



# Tennessee Refuge Reflections

**Tennessee National  
Wildlife Refuge**  
3006 Dinkins Lane  
Paris, TN 38242

(731) 642-2091  
<http://TennesseeRefuge.fws.gov>

Refuge Manager  
John Taylor

Office Hours  
M-F 7:00 to 3:30

## Benefactors

Johnny Allen

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Paris! Magazine

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## Presidents Page

Hello Friends.

We just wrapped up another year that I would call astounding. We do not have a sprawling metropolitan area nearby with tens of thousands of potential members at our doorstep. We are not the retirement home of multi-millionaires who can sponsor programs on a whim. While we don't have huge numbers and unlimited dollars what we do have is a group of concerned citizens who care deeply about their refuge and the wildlife it supports. I meet and talk with Friends Groups around the country and the Friends of Tennessee ranks right at the top.

We began the Refuge Discovery Series to provide information about the refuge and the wildlife it hosts. We are learning as we go and have found that some programs are well attended and others don't catch people's eye. Let us know what you would like to learn to make your refuge visits more fun.

In March the Friends partnered with the 4H Honor Club, Civil Air Patrol, Sporting Chance and Master Gardeners to renovate the Chickasaw Trail. It was a real motivator to see everyone out there working hard to give refuge visitors a trail to hike. We will continue to perform work days to improve both the habitat and public accommodations on the refuge.

We held our first ever wildlife art and photography show at Lee School. The local talent is truly amazing. It was a great success and plans are underway to make this years show bigger and better. Mark your calendar for September and don't miss it. If the interest is there we may split the show into separate art and photography shows.

Throughout the year we participated in various events to let the folks know who we are and raise public awareness of the refuge. We will continue to partner with groups such as the Downtown Paris Association to provide activities that are fun and educational for the youth of the community.

That brings us to a unique position. Two years ago we laid out a series of prioritized objectives for the Friends Group. We have completed the list and moved on to items such as the art show and a refuge office and visitor center that were not even thought practical for our young group at the time. I ask you all to put on your thinking caps and come up with the items and tasks you would like to see your Friends Group take on. Join us at the refuge office on Saturday January 19<sup>th</sup> if you can. The details are on page 5 of this newsletter. We hope to hear from you and look forward to adding to our list of accomplishments in the coming year.

Dan Dziekonski  
Friends President



# Manager's Corner

Hello Refuge Friends,

Refuge Manager John Taylor was in D.C. recently meeting with Congressman Zack Wamp and Greg McIlvaine of his staff. The folks in D.C heard about the proposed headquarters from Senator Alexander's staff and wanted to meet with John to discuss it. We owe much thanks to our Friends Group for putting a bug in Congress' ear by way of letters and meeting with Senators Alexander and Corker and Congressman Tanner earlier in the year. After Refuge Manager Taylor explained who we are and what we do, Congressman Wamp said he supported us and our headquarters proposal should it make it through the budget process. He also asked us to keep him informed of its progress in the coming months.

Because of summer drought conditions and heavy rainfall in October, the agriculture crops on the refuge did poorly this year. Average corn yields ranged between 50-125 bushels per acre, and average soybean yields ranged between 4-20 bushels per acre, hardly a great year for our Cooperative farmers. In many cases, harvest was not worth burning the diesel fuel. However, there is food for an overabundance of waterfowl visitors this winter.

Many construction projects were completed on the refuge this year. Some of these projects were completed by refuge staff, but most were by contractors. TVA repaired a flood damaged levee on the Duck River Unit. They restored the washed out levee to the original elevation and installed a 1000ft spillway to accommodate flood waters. TVA also removed woody vegetation, improved side slopes, replaced two water control structures, and cleaned out a main drain that was silted in.

Two other completed contracts include the armoring of the outer levee with rip rap up on the north end of the Duck River Unit to protect it from flood damage, and the replacement of another water control structure. Also, construction has recently started on a contract to install four security fences on the Duck River Units to protect our valuable assets during closed hours.

