

Happenings at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

Refuge Reporter

Volume 13, Issue 1

Winter 2009/2010

Wild Goose Chase a Bit Soggy, But Fun

By Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

Imagine running through a tranquil forest with the smell of leaves and earth surrounding you. Now add about one-half inch of rain to this picture and “slippery when wet” gains a whole new meaning. Wet, rainy weather and cool conditions could not keep a bunch of avid runners and walkers away from Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on Saturday, October 3, 2009, for a very unique event. The second annual **Wild Goose Chase 5 K Run and Walk** had 64 registered runners and walkers.

Runners and walkers followed a route along gravel roads and hiking trails, some of it in normally closed areas. The geese and ducks didn't seem to mind the weather as they provided the soggy participants with aerial acrobatics and cheerful honks and quacks along the way.

Most participants said they were intrigued by the notion of having a running and walking race in the “wilderness.” Some participated in last year's race and enjoyed it so much, they came back again.

The run planning committee made up of Becky Goche, Steve Kahl, Ed DeVries, and Tom Horb from the refuge and Susan Scott from the Friends began planning this year's event shortly after the success of the **2008 Wild Goose Chase**. Partners that helped sponsor the race included, Friends of Shiawassee NWR, JDL Business Solutions, Red Horse Creative, The Restorative Touch, Runner's Performance Footwear and Apparel, Shay Water Company, and Universal Sign. On the day of the race, 14 volunteers donated 70 hours working the registration table, taking pictures, helping at the finish line, and providing water and other refreshments to the runners and walkers. Six refuge staff also worked the event.

Something's Fishy at Green Point ELC

For its final 2009 **Nurturing Nature** program, the Friends of the Shiawassee NWR is offering something fishy preceding Tom Lenon's 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2, program on **Fish of Michigan** at Green Point ELC.

Lenon, of Midland's Chippewa Nature Center, will show how to identify fish common in Michigan, tell where they are found and what they like to eat, which migrate and what they do during the winter.

Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. for those who wish to sample one of those primary fish in our waters. Catered by the Huron Fish Company of Saginaw, the feast features broiled Lake Superior whitefish, fries, hush puppies, assorted cold beverages and dessert.

The cost of the dinner is \$12 per person, with reservations and payment due by noon Monday, Nov. 30. Call (989) 759-1669. The lecture is \$2; free to Friends members.

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Special Points:

- *Green Point has snowshoes that you can borrow and use on our property during business hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Closed all Federal holidays.*
- *Don't know how to snowshoe? There are several guided snowshoe hikes planned throughout the winter where you can learn the basics. See the calendar insert for more information.*
- *You can also cross-country ski refuge trails. They're not groomed, so be prepared to blaze a trail!*

Welcome to the Refuge, Ken!

By Ed DeVries, Assistant Refuge Manager

On October 11, 2009 Ken Schimp officially became the new maintenance worker at Shiawassee NWR, joining David Peters on the refuge maintenance staff. Originally from Eldorado, Illinois, Ken graduated from high school there and attended John A. Logan College in Cartersville, Illinois. He studied construction management for two years while at John A. Logan and was involved with a class building project at Crab Orchard NWR in Marion, Illinois. While working on the building project at Crab Orchard, Ken became acquainted with the refuge manager and from him learned about the Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. One thing led to another and in 2007 Ken became enrolled as a SCEP student.

In July, 2008 Ken received his first job with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a SCEP maintenance worker at the Savanna District of the Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Refuge. While there he received certification on many types of heavy equipment, and also had the opportunity to work on several refuge Maintenance Action Teams. MAT teams are work groups made up of individuals from a number of refuges who team up to build projects such as dikes and roads on refuges. This alleviates the need to go through the contracting process with private industry at a cost savings to the government. Ken worked in Savanna until August, 2009, and was awaiting assignment to a permanent station when Shiawassee NWR was notified that he

was available. Having heard nothing but good things about Ken from his past supervisors, we were eager to welcome Ken to our staff.

Ken has already become immersed in refuge maintenance operations here. He's currently living in Birch Run, and in his spare time he enjoys hiking, biking, and kayaking. Please join me in welcoming Ken Schimp to the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge!



New maintenance worker Ken Schimp. Photo by Ed DeVries, 11/2009

Jim Dastyck Heads West

By Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

Shiawassee NWR staff, volunteers, and friends bid farewell to a friend on September 18, 2009, at a small gathering in Frankenmuth. Wildlife Biologist Jim Dastyck left Saginaw to accept a refuge biologist position in Oregon.

Jim is now the refuge biologist at Malheur NWR in southeastern Oregon, near Princeton. This refuge boasts a vast complex of wetlands in Oregon's high desert. Actually, there are 120,000 acres of wetlands out of the 187,000 acre refuge. Over 320 birds species and 58 mammal species can be found on this refuge that lies within the Pacific Flyway. Water manage-

ment is key to supporting all this wildlife, and Jim brings a lot of experience in this area.

