



"The Eagle's Eye"

Newsletter of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Edited by Lori Nicholson & Robin Will

The Amazing Migrating Monarch Butterfly! Robin Will

FALL 2009
St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Fall is in the air and so are the migrating monarch butterflies, making their 2,000 mile trip from the northern American boundary to the mountains of central Mexico. This amazing phenomenon passes through the Gulf coast of Florida beginning about the third week in October, and may be observed along the coast at the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

Unlike other animal migrations, each monarch butterfly is on its own. There is no parent to follow. Its annual journey is a complex, inherited behavior pattern, not a learned process. Migrating monarchs are usually those who hatch out in late summer. The young females do not develop productive ovaries and so do not mate until they fly south. Monarchs have a 4-inch wingspan and weigh 1 gram (1/5 the weight of a penny). They travel with cold fronts, often at speeds of 10 – 30 mph, covering up to 80 miles a day. They may fly at 3,000 feet and higher and will "fall out" on the goldenrod and saltbush, blooming down at the lighthouse, and feed hungrily for their long trip.

Volunteers have been tagging the St. Marks monarchs for many years, hoping a few would complete the trip to Mexico. So far, only two have been recovered at the wintering site. The research will continue this fall, with tagging volunteers checking to see if any St. Marks monarchs will be observed either migrating through Apalachicola to the west or Cedar Keys to the east. Anyone out in Apalachee Bay or on St. Vincent NWR who observes migrating monarchs is asked to let us know – 850/925-6121 or email us at saintmarks@fws.gov.

Sadly, this great migration is in trouble. The nectar sources monarchs need for migration and the milkweed plants they need for their caterpillars are being replaced with development. If you do live on the Gulf coast, leave shrubs and trees at the water's edge for migrating monarchs and birds. If you live in the Big Bend, please plant nectar and milkweed plants in your yard for monarchs and other pollinators. Many nurseries sell milkweed with monarch butterfly eggs laid under the leaves. Also, educate your family on providing habitat for all kinds of north Florida butterflies by attending one of the many butterfly classes at local nature centers and nurseries.

The refuge will be hosting its 21st annual celebration of the migration on Saturday, October 24, 2009, from 10 am – 4 pm. Join us to observe the miracle of migrating monarch butterflies in person. The event is filled with the wonder of folks of all ages learning about tagging the monarchs, holding butterflies in their hands inside the live butterfly tent, charting their own "migration," making butterfly crafts, talking with monarch butterfly researchers and other wonderful exhibitors, taking tours and walks and much more! Everything is open to the public as space allows, except for the guided auto tours. We do ask folks to call 850/925-6121 after October 1 to reserve a space on the tour vans. There is no cost for any of the tours or programs; however, the regular entrance fee into the refuge will be charged.

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St. Marks NWR
P.O. Box 68 St. Marks, FL 32355
(850) 925-6121

<http://www.fws.gov/saintmarks>

St. Marks NWR Boundary Expansion

The refuge completed a preliminary project proposal recommending expansion of the authorized acquisition boundary by about 35,000 acres in July 2008. Recently the Acting Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service gave approval for detailed planning and public review of this proposal. Refuge staff is now preparing an environmental assessment and will soon have the plan before the public, State government agencies, and other stakeholders for review and input. Highest priority acquisitions are lands north of and adjacent to the St.

Marks Unit of the refuge that are currently owned by The Nature Conservancy and the Sam Shine Foundation. This expansion is supported by extensive public comment received during the preparation of the 2006 Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the refuge. Protection of much of the expansion area is considered essential to meeting the trust responsibilities of the refuge in the face of human population growth in the area and the impacts of sea level rise expected to occur over the next century.

Refuge Managers Report Terry Peacock

I guess I should start with a Whooping Crane update. It looks like we could get 11 or 12 chicks this year depending on how things go with training. I will be at the fall meeting September 21-24. I should have a better idea of exactly how many birds will come down this year following the meeting of the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership in Wisconsin. We also need to be on the look out for the birds from last year. They could be down starting in November. Please contact the refuge if you see adult Whooping Cranes. The whooping cranes will have leg bands so check for those if possible before reporting the birds. This year the SMRA and the USFWS have joined together to provide a web camera for the crane pen. You will be able to watch our pen site on your computer at home. I am sure Tom and Joe will be providing you with the web address once the camera is up and functioning.

