

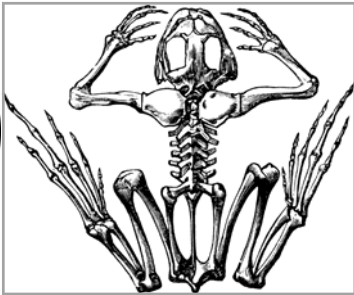
Refuge Reporter

Volume 15, Issue 2

Spring 2012

Presentation to Offer a Little "Skull"duggery

by Janet I. Martineau, Friends Board



A parade of skulls will populate the Green Point En-

vironmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple in Saginaw, on Wednesday, April 4 – nearly 30 of them, in fact. That is when Janea Little, a senior naturalist at the Chippewa Nature Center in Midland, presents a 7 p.m. Nurturing Nature program entitled "Animal Skulls." Admission is free to members of the Friends of the Shiawassee National Wildlife refuge; \$2 at the door for others.

Little says her collection that night will range from a black bear skull measuring 10 inches long to a brown bat skull a mere half-inch long. Which creature skull fascinates her the most? "It depends on my mood. I think the lacy network of bone along the muzzle of the rabbit (designed as an air conditioner for cooling down during a burst of speed) is very cool and unique."

Ask her that if it is true the bigger the skull the smarter the critter, and she says it's complicated. "It's the size of the head RELATIVE to the body (T. Rex had a really big head, after all), and also how much of the head is the BRAIN cavity. For instance, possums and raccoons have the same size heads; in fact, the opossums is larger compared to body size. But the BRAIN cavity of the possum is the size of a peanut (still in the

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

- Saginaw Pioneer, Ephraim Williams* 2
- Skull Duggery cont.* 2
- Talking Turkey Re-scheduled* 3
- Ephraim Williams cont.* 3

Special Points:

- *The Wildlife Drive is scheduled to open May 1, from sunrise to sunset. Please note that the opening may be delayed pending the status of the Bald eagles and their nest next to the route.*
- *Spring is a great time of the year to visit the refuge. The songs of the frogs and birds can almost be deafening at times! Make sure you're prepared for potentially muddy trails. Remember that some of the refuge trails - especially the Woodland Trail and the trails at Green Point may flood in the spring.*

Refuge Reporter to be Available Electronically Only

This marks the last printed issue of the **Refuge Reporter**. In an effort to be more eco-friendly, the newsletter will be available electronically. Readers who want it delivered directly to their email inbox need to provide us with their email addresses. Send your email address to shiawassee@fws.gov with "Subscribe to newsletter" in the subject line. You will

be added to our list and will receive future editions of the newsletter as well as news releases about upcoming refuge events.

If you do not wish to subscribe, you can always see the current and past issues of the **Refuge Reporter** on the refuge website.

Saginaw Pioneer, Ephraim Williams, Comes to Life at May's Nurturing Nature Program

by Janet I. Martineau, Friends Board



A Saginaw pioneer comes to costumed, first-person life on Wednesday, May 2, when the Nurturing Nature series presents “Ephraim Williams, Pioneer Fur Trader.”

“When Ephraim and his brother, Gardner, lived in Saginaw, they were very involved with the growing

town,” says Kyle Bagnall, who assumes the persona of Ephraim during the 7 p.m. program at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple.

“Ephraim was the first clerk of Saginaw Township, the first postmaster of Saginaw and building superinten-

dent for the first Saginaw County Courthouse. His daughter, Julia, was one of the first white children born in Saginaw. His brother was the first supervisor of Saginaw Township and was elected the first mayor of Saginaw in 1857. And 1834, the Williams family built the first sawmill in the Saginaw Valley.” And that does not even include the earlier family history connected to the War of 1812, which marks its 200th anniversary this year.