Jim began his duties at Shiawassee on November 4, 1990. A long list of accomplishments and programs can be attributed to Jim during his nearly 19 years as refuge biologist here. He is probably best known and admired for helping establish the Non-Ambulatory Deer Hunt on the refuge for hunters who use wheelchairs to get around. His insight, biological knowledge, and tall tales will be missed, but not forgotten. We wish Jim well and hope that he can quickly learn how to hunt mule deer and antelope so that he can spin new yarns for his old friends here in Michigan.

From Africa to Alaska

By Janet Martineau, Friends Board

That's the title of our 2010 *Nurturing Nature Wednesday Series* that kicks off in January with a program featuring the sights, sounds, souvenirs and smells of three countries in Africa and ends in December with a "trip" to Alaska and the Yukon.

In between are some sweet samplings during a program on maple tree sap, a chance to stump Shiawassee Refuge manager Steve Kahl with questions and a musical history of the Saginaw Valley with both original and traditional songs.

Check out the full 2010 schedule enclosed in this newsletter.

We need your email address!

Did you know that the *Refuge Reporter* can be delivered directly to your email inbox? Send an email with your name and email address to Shiawassee@fws.gov to be added to the list. The newsletter may be going to an all digital format in the near future. Keep in mind, the *Refuge Reporter* is already available on the refuge website in COLOR. Log on to www.fws.gov/Midwest/shiawassee/ and click on the Refuge Reporter Newsletter link.

2009 Goose Hunt Results

Goose migration seemed delayed a bit this year compared to past years. With fewer geese migrating through and using the refuge during the goose hunt, less birds were taken. One hundred and seventy Canada geese were harvested during 12 days of hunting, beginning October 10 through October 29. Hunter numbers were down roughly 25 percent from last year with 375 hunters. The hunters overall success rate was 23 percent.

Refuge Trail Closures

Woodland Trail at Stroebel Road

December 11 – 14, 2009

December 18 – 19, 2009

Ferguson Bayou Trail at Curtis Road

December 1 – 5, 2009

December 11 – 14, 2009

December 18 – 19, 2009

December 26 – 30, 2009

Cass River Unit in Bridgeport Township

December 1 – 5, 2009

December 26 – 30, 2009

REFUGE REPORTER

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

Volume 13, Issue 1

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

Visitor Services Manager—Becky Goche

Biologist—Vacant

Biological Technician—Donald Poppe

Private Lands Biologist—Michelle Vander Haar

Park Ranger—Tom Horb

Park Ranger (Law Enforcement)—Joe Hughes

Administrative Officer—Mary Ann Gillette

Maintenance Staff—David Peters, Ken Schmp

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)



Something's Fishy at Green Point on December 2



Join the Flock, Submit Your Artwork for the Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest

By Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

It's time to start working on your entries for this year's Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Thousands of students nationwide participate in this program and art contest each year. Last year 335 students in grades K through 12 participated in Michigan alone!

All artwork must be postmarked by March 15, 2010. 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 refuge website or go to www.fws.gov/juniorduck. I also can email the 2010 informational brochure and entry form to you – either call me at (989) 759-1669 or email me at Becky_Goche@fws.gov.

Shiawassee NWR Winter 2009/2010 Calendar of Events

Stories from Nature - CANCELLED
December 2, 10:00 a.m.
Green Point ELC

Fish of Michigan
December 2, 7:00 p.m.
Green Point ELC

Tom Lenon of Midland's Chippewa Nature Center will show how to identify fish common to Michigan, and share other interesting information. At 6:00 p.m., an optional fish dinner will be offered, with walleye and whitefish, French fries and slaw catered by Huron Fish of Saginaw. Reservations are limited to 30; the cost is \$12. Call (989) 759-1669 to reserve your spot. Admission for the program only: \$2, FREE for Friends of Shiawassee NWR members.

Snowshoe Hike
December 5, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Green Point ELC

Volunteer Joanna Rogers will teach you how to snowshoe. You are welcome to bring your own or use one of our pairs. Please call (989) 759-1669 to reserve your pair, as we have limited numbers. If there is no snow, there will still be a guided hike. All ages are welcome.

Live Birds of Prey Program
December 5, 2:00 p.m.
Green Point ELC

Joe Rogers and his team from Wildlife Recovery Associates are back! Several live birds will be available for you to see. Donations accepted.

Track and Scat Hike
December 12, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Green Point ELC

Volunteer Joanna Rogers will help you identify signs that animals leave behind. All ages are welcome.