The ARRA (stimulus funding) is moving along. A design firm has been contracted to complete the drawings for the Environmental Education Building and the Salt Water boat ramp. We will also be completing repairs to the

accessible fishing dock at the salt water boat ramp. We will not be selling the cabin until the contract on the new building is awarded. If you are interested in purchasing and moving the cabin, let me know and I will put you on a list and contact you when it goes out for bid.

Daniel Wells, a TCC student, will be working with us for a few weeks this summer and some during the fall. We were allowed to hire him with ARRA funding. He is assisting with our biology program.

A new pole shed will be installed at the maintenance work yard. It will provide protection for our heavy equipment. It should be going up soon.

I want to close out by welcoming Shelley Stiaes to St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge. She is our new manager over there. We are very pleased to have her here.

Come and visit your National Wildlife Refuge and watch the wonderful changes.

Visitor Information

Visitor Center- The Refuge visitor center and office is located on County Rd 59, 3 miles south of U. S. Hwy 98 at Newport. Visit the displays describing refuge wildlife and habitats and the refuge association bookstore.

Entrance Fees- Federal entrance fee passes apply (America the Beautiful, Senior, Access) or daily passes can be purchased for \$5 per car. Annual passes include the St. Marks NWR Specific Pass and the current Federal Duck Stamp.

Hours- The Refuge is open daylight hours all year and the Visitor Center is open from 8 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday; and 10 am till 5 pm weekends. Closed on Federal holidays.

Lighthouse Drive- For casual observation, the Lighthouse Road provides many excellent stopping points along the 7-mile stretch of road from the Visitor Center to the St Marks Lighthouse on Apalachee Bay. Please observe the posted speed limit.

Restrooms - Located at the Refuge Visitor Center, Tower Pond/Mounds Trail and Otter Lake Recreation Area.

Picnic Facilities- Located next to Tower Pond Trail and Otter Lake.

Hiking- The fall, winter and early spring are the best times. Foot- and bicycle-traffic are allowed on trails. Guides are available at the toll booth, visitor center and information kiosks.

Fishing- Freshwater and saltwater fishing are available in certain areas of the refuge year round. Contact Visitor Center for restrictions. Boat launching is permitted during daylight hours at the Lighthouse saltwater launching ramp.

Hunting - Hunting is permitted for resident game species in designated areas fall - spring. Contact the Refuge after June 1 for current year's applications and permit information, or visit www.fws.gov/saintmarks

Red-cockaded Woodpecker 2009 nesting season summary: This was a year for the record books – the St. Marks NWR population (which includes Ochlockonee River State Park) once again showed impressive growth, reaching our highest numbers of adults in the population (60), occupied territories (22) and potential breeding groups (22) to date. We use the term “potential breeding groups” or “PBG” to denote a pair or a pair plus helper adult birds that are capable of raising young in a territory – as opposed to a site occupied by a single adult bird (generally multiple single bird territories is a sign that the population is not robust enough to fill vacancies in the existing social structure). Unfortunately, we also had record-breaking cold and wet weather during the critical peak period when new nestlings need to be fed constantly. Across much of the southern range of the species, this scenario seriously affected reproductive success this year, and St. Marks was no exception. Now for a quick rundown of the numbers. Think of these statistics as an ecological accounting of one critical indicator species of the long-leaf pine ecosystem. Our account balances in the Red-cockaded woodpecker department provide insights into the current value of our shares and are a predictor of future earnings or losses.

90.9% of PBGs attempted nesting : An excellent rate of attempted nesting. In nature, if you don't reproduce, you don't count.

1.90 chicks banded per nesting group: Pretty low numbers – never before have so many single chicks been banded as opposed to clutches of 2, 3, or even 4.

1.60 total fledges per nesting group: Way down this year - the



Banded Red-cockaded woodpecker Chick in the capable hands of biologist Mike Keys. Taken by Joe Bonislawsky

twelve-year average is 1.74

0.55 males fledged per nesting group : Skewed 2 to 1 in favor of females this year – see below.

1.05 females fledged per nesting group : Apologies to females who may be reading this, but in the currency of RCW demographics, male fledglings are more valuable because they are likely to stay around home and become adult “helpers” who feed next year's chicks, defend the territory, and construct new cavities. Females on the other hand, nearly always disperse within the first 6 months of life to either find a vacant breeding niche in another territory or perish while looking.

84% of banded chicks-fledged: Worse than normal, but not as bad as it could have been, given the terrible weather conditions this year. This number is testimony to protection our artificial and natural cavities provide to nestlings.

2.73 adults average per PBG: This number continues to increase, providing a buffer in the breeding population allowing it to sustain normal losses due to weather and predation during the year.