The Federal Highway Administration "Wildlife Loop" Project encountered some construction delays due to backordered materials and heavy rains in October; however they finished up the end of December. The completion of this project will bring several benefits to the refuge, such as: restoration of several flood damaged levees, a new spillway revetment system designed to accommodate river flood waters in the lower Duck River Bottoms, replacement of several water control structures, installation of several new water control structures to improve water management capabilities, removal of woody vegetation on the side slopes of the levees, and improved gravel road surfaces for public traffic. The final phase of the project will to place interpretive signs along the auto tour route to explain management practices. This auto tour will be opened seasonally beginning March 16th for wildlife viewing opportunities.

The refuge maintenance staff has been feverishly taking advantage of the good construction conditions this year to complete several projects. Work completed includes: the raising of Honey Point Ferry Road to create a new waterfowl impoundment at Duck River, emergency repair work on the pool 8 levee, rehab work within several impoundments and farm fields on both the Duck River and Big Sandy Units, and the restoration of two small levees and replacement of two water control structures on the Busseltown Unit. These projects along with their regular maintenance activities made for a busy maintenance year.

All these projects will improve water management capabilities, flood water accommodation, public use opportunities, and security. We encourage you all to come out and see what wonderful things our staff and contractors have been doing for the critters and our visitors.

Andy Hofmann  
Assistant Refuge Manager

# Critter Corner

## Red Fox



Adult Red Fox



Red Fox Pup



Red Fox Hunting

### Quick Facts

**Diet:** Omnivore  
**Longevity:** 2 to 4 years  
**Size:** 30 – 50 in.  
**Weight:** 6.5 to 24 lbs  
**Litter size:** 2-12 pups

There are two species of fox on the refuge, gray fox and red fox. However, if you happened to see one of these shy creatures, it will likely be a red fox.

**Characteristics:** The red fox is similar in shape and size to a medium sized dog. Like a cat's the fox uses its thick tail for balance, as a warm cover in cold weather and as a signal flag to communicate with other foxes. Foxes also signal each other by making scent posts—urinating on trees or rocks to announce their presence.

**Range and Diet:** The red fox is found throughout most of the US and Canada with the exception of Alaska and the southwest. It has adapted to wooded areas, mountains or grasslands, farm land or even in suburban areas. This fox is an omnivore, meaning they will eat just about anything. They are solitary hunters who feed on squirrels, mice, rabbits, birds, and other small game. A large part of the red fox's diet is made up invertebrates like crickets, caterpillars, grasshoppers, beetles and crayfish. Foxes will also eat fruit and vegetables, fish, frogs, and even earth worms.

**Life Cycle:** Foxes mate in the winter. After mating the female (vixen) will make several dens. If one is disturbed she will move to the next to bear her pups or kits. A litter is typically 2 to 12 pups. Red foxes are born brown or grey. The male brings the female food while she is caring for the kits. The red coat grows in at the end of the first month. The kits start playing outside the den at about the same time. After nursing the mother begins feeding her kits regurgitated food. She will later bring them live prey to "play" with and eat. Playing with live prey helps the young kits develop their hunting skills. The kits usually leave their mother when they are about seven months old.

**Behavior:** They are mostly nocturnal but will hunt during the day as well. Red foxes can hear small rodents digging underground and will dig through dirt or snow to catch them. They will usually stalk their prey and then pounce like a cat. Foxes usually sleep outdoors but will use a rabbit den at times. They curl up and use their tail to keep warm.

### Time to Renew Your Membership. . .

If you joined before July of 2007 then your membership has expired. Please bring your renewals to the refuge office or any Friends event, or mail them to Friends of Tennessee NWR, 3006 Dinkins Lane, Paris, TN 38242. Dues remain \$15 for an individual and \$25 per family, \$100 for corporate and \$500 for benefactor memberships.

### Thanks to our New Members!!

Angie Jones  
The Graff Family  
Laura Brem

Danny and Martha Jo Kimberlin  
Bob and Shelley Cosey  
Sharon and David Holton

Gary and Adam Watts  
Thelma Traut  
Carol and Al Walsh

## Our Mission

Friends of Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. is an independent, non-profit corporation dedicated to supporting the primary purposes for which the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge was established and promoting 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.

