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Field Day at Bosque del Apache NWR*

On May 5th Bosque del Apache NWR hosted 46 children and their chaperones for a day of outdoor activities at the refuge. With a grant and donations from local businesses, a volunteer group of fifteen refuge staff and Friends worked to build a deeper connection between this public land site and the surrounding community by offering a unique outdoor education opportunity to a group of children from five to fourteen years of age. Divided into groups of twelve, these young people had the opportunity to test their skill at archery, learn basic orienteering, duck calling/identification and photography. Upon completion each child received a duck call, SD card and reader containing the pictures they took, a compass, rubber duck, Field Day T-Shirt and hat, water bottle, snacks, and a lunch.

At the end of his lunchtime discussion of outdoor ethics, Law Enforcement Officer Ben Lanford asked the question, “Whose responsibility is it to keep our public lands clean and safe?”

One child said, “It is our responsibility to pick up trash, don’t play with fire, and keep our lands safe for all of us to enjoy.”

I believe that statement alone captures the educational value of our “Field Day” event, and is why we hope to do this again next year.

--Jake Nuttall, Fire Management Officer, New Mexico Fire District

(Editor’s note: We would like to thank our sponsors to include Toyota Motor Sales USA through the National Environmental Education Foundation, Lanford Livestock, the Owl Bar, the San Antonio General Store, the Buckhorn, the San Antonio Crane, Howard Harlan Duck Calls, and Hunt’s Photo & Video.)



***See photos of all the fun throughout this issue!**





FROM THE EDITOR

Everyone is pretty tired of talking about the weather but since there is no water in the river and monsoon is still a distant dream, it's hard not to stand outside looking for clouds and maligning the weather forecasters who bring a whole new level of meaning to probability theory. But if you are looking for low spirits, you'll not find them here. Shutting down and walking away is not an option and the refuge folks are doing what they always do; they work with the resources they have to accomplish what is needed – regardless.

The summer researchers have arrived. I've lost count of how many have shown up, but their numbers alone are testimony to the fact that Bosque del Apache is THE place to be. This refuge sets the standard, provides the innovation and leads the way for wetland management nationwide.

The Friends have recently created a research library in the Biology building for the resident staff and researchers. The new shelves are lined with archive boxes filled with hundreds of neatly cataloged files, some of which hold information dating back to 1938, a year before the refuge was formally created. Rachel Minnaar, a librarian who doggedly worked through mountains of material, bringing order to chaos, accomplished all this. I walked into the library the other day to see about shelving some books only to find a couple of researchers happily working through some of the ear-

lier records. They seemed oblivious to the fact that some of their colleagues were covering the conference table with lizards that were to be studied and released. In the bid for space, the lizards won and I retired to shelve books another day.

Long after this year's summer folk are gone, another generation of researchers and staff will be able to use this library and hopefully add the results of their research to it. It is at these moments that the legacy of the Friend's support to the refuge is most apparent. It's what we are here to do – regardless.

--Lise Spargo



Summer Intern Program

This year the Friends have partnered with the City of Socorro to hire a full time intern mechanic for eight weeks to work with the maintenance staff at Bosque del Apache. If successful, the plan is to repeat this process each year giving a Socorro High School student or recent graduate an opportunity to develop work skills while providing much needed support to the refuge. The Friends is also sponsoring two City-hire high school students for part time work this summer helping with refuge and Friends projects.

Library Project

Rachel Minnaar, our part time librarian, has completed the organization of the archives in the new Biology Building Library. We are hugely grateful to Rachel for taking on this monumental task. The new library shelves have been built,

78 archive boxes are in place and a considerable volume of hardbound books will soon be in place for use by the biology staff and researchers at the refuge.

Nature Store

The Nature Store continues to see an increase in visitation and sales over last year despite moving into the hot season. The store's new computer installation has gone very well. Store Manager Kim Royle has been working wonders with our on-line store, which looks really great. Sales on-line are also up from last year.

New Policies

The Friends are currently working with the refuge to address changes called for in the Friends Policy released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this spring. Changes made or in the works at the time of this publication are the removal of consignment art from our Nature Store, the separation of sale of refuge passes from Nature Store transactions, and the phasing out of snacks and drinks sold through the Nature Store.