50% of all PBGs have 1 or more helper : More helpers equals more chicks produced. A positive feed-

back loop, and we're on the upside of the curve.

40% of all adults new in group this year : An unusually high number this year – typically, about 20% of the adults die and are replaced in a normal year. Last year's Tropical Storm Fay was likely the cause of this significant turnover event.

3.86 average age of breeding male : I don't know what this compares to. I just thought it was interesting to know. **3.16 average age of breeding female.**

Breaking News:

St. Marks is scheduled to receive 10 Red-cockaded woodpeckers from the Apalachicola National Forest as part of a translocation effort to sustainably “harvest” woodpeckers from this giant and stable population to our west while bolstering our small but growing population. To date we have received 38 individual birds through this process. We are hard at work preparing artificial cavities in 10 "recruitment" sites in the vicinity of Surf Road between Sopchoppy and Ochlockonee Bay. The translocated birds will be captured on the national forest, transported after dark to the refuge, placed in individual cavities, and released the next morning.

Photos taken by Joe Bonislawsky.



Hunting and Fishing

St. Marks quota hunt applications have been processed and hunters have been selected for the 2009-10 season. Over 700 slots were available for hunters on the Panacea and Wakulla units of the refuge. White-tailed Deer and Turkey are the two most sought after big game animals on the refuge. Wild Pigs, Raccoons, and Squirrels are also tracked down during the appropriate season.

The application process and quota drawing was performed by Florida FWCC this year. We hope to continue partnering with Florida FWCC to help with this administrative process.

If selected, each hunter must pay a \$15.00 fee to receive their prized permit. This fee is collected to help offset administrative costs (staffing, fuel, publications, and printing) and facilities (restrooms and office). The refuge retains 80% of all fees collected through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fee program. The remaining 20% is retained at the regional level for use throughout the southeast.

Volunteer Opportunities

The smell of fall briefly entertains the morning mist, but the summer heat is slow to relinquish its' grip. The end of summer marks the beginning of our fall programs and festivals. People are scurrying around, getting excited about cooler weather blowing in. Monarchs will start migrating through the northern gulf coast and several species of duck

are moving into our refuge. This is the time of year children return to school and family gatherings are common each weekend. This season also lends itself to many volunteer opportunities at the refuge. Take a look at the following needs in chronological order by date. If any or all of these programs and activities excite you, please call and set up a meeting with me.

Help Needed for Coastal Cleanup and Awareness Day Sat. Sept. 19

*If you are interested in fieldwork at the cleanup, let's brainstorm ideas with everyone about organization of section leaders, their field crews, and support haulers.

*Weigh-in- Data card and weight estimating specialists will be needed as the morning heats up. Field collectors will be bringing forth their bounty from 9-Noon. The initial push will involve giving out trash bags and assigning sites. We need a logistics specialist on site to confirm meeting locations with section leaders in the field. After the garbage has been weighed, the data card specialists will issue a meal and t-shirt ticket to each volunteer.

*We need two grillmasters, beverage assistant, and ticket collector to handle all aspects of the free lunch for volunteers.

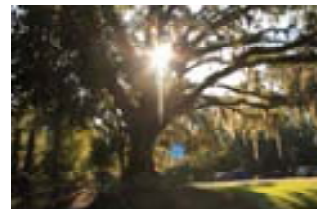
*See Oct. 24 in Calendar of events for help needed for Monarch Butterfly Festival. If you need more info. Or would like to volunteer please email me for more information david_moody@fws.gov

Old Ironsides

Barney Parker

Coming to the Refuge on a recent Saturday, I was struck by the beauty of the sunlight streaming through a big live oak tree. This brought to mind one of the lessons that I love to teach about natural history at the Refuge. Recently, returning from a trip to Boston and New England, I visited the USS Constitution, that was nicknamed "Old Ironsides". A little known fact is that the ship gained respect from the mighty British Navy during the War of 1812 when it encountered and sunk the British frigate, Guerriere. The two ships met about eight hundred miles off the coast of Massachusetts. When they drew close, the British ship fired on the Constitution. A US sailor aboard the Constitution stuck his head through a porthole during the battle and saw the cannon balls bounce off the sides of the ship. He commented that the cannon balls bounced off the ship as if its sides were made of iron; hence the name became Old Ironsides. When the US ship fired back at the Guerriere, the ship was left mortally wounded and sank. The reason the cannon balls bounced was because the hull of Old Ironsides was reinforced with the wood of the live oak tree, one of the hardest woods in the forests of North America. Stories like the one above are a part of the Photo Class taught the first Saturday of each month at 9:00 a.m. in the Education Cabin of the Refuge. In addition to learning the techniques and mechanics of digital photography, natural history on the refuge is included in the presentation. The class is free and open to all ages. To reserve a place in the class, call the refuge at 925-6121. Bring lunch and be prepared to walk short distances.