The manager of historical programs at Midland's Chippewa Nature Center, Bagnall is no stranger to the Nurturing Nature series. He has presented three living history programs as Michigan explorer Bela Hubbard in various phases of his life. He was intrigued to do the same with Williams, Bagnall says, “because of his fascinating life story at the end of the Michigan fur trade era and his involvement in the earliest era of settlement in the Saginaw Valley. This is one of my favorite periods of Michigan history, and I can't think of a more fascinating family to bring it to life.”

Bagnall researched his script through Williams family contributions to the “Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections.” Published between 1876-1929, this 40-volume collection is a vast repository of pioneer reminiscences, biographical sketches, memorials, and the

(continued on page 3)

Presentation to Offer a Little “Skull”duggery continued

shell), while the raccoon brain cavity is triple that size.”

In her career, Little says she has never found or been asked to identify anything really old. “Probably the oldest was a cow from (Midland's) Jefferson Avenue. The people who brought it in said it was in their yard, which had not been a cow pasture for several decades. As a child, I did have a very fine collection of dinosaur bones. Looking back, they bore a strange resemblance to cow bones of all sorts.”

There are all sorts of clues she uses in trying to identify skulls found or brought in to the nature center -- ones she will share during her “Nurturing Nature”

program. “Teeth are a biggie in ID – carnivores have fangs, herbivores do not. Rodents have really large, yellowed incisors, other herbivores do not. Deer don't even have upper incisors, only lowers. Each species has a unique set of teeth (even fox and gray squirrels have slightly different tooth count), so if the skull is complete, you can ID it.” All LAND mammals have teeth ... but birds do not.

And yes, sometimes she is stumped. “I often fail to ID a skull if it is incomplete or heavily damaged (sorry, I'm not CSI). I have also struggled with pigs and cows, as my brain is always trying to figure out what WILD animal it is.”

Saginaw Pioneer, Ephraim Williams, continued

proceedings of local pioneer societies.

As the story goes, Ephraim was born in Concord, Mass., in 1802. His father opened a trading post in Detroit in 1808, and his ship was captured by the British at Mackinac Island during the War of 1812. The entire Williams family moved to Detroit in 1815 – when Ephraim was 13, the oldest of eight children.

Ephraim and his brother arrived in Saginaw in 1828, as agents of the American Fur Company. They were responsible for the company's trade and dealings with Native Americans for the entire Saginaw Valley, including posts at Midland and Sebawaing and along the Cass and AuSable Rivers.

“During this program, I portray Ephraim in the year 1840, as he is closing up fur trading in the Saginaw Valley,” says Bagnall. “My historical dress consists of reproductions from the period, typical for a fur trader in the Great Lakes region. I also use a variety of furs, an 1823 map reproduction, a knife, tomahawk, and other typical trade goods of the period.”

Ephraim eventually moved to Flint and was elected mayor in 1861. He died in Flint 1890, at age 89.

Nurturing Nature is co-sponsored by the Friends of the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge and the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Admission is \$2 at the door.

Talking Turkey Program Rescheduled

The Talking Turkey program originally scheduled for February 1, has been moved to March 7. Eric Dunton, Refuge Biologist, will present information on the history and ecology of Wild Turkeys. One of the greatest wildlife conservation success stories in the history of North America wild turkeys have rebounded from extremely low populations levels at the end of the 1800's to millions of birds across North America. The presentation will cover the history of wild turkeys in North America, restoration efforts, and will discuss general ecology of wild turkeys. Prior to coming to the refuge, Eric worked as a Wildlife Research Biologist with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and served as the statewide wild turkey biologist for Minnesota.

REFUGE REPORTER is published quarterly by the Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge for the refuge.

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

Refuge Manager—Steve Kahl

Visitor Services Manager—Becky Goche

Private Lands Biologist—Michelle Vander Haar

Wildlife Biologist—Eric Dunton

Biological Technicians—Zac Gilna, Chris Haggard, Kile Kucher

Park Ranger (Law Enforcement)—Ryan Pauly

Administrative Officer—Vacant

Maintenance Worker — Keith Jensen

Engineering Equipment Operator—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.