Rafting the Rio

In early May the Friends sponsored a one day rafting trip on the Rio Grande coinciding with the release of water into the river from Cochiti Dam to support the spawning-- and endangered--silvery minnow.

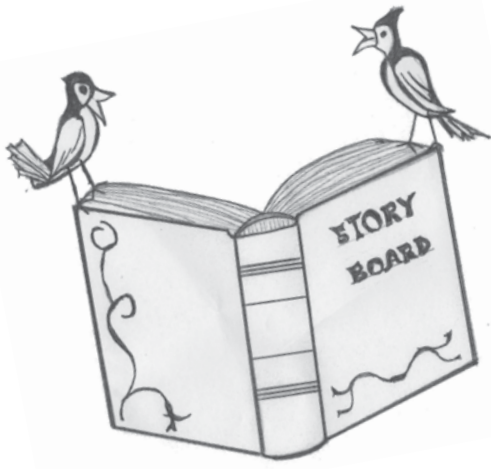


With sturdy rubber boats and gear, a hardy band put in at the Escondida bridge north of Socorro, and headed south. Guided by Environmental Ecologist Gina Dello Russo, we paddled with the current, skirting sand bars, viewing wildlife and seeing the river from a unique vantage point. By mid afternoon we had pulled out just north of San Antonio and although somewhat battered by wind and waves, it was an adventure truly worth the effort.



Our thanks to Gina and the folks from Far-Flung Adventures who made this such a memorable day.





Editors Note: *In the past year we have been asking people to share their special moments at Bosque de Apache NWR through the "Story Board" in our newsletter. Recently I received the following letter that captures a special moment with one of the birding worlds true giants. This is Don's story.*

Dear Ms. Spargo~

I looked on the list of staff members but couldn't find your name, so I hope I haven't screwed up too badly. When I saw the request, I meant to write soon but then got distracted.

I had already been to the Bosque a number of times, when it was thrilling to see the Whooping Cranes. Some time in the late '70s or early '80s (I think) the annual Festival of the Cranes was for the benefit of The Nature Conservancy. I was chairman that year and we had Roger Tory Peterson as guest speaker at the College. It was almost a full house. At the head table I had an opportunity to ask Mr. Peterson if he would mind autographing my Guide Book, which he kindly did. I can still hear him saying, "Golly, that's a well used guide." I told him we had left Santa Fe in 1934 to drive to Cornwall, CT and that from the old armory, Route 66 was a dirt road all the way to the Texas border. I also told him I started birding the next year and had his original *Guide to Eastern Birds*, which sadly got lost in various moves. He didn't offer to replace it. (Wish I could put a smile face here.)

Sincerely,
Don Van Soelen

P. S. Unfortunately, neither Mr. Peterson nor I put a date with the autograph.



Legacy

The story is out. Bosque del Apache Refuge is a destination people choose to find; a place with magnificent remote beauty. It's what locals would describe as

'out back and beyond.' Many first time visitors, on a journey of discovery, are stopped in their tracks. They have never seen anything like it, the birds, the river, the views... everything; and they never realized it was all here. Once they discover it, they want to come back.

For many, Bosque del Apache becomes the journey, the destination, a place and time full of meaning for them, a place they want to experience again and again, a place to share with their parents, their kids, and their friends. Regardless of what brought them here, their compass needle has moved and the journey on will be forever changed.

The refuge is 75 years old this year and all indications are that 75 years from now it will still be here, a legacy for future generations of first time visitors. To quote Aldo Leopold, "I do not imply that this philosophy of land was always clear to me. It is rather the end result of a life journey."

If Bosque del Apache is part of your journey, you can help to build that legacy with a Life-Income gift to the Friends of the Bosque that will be a lasting commitment to help sustain this valuable natural resource - out back and beyond.