Photo on left of crepuscular rays in live oak. Photo on right of "Old Ironsides". By Barney Parker.



24th Annual Coastal Cleanup & Awareness Day

As summer draws to a close, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge is pleased to announce the arrival of the 24th Annual Coastal Cleanup and Awareness Day. From modest beginnings, the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Cleanup has grown into a major annual event, coordinated by refuge staff and volunteers. Last year, over 500 volunteers lent a hand to clean up litter and marine debris from the shores, lakes, and rivers in the Big Bend of Florida, from the Aucilla River to Ochlockonee Bay.

Support marine protection and education and join us at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday



Florida Wild Mammal and their wonderful exhibits, above and below. Taken by Betsy Kellenberger



September 19, 2009 for our 24th annual Coastal Cleanup & Awareness Day. It is part of the International Coastal Cleanup held globally to examine sources of marine trash to identify solutions. Cleanup registration will run from 9 am – 11 am at the Refuge Visitor Center, 1255 Lighthouse Rd. Cleanup volunteers who return to the Visitor Center with trash will receive a ticket for a complimentary t-shirt and lunch as long as supplies last.

This year, all visitors will be invited to learn more about water resources, pollution, and how you can make a difference. “Every Drop Counts” is the theme for this year’s cleanup. Exhibits will be open from 10 am – 1 pm.

T-shirts and lunch will be provided by the St. Marks Refuge Association. Lunch will be served from 11 am – 12:30 pm. Please call the refuge at 850/925-6121 for more information and to register groups of more than 10 people.

Over 500 volunteers collected 6,440 pounds of garbage last year. “We haven’t had any major storms this year to move floating debris, but we seem to find hundreds of pounds each year anyway,” reports David Moody. Much of what we find is an accumulation of careless human ac-



Examples of refuse turned in at previous coastal cleanup.



Participant Tia Nicholson enjoys exhibits after working hard cleaning up the coast.

tivity.

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge is a partner of the *Get Outdoors Florida!* coalition. The coalition engages communities, families and individuals in outdoor experiences to achieve healthier lifestyles and sustain Florida’s natural resources. Families who volunteer together at events such as Coastal Cleanup build a stronger connection to the natural environment. Children who participate in good stewardship activities are likely to continue practicing into adulthood.



Participant enjoys Saturday at the Sea exhibit. Taken by Lou Kellenberger.

Florida Wild Mammal, TAPP, USGS, Wakulla county 4-H Jr. Master Gardeners, Gulf Specimen Marine Lab and Saturday at the Sea will provide exhibits for families to enjoy after picking up trash. **Call 850-925-6121 for more information.**

Calendar of Events June - Dec. 2009

Please call 850-925-6121 for Reservations & Updated Information

Sat. Sep 5 - St. Marks NWR Photography Class - 9 a.m. - noon.

For all levels of digital photographers! Reservations required. Class size limited.

Sat. Sept. 5 Lighthouse Evening Tour time 6 p.m. Must register, 50 spaces available. Meet at the lighthouse at 6 pm for a guided tour with historian and "lighthouse keeper" Ranger Andy Edel. Bug repellent recommended.

Sat. Sept. 12- Free Pancake Breakfast- 9-11 a.m. in the cabin.

Sat. Sept. 19 - 24th Annual Coastal Cleanup and Awareness Day 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Families welcome! Free hot dog lunch and t-shirt to the first 500 volunteers.

Sat. Sept. 19 - St. Marks NWR Photo Club - 9 a.m. until. Contact President Tom Darragh at thomasd@talstar.com for more information. *There will not be a meeting this month, as the Club will be participating in Coastal Cleanup.

Sat. Oct 3 - St. Marks NWR Photography Class - 9 a.m.—noon. For all levels of digital photographers! Reservations required. Class size limited.

Sat. Oct. 17- Photo Club- Contact President Tom Darragh at thomasd@talstar.com for more information.

Sat. Oct. 24 - 21st Monarch Butterfly Festival - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Exhibits, demonstrations and tours celebrating butterflies, native plants and the migrating monarch butterfly.

