One of the first questions asked of us is "How large is this group of yours that is in support of these needed funds?" (How many members do you represent?) We need a large Local Constituency for the most impact or clout.

We now provide a **COMPLIMENTARY MEMBERSHIP** to all who would register with the Friends of Shiawassee NWR. You become a part of our **LOCAL CONSTITUENCY** in support of our refuge with all the rights and benefits of membership. This will be for a period of five years from the date that you register. You will receive our newsletter, informing you of what is going on at our refuge, and you may participate in any of our programs or refuge volunteer projects. You will be a **FRIEND OF SHIAWASSEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE..**

Welcome!

Chuck Hoover, President

Join the Friends of Shiawassee NWR Today!

FREE Membership includes the following benefits...

- Joining a local constituency in support of the development and operation of the refuge
- Subscription to the *Refuge Reporter*, the quarterly newsletter from the refuge
- FREE admission to monthly *Nurturing Nature Wednesday Series* programs
- 10% discount on Friends merchandise
- Opportunities to participate in programs and volunteer for projects that help the refuge

To become a member of the "Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge" you must agree to support the mission and goals of the group, abide by the current and future bylaws if amended, and sign the following disclaimer. *"I acknowledge that I am participating in "Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge" (Friends) activities at my own risk, and that Friends has made no warranty or representation, expressed or implied, regarding safety of conducting any activity. I expressly release and hold harmless Friends and their officers, directors, employees, and agents from and for any and all claims, demands, actions and causes of action whatsoever on account of any loss, damage or injury to person or to property suffered or incurred by me in connection with the activity or any aspect of it, including, but not limited to, any transportation arranged by, paid for, or provided by Friends. By signing below, I (we) acknowledge that I (we) have read and understand this form and that the statements I (we) have made are true."*

Signature(s) and Date: _____ Date: _____

Parent's signature if member is under age 18: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Friends' Volunteer Opportunities

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| _____ Assisting with refuge events | _____ Helping with workshops |
| _____ Doing outreach activities | _____ Leading walking tours |
| _____ Assisting with Nurturing Nature | _____ Developing trails |
| _____ Writing newsletter articles | _____ Helping with simple maintenance projects |
| _____ Writing/developing grants | _____ Staffing Store |
| _____ Serving as Committee member | _____ Researching/Ordering merchandise |
| _____ Leading children's activities | _____ Other – please list: |

Board meetings held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple Street in Saginaw. The annual meeting is held in January of each year. Friends Board of Directors Officers are: President – Charles Hoover, Vice President – Susan Scott, Secretary – Janet Martineau, Treasurer – Wil Hufton II.

Upcoming Refuge and Friends Programs

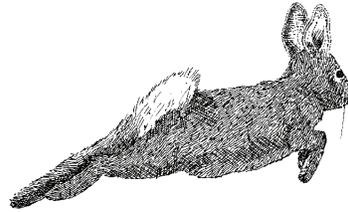
By Janet Martineau, Friends Board

The Friends of the Shiawassee National Refuge have teamed up with the refuge to either help with and/or lead seven activities for 2009 – one of which is ongoing and already started. As new members join us as Friends, we're always interested in having you assist us! Planned in 2009 are:

- **Nurturing Nature Wednesday Series** – A monthly lecture series at 7 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month, at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple in Saginaw. The topics this year range from fox snakes on the refuge to weekend canoeing in Michigan. Volunteer opportunities: suggesting program ideas and delivering flyers to various venues.
- **March 25, Junior Duck Stamp Judging** – Held at Green Point beginning at 9 a.m. Volunteer opportunity: helping during the judging process.
- **April 25, Junior Duck Stamp Awards Ceremony** – Held at Green Point beginning at 2 p.m. Volunteer opportunities: assisting with parking, serving refreshments, helping hand out prizes and artwork.
- **May (no date set), kite-making project** – Held at Green Point followed by a flying contest at the Germania Town and Country Club. Volunteer opportunities: designing kites and helping the youngster make and fly them.
- **June 13, Kids' Free Fishing Day** – Assist with the annual fishing day. Volunteer opportunities: registering children, counting and releasing fish, showing kids how to fish, and assisting with handing out prizes.
- **July (no date set yet), Muskrat Ramble Dinner** – A meal and tour of the refuge for Friends members. Volunteer opportunities: contracting a food vendor, setting up the serving of the food, organizing the tour logistics, and operating a sales table.
- **September 12-13, Annual Refuge Open House Weekend** – Held at various refuge locations. The Friends want to host some sort of take-home project(s). Volunteer opportunities: suggestions for those projects, like making suet feeders, bird houses, etc.; getting the supplies needed; and working with visitors in making them.

- **October 3, Second Annual Wild Goose Chase Run/Walk** – Held on Ferguson Bayou Trail on refuge. Volunteer opportunities: helping plan all the logistics involved with this event, working the day of the event by checking in runners, serving runners water, and running errands.

To suggest ideas or to volunteer, call (989) 759-1669.



REFUGE REPORTER

Published quarterly by the Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge for the refuge.

Volume 12, Issue 2

Editor: Becky Goche

Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

Established in October, 1953 and administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Shiawassee NWR provides resting, nesting and feeding habitat for waterfowl and other birds. Its mission is to preserve or manage an undeveloped expanse of floodplain forest, marshes, rivers, and associated habitat within an agricultural and urban landscape through habitat management, encouraging public stewardship, educational programs, and private lands activities.

Refuge Manager—Steve Kahl

Assistant Refuge Manager—Ed DeVries

Biologist—Jim Dastyck

Biological Technician—Donald Poppe

Private Lands Biologist—Michelle Vander Haar

Visitor Services Manager—Becky Goche

Park Ranger—Tom Horb

Park Ranger—Joe Hughes

Administrative Officer—Mary Ann Gillette

Maintenance Staff—David Peters

Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

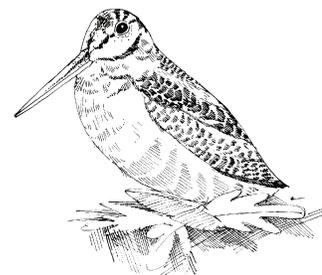
A nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization established in 1999 to promote the preservation of the natural and historical resources of the Refuge, foster its use and enjoyment by the public consistent with the protection and preservation of its environment, and engage in such educational, scientific and civic activities as will assist the management of the Refuge in carrying out its mandates.

Refuge Website: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee>

Shiawassee NWR
6975 Mower Rd.
Saginaw, MI 48601
Phone: 989-777-5930
Fax: 989-777-9200
Hours: M - F, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We're on the web!

[Http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee)



Join the Friends of Shiawassee NWR—It's FREE!

Federal Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest Deadline Is March 15, 2009

By Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

The Junior Duck Stamp art contest deadline is fast approaching, but there is still time to enter. All artwork must be post-marked by March 15. Students at the state level are judged in four groups according to grade level: Group I: K-3, Group II: 4-6, Group III: 7-9, and Group IV: 10-12. Three first, second, and third place winners are selected for each group. In addition, 16 honorable mention winners are picked in each group. Judges select the "Best of Show" from the 12 first place winners, which is then submitted to the national Junior Duck Stamp Contest. The first place design from the national contest is used to create the Junior Duck Stamp for the following year.

All entries will receive certificates of participation and winners will receive special ribbons and prizes. All artwork will be returned to the students or schools. The Best of Show entry is included in a national traveling display. In addition,

the top winning artwork in Michigan will travel around the state for up to one year following the contest.

To learn more about the Junior Duck Stamp Program, and get the entry form and rules, visit the website: www.fws.gov/duckstamps and click on the Junior Duck Stamp link. I also can email the 2009 informational brochure and entry form to you – either call me at (989) 759-1669 or email me at Becky_Goche@fws.gov.