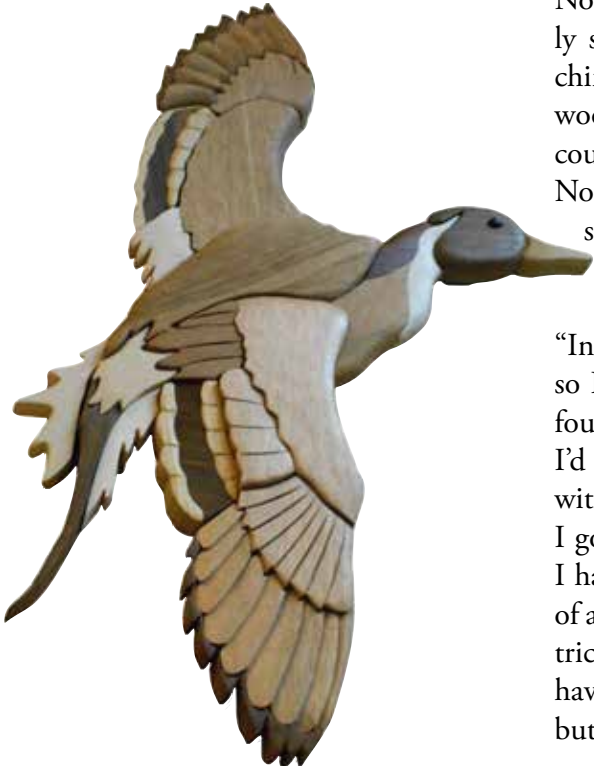
Artist Profile: Dennis Prichard

(Editor's Note: In each issue of Bosque Watch we are trying to highlight one of our gifted local artists. You can see Dennis's beautiful wood pieces in our Nature Store.)

As Dennis told us.....

I only had one formal art class, and that was an easy "A" as a senior in high school. But that class sparked an interest that lasted the rest of my life, unlike algebra. I learned calligraphy then and use it still. Mechanical drawing was my true love as I aspired to be an architect, but did I mention my lack of math skills? Alas, I went into biology and graduated from Oklahoma State University in 1976.

I immediately went to work as a National Park Ranger at Carlsbad Caverns. Over the next few years I traveled to Mammoth Cave



NP in Kentuck, Everglades and Big Bend NP where I spent four winters and complimented those seasons with summers on Isle Royale NP in Lake Superior. The winter of 1980-81 I spent working at Bosque del Apache NWR where I got married and really started looking for a permanent job. I landed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in my home state of Oklahoma where as a public use specialist I worked in three different refuges. I later found employment in Texas and Alaska and did a stint in Washington, DC for two years. I returned to the field at Sevilleta NWR to accept the position of Deputy Refuge Manager following the big footprints of Deb Davies as she took the same position at BDANWR.

Now in a house of my own I quickly started acquiring tools and machines to help me in my hobby of woodworking. I read everything I could on the subject, and watched Norm Abram's New Yankee Workshop religiously. I first made some furniture, but saw an article about this thing called "Intarsia." It looked easy enough, so I picked out a pattern and soon found it to be much harder than I'd thought. Still, I persevered, and with practice and a lot of patience, I got better with each piece. I wish I had taken a class, or had the help of a mentor to teach me the tips and tricks I needed early on instead of having to learn them the hard way, but that's Life's Lessons.



Before I retired in 2011, I would come home from work at night, turn on the saw, concentrate on not cutting my fingers, and forget all about work! I now walk into the workshop (er, garage) and say to myself, "There's no end to the possibilities here." My side of the garage is filling rapidly with boards of more than 30 types of wood and a new tool every once in a while. My inspiration comes from anywhere (as does the wood), and I love to emulate Nature in all its aspects. Birds are a favorite subject since I'm an avid naturalist, but lately I've been branching out to do Native American symbols and hot-air balloons (I've been selected to show at the Balloon Fiesta in October.)

See more of my work at www.dennisprichardworksinwood.com. There will be items up in the Manzanita Street Coffeehouse in Socorro during November and December also.

Enjoy!

Our 27th Festival of the Cranes is coming!

Come celebrate the 75th birthday of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge at the Festival of the Cranes.

Festival's expanded brochure becomes available in mid-August and online registration starts the first week of September. Friends of the Bosque members will be given online registration priority for one day starting September 2nd at 9:00 AM. Non-member registration begins on September 3rd at 9:00 AM. Become a member and register early! It is easy – just visit our website at www.friendsofthebosque.org. Click the green and blue Join Us button and in a few minutes you will be joining one of the strongest Friends groups in the country.