Sat. Oct. 31 Magnolia Cemetery Tour - Celebrate Halloween with a historical tour of the cemetery of the ghost town of Magnolia. Meet at the Visitor Center at 4 p.m. Call to

register.

Sat. Nov. 7 - St. Marks NWR Photography Class - 9 a.m.-noon. For all levels of digital photographers! Reservations required. Class size limited.

Sat. Nov. 14—Fall Wildlife Tour— Tour with naturalist guide, Don Morrow to view the change of the seasons with birds, mammals, reptiles and plants. Please call to register for the 9 a.m. or 1 p.m. tour. Bring binoculars, bug repellent, water and field guides if you have them..

Sat. Nov. 21 - Photo Club - Contact President Tom Darragh for more information at thomasd@talstar.com

Sat. Nov. 21 - Outdoors for the Holidays & - Family friendly day at the refuge from 10 a.m.—3 p.m. Photo opportunities, crafts and treats.

Sat. Nov. 28 - Families in Nature Bring your family any time between 10 am and 2 p.m. for an exciting time learning about "Magnificent Manatees."

Sat. Dec. 5 Historic Port Leon Tour - 2 p.m. Meet at Visitor Center. Join Ranger Andy Edel for a guided walk through the old ghost town site of Port Leon. Space is limited, call to register.

Sat. Dec. 5 - St. Marks NWR Photography Class - 9a.m.-noon. For all levels of digital photographers! Reservations required class size limited.

Sat. Dec. 12 - Early Winter Wildlife Tour - See Nov. 14 listing for details.

Sat. Jan 2, 2010 - St. Marks NWR Photography Class - 9 a.m.-noon. For all levels of digital photographers! Reservations required. Class size limited.

Hints for

Enjoying Your Visit

Take Your Binoculars

Binoculars, spotting scopes and cameras will help you get a close-up view of wildlife without disturbing them. Look for wildlife up in the trees and the sky as well as in the roadside pools.

Bring Your Field Guides

Guide books will assist you in identifying the more common north Florida native flora and fauna.

Start early and stay late

Mammals and birds are more active during the early morning hours and late afternoon.

Observe carefully

Be aware of potential dangers, snakes, poison ivy, etc. Observe common-sense rules with bears and alligators, don't get too close. Remember feeding alligators as well as all wildlife is prohibited.