Schedule Your Spring Field Trip Now

April, May and June are popular times for teachers to bring their students out to Green Point for an educational field trip. Schedule your trip early so that you can get the date you want! A variety of programs are available. Visit our website and click on the Environmental Education link for a listing.

Spring Calendar of Events

Guided Cross-Country Skiing

March 7, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

Green Point ELC

Winding, flat trails. Bring your own skiing equipment. If there is not enough snow, there will be a hike instead. Dress for the conditions. Trips will be cancelled in the event of local travel advisories or severe winter weather conditions. If you need more information, contact Park Ranger Tom Horb at (989) 759-1669.

Guided Spring Hikes

April 18, 2009, 10:00 a.m. at the Ferguson Bayou Nature Trail off of Curtis Road

AND

May 9, 2009, 10:00 a.m. at Green Point ELC

Park Ranger Tom Horb will lead you on these guided tours. Dress for the weather and bring your binoculars and cameras. Each tour will last about 2 hours.

Spring Guided Bicycle Tours

March 28, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

AND

May 16, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

Park Ranger Tom Horb will lead guided bicycle tours beginning at the Ferguson Bayou Nature Trail parking lot at the west end of Curtis Road. Mountain bikes or those with wide tires work best on the gravel roads. Dress for the weather and bring your binoculars and cameras. Each tour will last about 3 hours.

Junior Duck Stamp Awards Ceremony

April 25, 2009, 2:00 p.m.

Green Point ELC

Winners of this year's Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest are recognized at this special event. Winning artwork from students all across the state in grades K-12 will be showcased and prizes awarded.

Deer Antler Shed Program

April 15, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

Green Point ELC

Park Ranger Tom Horb and Biological Technician Don Poppe will show several dropped or "shed" antlers. They will discuss how to find them in the wild and why collecting on Federal lands like the refuge is not allowed. A video of white-tailed deer will also be shown. Participants are welcome to bring antlers that they have found to share with the rest of the group.

Guided Horseback Tour

May 16, 2009, 9:00 a.m.

Evon Road parking lot

See a closed area of the refuge from horseback. You must provide your own horse and reservations are required. Contact Ed DeVries at (989) 777-5930, ext. 13 to reserve your spot and for more information.

For more information, contact Green Point Environmental Learning Center at (989) 759-1669.

More Spring Events

Nurturing Nature Wednesday Series

- All programs begin at 7:00 p.m. and last 60 – 90 minutes.
- Held at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple Street, Saginaw, unless otherwise noted.
- Admission: \$2. FREE for members of the Friends of the Shiawassee NWR and Midland's Chippewa Nature Center.

Backpacking in Michigan

March 4

Chippewa Nature Center senior naturalist Phil Stephens will share tips on equipment and techniques, and suggest places to check out in Michigan, for both novice hikers and seasoned backpackers. He has hiked and backpacked thousands of miles, many of them off-trail.

Weekend Canoeing in Michigan

April 1

Author/canoeist Doc Fletcher will discuss what makes certain rivers fun favorites, and provide information on both fast water and family-friendly rivers. He penned "Weekend Canoeing in Michigan: The Rivers, The Towns, The Taverns" and will bring copies to sell and sign.

Butterfly Gardening

May 6

Gardening for butterflies can range from a single pot of butterfly-friendly flowers to full gardens, woods, water, sand and even rocks, depending on the species you want to attract. Janea Little, a senior naturalist at Midland's Chippewa Nature Center, offers tips for attracting the winged wonders.

Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest

Deadline is March 15, 2009

Contest is for students in grades K-12. Visit the refuge website for more information.



Refuge Clean-up Day

May 2, 2009, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Green Point ELC and Refuge Headquarters

Bring your gloves and help us clean-up two areas of the refuge. Call Becky Goche at (989) 759-1669 for more information and to sign up to help.