If you prefer, a hard copy registration form will be available in our Festival brochure that can be faxed or mailed to the Friends office.

REMEMBER- The fastest way to register is using our online registration that is accessible through our website www.festivalofthecranes.com. Just click on the red registration button. Problems? Questions? Starting 2 September you can reach us by phone at (575) 835-2077.

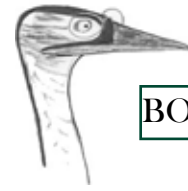
We have an exciting Festival in the works with more than 135 event sessions in six days to pick from; 50 are NEW! As a premier birding festival we are offering more than 55 birding event sessions. Are you a serious birder? If so look for the Birder's Corner in the brochure for information. The BRANT Group is back offering even more birding intensives. Did you hear the talk about last year's Owling Expedition Intensive? We have expanded capacity with it being offered three times this year.

As one of the top outdoor photography festivals in the country 40 photography event sessions will highlight photography professionals like Roman Kurywczak, Artie Morris, Joe Brady, Ron Knight, Maxis Gamez, Russell Burden and Kathryn Dow. Talk about something rare!

Friends believes that the VLA Startrails Night Photography workshop will be a hot topic this year; a photography workshop that will only be offered once a decade.

Our Expo Tent once again expands with more camera, optic and eco-travel exhibitors. Help us celebrate the 75th birthday of a national treasure and place Festival dates November 18-23rd on your calendars.

The fun is about to begin!



BOOK REVIEWS

A PHOTOGRAPHIC GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN RAP-TORS, by William S. Clark, Brian K. Wheeler (2003).

When I first arrived at the Bosque del Apache NWR, as a Florida gal I was overwhelmed by the differences in plumage exhibited by red-tailed hawks (RTHA). Interestingly, the red-tailed exhibit the most variability of any hawk population ranging from light to dark morph and in some cases no red tail! Birds of prey/ raptors, whether soaring, perched or on a kill, can be difficult to identify for both the novice and expert birder. However, since discovering this excellent field/reference guide by Wheeler and Clark during the 2013 Festival of the Cranes, I have used it as my principle raptor guide.

Wheeler and Clark, two experts on raptors, have provided over 360 high quality color photos of 43 raptor species seen in North America. For each species the authors have included identifications tips, descriptions of distinguishing marks and range. Photographs for each species demonstrate the raptor in poses that are commonly seen in the field, perched and soaring, with detailed views of the wing and tail. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, the field guide's last section is dedicated to raptor ID problems. Similar species, such as the Cooper's Hawk and the Sharp-shinned Hawk, are compared with side-by-side photographs and descriptions of the differences.

--Sunny Phillips

THE STORY OF CORN, by Betty Fussell. University of New Mexico Press (1992). 356 pages, paper bound

To the unknowing, by the title one could easily think the *The Story of Corn* might be found in the children's section or even perhaps be a pamphlet, or cookbook. These assumptions would be incorrect. The author in fact describes the varieties of corn and man's relationship to corn throughout the ages. With easy flowing text and supporting pictures, she draws on her vast knowledge and experiences in archaeology and personal travel to enlighten the reader. To tell her story, the author reminisces on her youth recalling how corn was grown and harvested by her grandparents, who were farmers, and comparing it with how it is done today. As described, American cooking is rooted in corn beginning with Native Americans who grew corn and later the first European settlers. Soon it became a substitute for rice. In other parts of the world there is evidence of corn use dating to before the time of Christ. Pictures of cobs and kernels in ancient art suggest corn's importance in religious ceremonies as well as creation stories and beliefs.

Being a volunteer for a short time at the refuge I have learned much. Of particular interest to me is the growing of corn to feed the migratory birds that spend the fall and winter at the refuge. After reading *The Story of Corn*, I wondered if the genetically modified corn seeds so often used today were planted on the refuge. I took the opportunity to ask refuge manager Kevin Cobble this question. He assured me that only conventional seeds that

are not genetically altered by man, were planted to feed the birds. I was happy with that answer and if I could be so bold, I think Betty Fussell would be to. Enjoy the book, it's worth your time.