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)



FINAL ISSUE! In an effort to be more eco-friendly, this is the final printed issue of the newsletter. You can receive it electronically, just send your email address to shiawassee@fws.gov with "Subscribe to newsletter" in the subject line.

Private Lands Open House Coming Soon

By Michelle Vander Haar, Private Lands Biologist

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program will host a 2012 Open House for private landowners to learn more about cost-share programs available to improve their property. All landowners are invited to attend from farmers to residential and public entities. We will have representatives from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pheasants Forever, Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy, Cass River Greenway Committee, Saginaw Conservation District and more.

Information will be available for improvements on soil erosion, water quality, wildlife habitat, soil testing, land preservation, conservation easements and much more. The event will take place in mid to late March from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Open House is intended to

be an informal gathering so landowners have the ability to ask one-on-one questions of the available professionals.

Please feel free to contact me at 989/777-5930 ext. 12 or Michelle_Vanderhaar@fws.gov, if you have any questions. You may also check the refuge website for date and location information.

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.



Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

2012 Spring Calendar of Events

Talking Turkey

March 7, 7:00 p.m.

Green Point ELC

Eric Dunton, a wildlife biologist at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, will explore one of the greatest wildlife conservation success stories in the history of North America – the rebounding of wild turkeys from low populations at the end of the 1800s to millions of them today. Admission is \$2, FREE for Friends of Shiawassee NWR.

Snowshoe Hike

March 8, 4:00 p.m.

Green Point ELC

Park Ranger John Anderson will teach you how to snowshoe. You may bring your own or use one of ours; call Green Point to reserve your pair. If there is not enough snow, there will still be a guided hike.

Guided Cross-Country Ski Tour

March 10, 10:00 a.m.

Woodland Trail

Park Ranger John Anderson will take you on a tour of 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.

Guided Spring Hike

March 24, 10:00 a.m.

Green Point ELC

Park Ranger John Anderson will take you on a hike along Green Point's trails. Dress for the conditions and enjoy the spring weather.

Junior Duck Stamp Contest Judging

March 27, 9:00 a.m.

Green Point ELC

The public is welcome to watch the judging for the state's Junior Duck Stamp Contest.

Animal Skull Investigator

April 4, 7:00 p.m.

Green Point ELC

You don't have to be a crime scene investigator to identify a skull you find while out on a walk or digging a hole in your backyard. Janea Little, a senior naturalist at Midland's Chippewa Nature Center, will show how each animal species has a unique skull and, using clues from the size, number and type of teeth, eye holes, brain cavity and other characteristics, you can determine what you have found. Admission is \$2, FREE for Friends of Shiawassee NWR.

Guided Bicycle Tour

April 14, 10:00 a.m.

Ferguson Bayou Trail

Park Ranger John Anderson will take you on a guided bike tour at the Ferguson Bayou Trail. Bicycles such as mountain bikes with wider tires work best. Dress for the weather and bring plenty of water, a camera and binoculars.

Wildlife Drive Open

May 1 – October 5, Sunrise to Sunset

October 6 – 25, 1:00 pm to Sunset

Wildlife Drive

The refuge's self-guided auto tour route, the *Wildlife Drive*, is open every day from sunrise to sunset through October 5. Limited hours will be available beginning October 6-25 from 1:00 p.m. to sunset. Please note that the route may close due to flooding, soft roads, or special conditions such as events or wildlife needs.

Ephraim Williams, Pioneer Fur Trader

May 2, 7:00 p.m.

Green Point ELC

Step back in time as Kyle Bagnall, manager of historical programs at Midland's Chippewa Nature Center, presents a costumed, first-person program based on the life of Ephraim Williams – tales of a family caught up in the War of 1812, establishing a farm in an unbroken forest, trading with Native Americans and building the first sawmill in the Saginaw Valley. Admission is \$2, FREE for Friends of Shiawassee NWR.

Memorial Day Holiday – Offices are closed

May 28

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.”