## Membership Annual Dues

\$15 Individual  
\$25 Family  
\$100 Corporate  
\$500 Benefactor

Mail to:

Friends of Tennessee  
NWR  
3006 Dinkins Lane  
Paris, TN 38242

## Friends Year in Review - 2007



Chickasaw Trail Workday in March



Making peanut butter pine cones  
At Santa's Last Blast in December



Wood Duck Banding in August

Refuge Discovery Series  
Programs every month



Wildlife Art Show in October



Cookout on the Refuge in September



## We'll see you on the Refuge in 2008!

For additional photos on these events you can go to:  
<http://www.tnwrfriends.org/>

**Members Winter Waterfowl  
& Bald Eagle Tour  
Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>  
Duck River Bottoms**

As a thank-you for your membership, the refuge is offering a special “members only” guided tour on Tennessee NWR during its peak season. The tour will take you behind closed areas of the Duck River bottoms to view thousands of ducks and geese as well as bald eagles, herons, hawks, and much more. This is the perfect family outing. New members may sign up at the event.

There will be an optional Dutch Treat dinner after the tour at Four Seasons Restaurant in New Johnsonville for those that wish to join us.

Meet at the Refuge office in Paris at 2:00 PM or in the shopping center parking lot at the corner of Long Street and Hwy 70 in New Johnsonville at 3:00 PM.

Must RSVP (731) 642-2091

**Your Friends Future  
Saturday Jan 19<sup>th</sup>  
Refuge Office 9:00 – 12:00 PM**

Please join us to offer your ideas on the future of our Friends group and let us know what is important to you. Just two years ago we created an extensive prioritized list of goals and objectives. That list has been completed and we are looking to the future. If you can not attend email your suggestions to [dziekons@earthlink.net](mailto:dziekons@earthlink.net).

**Projects** – such as trails and photo blinds

**Membership and Volunteers** -

**Education** -

**Advocacy** – serving as a voice for the refuge

**Communication** – with the Friends and public

**Fund Raising** -

**Partnerships** -

We will have coffee and doughnuts available and offer a light lunch for those that attend.

Please RSVP to (731) 642-2091.



## Spotlight on the Staff

This month we highlight employee Jean Ruble. Although Jean has been the Administrative Officer since May 2007, she has worked at Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge since April 2006. Before taking the reigns from Dorothy Easley as the Administrative Officer, she was the Office Assistant. Her current duties include budget management, purchasing, payroll, record maintenance and coffee mess supervisor for the Duck River Unit and Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge.

Jean’s educational background is well rounded. She received her Master’s in Business Administration with a minor in Accounting from Murray State University in 2000. She also has a Bachelors of Science Degree in Business Administration (Saint Leo University, 1997) and a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Occupational Education (Southern Illinois University, 1983).

As can be seen from her schools, Jean is well traveled. She is a military retiree, having served 10 years in the United States Navy and 10 years in the United States Coast Guard. Jean’s favorite tour of duty was on the icebreaker, USCGC Polar Sea. She has been to the South Pole and; although never to the North Pole, she has been to the Artic Ocean on numerous scientific missions. Although her primary job was an electronics technician in the military, Jean was a jack of all trades. She worked as a computer system’s manager, an engineer and a quality assurance inspector for certain jobs on submarines.

Prior to her return to Paris, in July 2004, Jean and Mark, her husband, were in Seattle, Washington. While in Seattle, Jean worked at the Department of Veterans Affairs for 3 years. Currently, Jean and Mark have 4 dogs [Handsome Harry Who (dini), Max, Sugar, and Spice] and reside in Henry County where Mark grows the best yellow watermelon.

Check out the new Friends Website at:  
www.invertfriends.org

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**Friends Of Tennessee  
National Wildlife Refuge  
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## Upcoming Events

### **Refuge Discovery Series**

**Tues. Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>: Backyard Habitat  
6:30 – 7:30 pm at Paris office**

Is your yard lacking birds and butterflies? What are those small things you can do to make your backyard more wildlife friendly. Dan Dziekonski will offer tips and suggestions that will make your backyard pleasing to your eye and attractive to birds and wildlife at the same time.

*(open to public)*

**Tues. Mar. 11<sup>th</sup> : What's Tracking Up My Yard  
6:30 – 7:30 pm at Paris office**

Connie McSwain will host an evening of fun for the kids and those young at heart. It will start with a review of what tracks area wildlife make during their tours of our neighborhoods. Then there will be a chance for all to create a plaster cast of their favorite tracks to take home with them.

*(open to public)*