--Sharon Hilburn

NO LIFE FOR A LADY by Agnes Morley Cleaveland. University of Nebraska Press (1977) Paper bound, 356 pages.

Agnes Morley Cleaveland was born on a New Mexico cattle ranch in 1874. Her story is told with a vividness that makes you feel as if you were right alongside her as the Datil Mountains of New Mexico move from "wild west" to civilization. Her deep love for life on a cattle ranch in the late 19th and early 20th century shows in every chapter that she writes. As she recounts story after story in the language of her time, it is as if you were sitting around a campfire at roundup time.

What I enjoyed most about *No Life for a Lady* is Cleaveland's familiarity

with the geographic location and her descriptions of the Datil Mountains, Magdalena, the San Agustin Plains, the canyons and arroyos. I can put myself in her horse's saddle and imagine how it felt to ride miles and miles to visit neighbors, pick up supplies in Magdalena, or chase down errant cattle. I did not like to leave Agnes's life when my own modern life called me away from her story telling.

This is an easy to read biography. If this part of New Mexico is home to you-or even if it isn't-you will enjoy *No Life for a Lady* and you will find it easy to be carried back to the time before the cattle ranges were fenced and automobiles replaced horses. You might even feel some regret that Agnes's world has disappeared.

--Linda and Frank Strehle

(Editor's note: You can find all these books in the Bosque del Apache Nature Store or on the Friends website, www.friendsofthebosque.org)





PHOTO OPS

Summer is here! Usually, human visitors are at their lowest counts, but other short and long-term residents ranging from dragonflies and butterflies to hawks and ducks are at the Bosque. You can discover rare species and have fun watching your old favorites.

During this time of year, the seasonal road is open. Depending on water availability and distribution, the different refuge management units may be covered with water, green with grass and sunflowers or totally dry.

In shallow ponds, egrets and herons hunt for fish and crayfish alongside shore birds. Members of the rallidae family that includes coots, sora, Virginia rails and common gallinules (formerly called moorhens) browse muddy banks edged with tall grass.

A Virginia rail near the boardwalk



A field of sunflowers during high summer



A datura plant (aka jimsonweed) growing in the Visitor Center Cactus Garden

In the trees and brush bordering the tour loop and seasonal roads, look for some of the more recent year-round residents, like spectacular vermillion flycatchers and Carolina wrens with their unique song. Watch for Say's and black phoebes catching insects for their hatchlings and feisty kingbirds warding off ravens and small hawks that attack their nests.

Juvenile black-crowned night heron





Carolina wren seen in a wooded area on the seasonal road

Right now, the seasonal road is a treasure trove of bug-eating birds like wood peewees. Try as they might, they can't catch all the mosquitos, so protect yourself against bug bites. In the treed or grassy refuge units you may spot a rafter (flock) of wild turkeys parading in a line, while, perched on tall waving grasses, blue grosbeaks will be snacking on grass seeds.

A kingbird posing along the South Loop



Say's phoebe with breakfast for its nestlings



Many birds such as yellow breasted chats, common yellow throat warblers and spotted towhee are hard to spot but make their presence known with distinctive songs. Before you come out to the refuge, anticipate what you might see, then practice bird ID by sound, using websites that include birdsong examples such as Cornell Labs' <http://www.allaboutbirds.org> and Audubon's <http://birds.audubon.org>. If you use a smartphone, you can download some well-known apps for birders with which you can listen to a wide song variety.

Photography and birding can be a bit more challenging during this time. Many summer residents are skittish and concerned to protect their young. You will need more patience and should be prepared to suffer missed shots or passing glimpses. Even so, it's great fun when you manage to get a good look or a great photo before your subject dives into the leaves or the pond.

Best times to bird: early morning and early evening.

A note of caution: be particularly careful while driving on the refuge roads and Highway 1. Baby quail, snakes and turtles tend to freeze when they sense a car approaching.

Have photos to share or questions for us? Please contact Kumar and Ingrid at bosquebirds@gmail.com

****To see these stunning photographs in color, visit <http://friendsofthebosque.org/newsletters.html>***

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