

Forrest L. Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center June Newsletter

It's been a very wet Spring, with lots and lots of rain, but that hasn't put a damper on the fun here at the Nature Center! See what we've been up to...

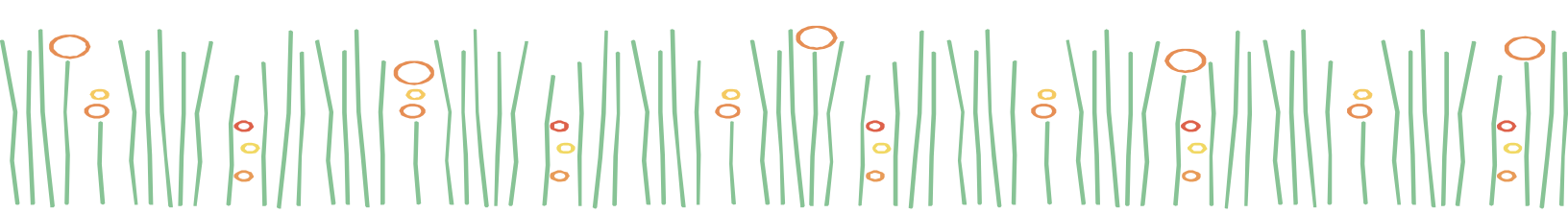
We closed out April with a very special banquet honoring our many volunteers. The nature center depends on its volunteers throughout the year, but especially during special events and for keeping up with our gardens. Everyone enjoyed a delectable meal together, after which all of our volunteers were recognized individually and they all won great door prizes. Our Youth Volunteer of the Year was, once again, Mitchell Pruitt for his outstanding dedication and hours donated, and our Volunteer of the Year was Jim Willcockson (pictured here, with Lee Elkins, Volunteer Coordinator), our trusty event photographer and devoted assistant. Thanks again to all of our volunteers for being so generous with your time!



We've had lots and lots of rainy days this month at the nature center, and Saturday, May 2 was one of them. That did not deter the enthusiastic group that came to the "Let's Get Birdy" workshop that day though! While birding in the rain is certainly no fun, we made the best of it by talking some basic bird biology, and then learning all about bird songs and getting to know a few. We headed up to the indoor wildlife viewing area to test our birding skills, and were nearly completely luckless until a couple of Blue Jays, a Downy Woodpecker, and a Carolina Chickadee braved the rain to feed at the feeders. The novice birders (which was everyone who was there) were ecstatic, and they all went away with a little more avian education than they came with.

Saturday, May 16 was an exciting day: We had our 2nd annual Spring Family Fair! More than 1800 people were here to partake in the festivities. With flowers, salamanders, and butterflies painted on their faces, and a hand-painted toy snake in their hands, kids (and parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles!) played our fishing and casting games, bounced in the inflatables, hunted ducks, pheasants, and monster bucks on the laser shot, sought the event Geocache, and ate free hot dogs, snow cones, and popcorn till there was no more. (Continued on next page...)





(cont'd) Kelly Irwin, the AGFC state herpetologist delivered a lively presentation on the reptiles of Arkansas, using live specimens to further pique the listeners' interest. Later, Keith Sutton, the famed Arkansas Naturalist and writer, disclosed some of his many secrets to catfish and crappie fishing in the Natural State. Hourly door prizes were awarded to some lucky winners, and a grand prize (lots of great camping gear!) was awarded at the end of the event. All in all, it was a beautiful day, and fun was definitely had by everyone who came!



We closed out the month with another great Saturday workshop: "Practice Makes Perfect," on May 30. It was a hot, hot day, but that didn't stop the nearly 40 people of all ages and experience levels who came to test their BB gun shooting skills. There were two ranges where shooters took aim at lots of different target types - two sizes of clay target, some fall away and some stationary, paper targets, and of course, aluminum cans. The ranges were open for two hours and were occupied by enthusiastic shooters the whole time. Shooters and educators both had so much fun that we are already looking forward to planning another round of "Practice" in the future.

COMING UP!

We hope you can come out to some of our June events, too! Here is a little preview of what we have in store!

- June 6, 1p.m.....Wild About Dad
- June 13, 9a.m.—4p.m.....Boater Education*
- June 20, 12:30p.m.....Spinners!*
- June 20, 2:00p.m.....Tales and Trails
- June 27, 11:00a.m.....Animal Track Activity
- Daily, 3:30p.m.....Feeding Frenzy
- Saturdays, 10a.m.....Creature Feature

A * beside a program name indicates that pre-registration is required. Visit our website at www.crowleysridge.org or call us at 870-933-6787 for more info!