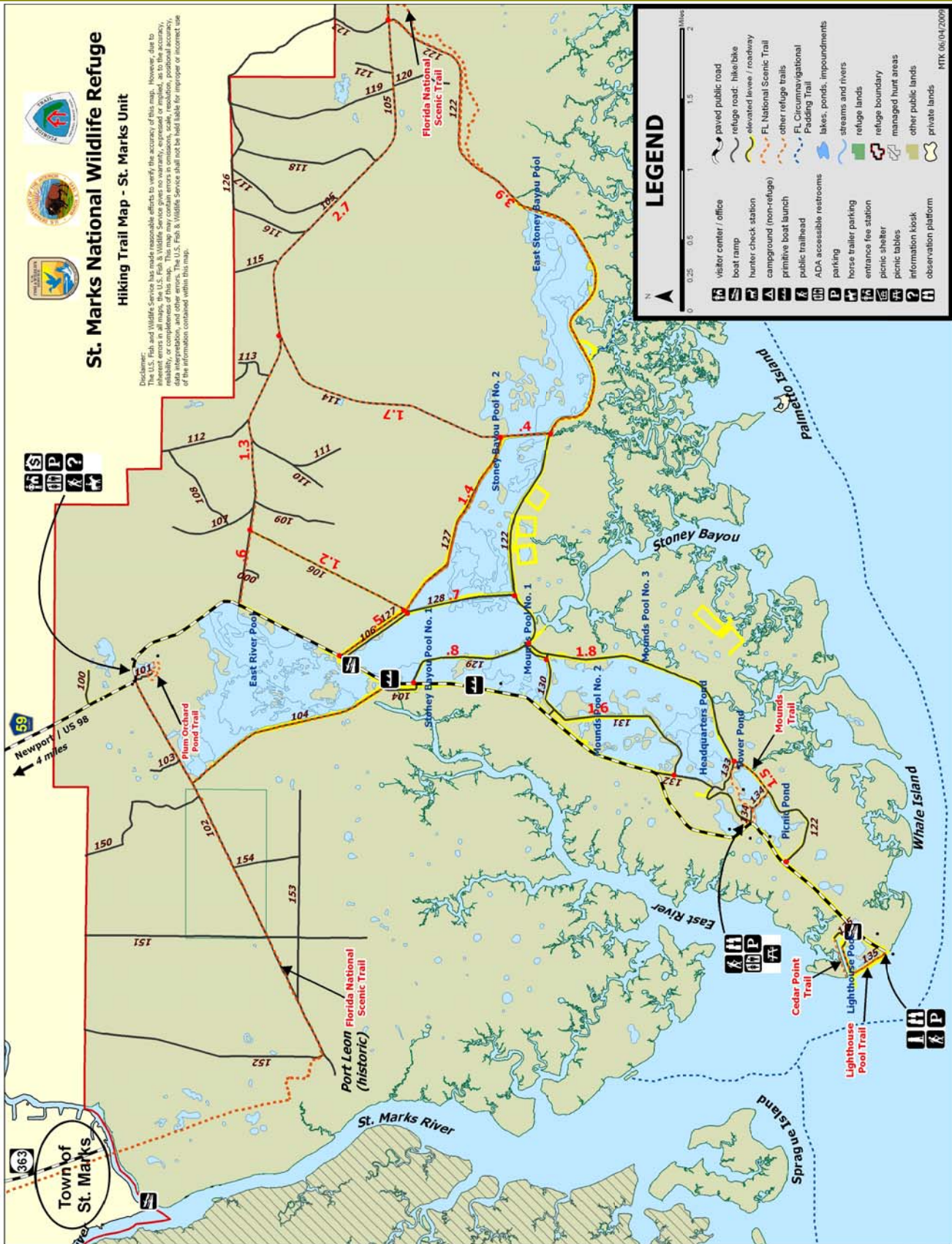
Dress appropriately

Insect repellent, sunscreen, proper hiking shoes and socks. Wear weather appropriate clothing.

Food

Other than chocolate bars, food is not for sale at the refuge, make sure to bring snacks or plan to visit nearby restaurants.

St. Marks Map with Trail Numbers



When you think of defense, you might think of the military or a security system. A defense system that surrounds all of us is our skin. For trees, bark acts as a protective defense against many dangers. Bark surrounds a tree, protecting the cam-



Picture of bark on burnt pine tree.
By Jennifer Hinkley

bium. The cambium is the area of tree that grows. The cambium grows in two directions. The inner direction grows the xylem. The outer direction grows the phloem.

Xylem is the hardwood part of a tree. It gives the tree structure and is the cells that move water and minerals from the roots to the rest of the tree. Phloem becomes the bark. The phloem closest to the cambium, or inner bark, carries sugars from photosynthesis to all parts of the tree. Therefore, bark protects one of the most important parts of a tree. When fire burns around a tree, the bark protects the tree from the damage of heat. You can see in the picture that pine tree bark is thick and flaky.

The bark thickness acts as a thermal protection against the heat of the fire. The bark sloughs off as flakes when it burns, carrying the heat away from the tree, thus protecting the cambium from excessive heat that would damage it.



Close up of charred pine bark.
By Jennifer Hinckley.

Let this pass through your mind the next time you are leaning against a tree, that bark is protecting that tree just like your skin is protecting you.

Historical/Cultural Sign Project Kicks Off

Bruce Ballister

The St Marks National Wildlife Refuge Association was successful in getting their application for funding to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation approved. A grant for \$15,000 will be matched by the Association to permit the construction of up to eleven interpretive sign installations around the refuge.

The cultural resources topics range from the original lighthouse, to the Wakulla Beach Hotel, to the Confederate Salt Vats and the

town of Port Leon. Association members led by Ranger Andy Edel will be doing primary research with assistance from the Wakulla County Historical Society. More will come in future issues as we make progress.



Picture of St. Marks Lighthouse taken in the 1800's.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Awards \$24,100 to Area Fire Depts.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge is partnering with Panacea, Ochlockonee Bay and Medart Volunteer Fire Departments to assist in purchasing wildland fire equipment and personal protective gear. The Service has provided a total of \$24,100 through the Rural Fire Assistance Grant Program to procure specialized equipment to reduce the threat – and impact – of wildfires in Wakulla County.

The Rural Fire Assistance Grant program awarded Panacea Volunteer Fire Department \$8,200; Ochlockonee Bay Volunteer Fire Department \$3,600 and Medart Volunteer Fire Department \$12,300.

“St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge works hard to use prescribed fire as a management tool to reduce hazardous levels of vegetation growth, but there is always an opportunity that a wildfire can start near homes in the wildland urban interface.” said Fire Management Officer Greg Titus. “These funds go a long way in helping equip our neighboring volunteer fire departments, so that we can all protect our communities from wildfires.”