Snowshoe Hike
December 18, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Green Point ELC

Volunteer Joanna Rogers will teach you how to snowshoe. You are welcome to bring your own or use one of our pairs. Please call (989) 759-1669 to reserve your pair, as we have limited numbers. If there is no snow, there will still be a guided hike. All ages are welcome.

Christmas Day Holiday – All offices closed
December 25

New Year's Day Holiday – All offices closed
January 1

The Best of Africa
January 6, 7:00 p.m.
Green Point ELC

Saginaw Township resident Catherine McMichael shares the sights, sounds, stories and souvenirs of her Elderhostel safari to Botswana, Zambia and South Africa -- with plenty of wildlife and landscape images. And to increase your sensory visit, some African snacks are served. Admission for the program only: \$2, FREE for Friends of Shiawassee NWR members.

Guided Cross-country Ski Tour
January 9, 10:00 a.m.

Woodland Trail

(at the corners of Center and Stroebel Roads)
Park Ranger Tom Horb will take you on a tour of the Woodland Trail, our most popular ski area. Bring your own equipment and dress for the weather. If there is not enough snow, there will still be a guided hike.

Snowshoe Hike
January 13, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Green Point ELC

Park Ranger Tom Horb will teach you how to snowshoe. You are welcome to bring your own or use one of our pairs. Please call (989) 759-1669 to reserve your pair, as we have limited numbers. If there is not enough snow, there will still be a guided hike.

M. L. King, Jr.'s Birthday – All offices closed
January 18



***Plan ahead for winter!**
Please note that events
will be cancelled in the
event of local travel
advisories and/or
severe weather
conditions.

Snowshoe Night Hike**January 29, 7:00 p.m.****Green Point ELC**

Explore the night under light of nearly a full moon while on snowshoes. You are welcome to bring your own or use one of our pairs. Please call (989) 759-1669 to reserve your pair, as we have limited numbers. If there is not enough snow, there will still be a guided hike.

Guided Cross-country Ski Tour**January 30, 4:00 p.m.****Evon Road parking lot**

(west end of Evon Road, off of highway M-13, south of Saginaw)

Ski through parts of the refuge that are normally closed to the public with Park Ranger Tom Horb. Bring your own equipment and dress for the weather. If there is not enough snow, there will still be a guided hike.

Shorebird & Waterfowl Banding & Avian Influenza Surveillance at Shiawassee NWR**February 3, 7:00 p.m.****Green Point ELC**

Donald Poppe, a wildlife biological technician at the refuge, shows never-before-seen pictures of refuge shorebirds, waterfowl and bird banding. And he will describe how refuge staff members capture and sample birds for avian influenza. Admission for the program only: \$2, FREE for Friends of Shiawassee NWR members.

Snowshoe Hike**February 6, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.****Green Point ELC**

Park Ranger Tom Horb will teach you how to snowshoe. You are welcome to bring your own or use one of our pairs. Please call (989) 759-1669 to reserve your pair, as we have limited numbers. If there is not enough snow, there will still be a guided hike.

Presidents' Day – All offices closed**February 15****Guided Cross-country Ski Tour****February 20, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.****Ferguson Bayou Trail**

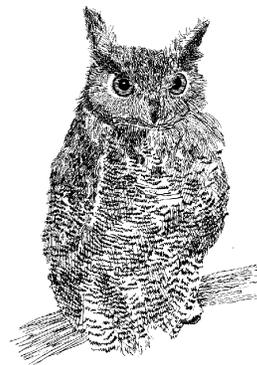
Go on a guided ski tour of the refuge with Delta College's Associate Professor of Biology Wendy Baker to learn about winter ecology. You must provide your own ski equipment.

Snowshoe Hike**March 6, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.****Hart and Willing Roads in James Township**

Park Ranger Tom Horb will take you on a guided hike to show you the remains of an old coal mine area. You are welcome to bring your own or use one of our pairs. Please call (989) 759-1669 to reserve your pair, as we have limited numbers. If there is not enough snow, there will still be a guided hike.

Guided Cross-country Ski Tour**March 27, 4:00 p.m.****Woodland Trail**

(at the corners of Center and Stroebel Roads)
Park Ranger Tom Horb will take you on a tour of the Woodland Trail, our most popular ski area. Bring your own equipment and dress for the weather. If there is not enough snow, there will still be a guided hike.



***Plan ahead for winter!
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will be cancelled in the
event of local travel
advisories and/or
severe weather
conditions.**

All programs are FREE unless otherwise noted. For more information call Green Point Environmental Learning Center, (989) 759-1669 or visit the refuge's website at www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee

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

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

Send membership form to:
Friends of Shiawassee NWR
P.O. Box 20129
Saginaw, MI 48602

If you wish to make a financial donation, please make check payable to “Friends of Shiawassee NWR.”