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge administers thousands of acres in Wakulla County as habitat for the Red-cockaded woodpeckers, whooping cranes, bears and other wildlife. Most of the refuge boundaries adjoin private lands. The area where private land and

natural areas combine is considered to be wildland urban interface.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

Environmental Education Update

Lori Nicholson

There will be an environmental education meeting on Friday Sept. 11th from 10am -1pm. If you are interested in becoming an education volunteer drop by and see what it is all about.

As the fiscal year comes to a close and a new school year begins we take stock of how we have done in the past year and how we can improve in the coming year. In accordance to the goals of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we try to connect children to nature through our environmental education programs. Last year we added a few programs to our roster and were able to reach 9529 participants both on and off site. This was an increase of 18% over last years numbers. Thanks to all those that helped reach this goal! Great job!

Local counties have started back to school and the phones have been busy

with teachers booking education programs. It looks like September and October are almost full with dates being filled into later months. This year there will be a deadline for transportation grants. For teachers wanting to book a program between September 15th and Dec. 18th, the deadline to turn applications in will be Sept. 25th. For teachers wanting to book a program between January 2nd and May 31st the deadline to turn in applications will be Dec. 18th. If you know of someone who is interested in receiving an application all you have to do is email me at the following address and I would be happy to forward it to you.

lori_nicholson@fws.gov

This year we plan on increasing our visits for educational programs at St. Vincent and their area schools. Plans are in the works to meet with administrators for those schools to schedule programming throughout the year.

It also looks like we will still have access to the education cabin for the upcoming year making logistics a little easier than previously planned.

I am looking forward to the upcoming school year and thank all of those who helped make the last one such a success.



The Photo Club is gearing up for a busy fall. We planning a safari trip in October about the time the Monarchs should be arriving, along with lots of fall wildflowers. Our November meeting will coincide with the Bookstore's celebration "Outdoors for the Holidays." We hope you will join us at our meeting and then do some holiday shopping at the bookstore. The December meeting is still being planned, but it will probably include another drop in open house. (Besides taking photos we like to eat!)

The rangers are keeping us busy with refuge projects with our favorite one being the Whooping Crane web cam. Keep an eye out for updates on the Association's web site: <http://www.stmarksrefuge.org/> about the camera. We will have a live camera going on the young whoopers of the Class of 2009. Until they arrive at St. Marks, watch the class getting ready on the Operation Migration site: <http://www.operationmigration.org/>

For now we will still have the Educational Cabin for meetings, the third Saturday of every month at 9am. Contact: thomasd@talstar.com if you have any questions or would like to be added to our email list.

On a sad note, the Photo Club lost one of its founding members recently, Sylvia Cohen. She had a wonderful spirit and was a dedicated member and volunteer. She will be missed by us all. Donations made by family and friends in Sylvia's memory will go towards Photo Club projects.



Photo taken by the late Sylvia Cohen.



Photo of Sylvia Cohen enjoying the outdoors and photography.

Outdoors for the Holidays

"Outdoors for the Holidays" Sat. Nov. 21, 2009 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Refuge Visitor Center and Education Cabin - 1255 Lighthouse Road.

This is a family- friendly event with yummy holiday treats and cider; family-friendly crafts; and wonderful nature holiday gift items! No waiting in line - just jolly good outdoor fun! HO!! HO!! HO!!!

Holiday photos will be available for a small donation. Props will be provided or you can bring your own.

"Outdoors for the Holidays" is sponsored by the St. Marks NWR Photo Club, Refuge Volunteers and the St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc.

Make sure and visit the bookstore/gift shop in the Visitor Center for our holiday sale. There will be plenty of

stocking stuffers and nature gifts to put under your tree. If you can't make a decision on what to buy Uncle Harry or Aunt Mable, gift certificates will be available. All profits from the gift store go to the St. Marks Refuge Association to support biological and educational projects.

Fees Help St. Marks NWR! Robin Will

The entrance and hunt fees collected through the Federal Recreation Fee program from visitors to the St. Marks NWR help the refuge in many ways. First, we cover our restroom cleaning contracts with these fees, as well as law enforcement for special events, and printing brochures and signs for the public and lots of other small customer service items. However, 20% of the fees are sent to the USFWS Southeast Regional Office and they are combined with other refuges' fees and offered back out to the field as grants. Last year, the Regional Office gave St. Marks NWR grant funds to complete the Animal Olympics Trail signage and

purchase digital cameras for educational groups. This year, St. Marks NWR was fortunate to receive funding from the Regional Office grant program to fund \$5,000 of the Whooping Crane remote cameras system and \$10,000 towards alternate transportation for groups. So, through your daily, annual and lifetime passes, you are supporting many visitor services programs here on the refuge.

Thank you!

Animal
Olympic
Sign



REFUGE REGULATIONS

No Littering, help keep your refuge clean!

Enclosed Cooking Fires are permitted in designated picnic areas only. Open fires are not permitted.

Pets must be on a leash and under control of owners at all times.

Collecting or taking of artifacts, natural features, animals or plants on government property is prohibited.

Weapons, fireworks, or firearms are prohibited.

Book Nook

Janie Nelson

I keep the door open between the bookstore and the workroom. The main reason is to get a little air circulation, but a side benefit is that I get to eavesdrop on visitors to the refuge.

A couple of weeks ago, I heard a couple exclaiming about what an incredible place St. Marks is. I heard them talk with amazement about the wildlife exhibits -- "Do you think that's a real deer?" the woman asked her husband. "Sure looks like it," he responded.

Being a born gabber, I popped out of my cavern and offered to answer -- or find out the answer to -- any questions they might have. I also asked the middle-aged pair where they were from.

To my surprise, they had lived in Tallahassee all their lives and had

never visited our special spot until that day. But, they promised, as they left the visitor center with big smiles, a bag of brochures and a T-shirt or two, they'd be back. And, they'd bring friends with them next time.

It made my day.

In other bookstore news: If you're collecting Audubon birds, you're in for a treat. We have several new arrivals to our flock, including willets, avocets, mallards and ruby-throated hummingbirds. The new shipment also contains some old favorites, such as bald eagles and wood ducks. I love these collectibles and can hardly pass the display without mashing a button to hear a bird sound. I do find it odd that the hummingbird is bigger than the eagle, but that just makes for a good chuckle.

We also have a new T-shirt that features area lighthouses, with St. Marks being

displayed prominently. They're very colorful and would make a great addition to any gift package you're putting together.

For folks like myself who prefer -- or require -- "roomier" sizes -- we've got a new shipment of our old lighthouse T's that will fit the bill.

One last thought: If your old hat is looking a bit ragged, treat yourself to a new one. We've now selling a comfy safari hat and some new bucket caps that provide good protection from the sun. And, we have a new supply of visor caps as well.

If you're traveling, and drop in on any other refuge bookstores, let me know if you see something you'd like to see in ours. Send an e-mail to janie_nelson@comcast.net.

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 68
St. Marks, FL 32355
(850) 925-6121
<http://www.fws.gov/saintmarks>

Association News and Update

Sign up for membership

ST. MARKS REFUGE ASSOCIATION

PLEASE CHECK MEMBERSHIP



◇ Individual/Family	\$ 25.00
◇ Organization	\$ 50.00
◇ Senior (over 62)	\$ 20.00
◇ Supporting	\$ 50.00
◇ Student (under 16)	\$ 5.00
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Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (home): _____

Phone (office): _____

Email: _____

Gift membership Y / N: Or honorarium Y / N

In memory of: _____

Join us on September 12 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. for all the delicious pancakes you can eat. We'll go over upcoming events such as Coastal Cleanup and the Monarch Festival and learn the latest plans for the arrival of the Class of 2009 whooping cranes.

With so much rain the refuge should be bursting with fall wildflowers. Join a Photo Club outing to learn more about improving your pictures. Soon, I promise, the heat will break and we'll want to get outside and enjoy the coastal nature of north Florida. I can't think of a better place to visit than St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. I hope to see you there soon.

Gail Fishman

grtener@hotmail.com

President, St. Marks Refuge Association

Here's a new easy way to raise money for St. Marks Refuge projects. Just start using Yahoo! powered GoodSearch.com as your search engine and they'll donate about a penny to the St. Marks Refuge Association every time you do a search!

In addition, do all of your shopping through their online shopping mall, GoodShop.com, where you can shop at more than 1000 top online retailers and a percentage of your purchases, up to 30%, will go the Association for Refuge needs. You pay the same price as you normally would, but a donation goes to help St. Marks NWR.

Here's the web site — <http://www.goodsearch.com>. Designate St. Marks Refuge Association as your charity. You can also read about GoodSearch in the NY Times, Oprah Magazine, CNN, ABC News and the Wall Street Journal.

Thanks Craig Kittendorf

Web Master, St. Marks Refuge Association

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