



# 2015 Capstone Project

by Ann Thorne

The 2015 Capstone project was to plant cord grass at Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge. Nine people were able to go up to Squaw Creek on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> in addition to the following Monday and Tuesday. In a few weeks, most of the class will go up to check on the project and see how it is thriving.

Plants were put into the ground every 12 feet, with rows 12 feet

apart. All nine people were involved in planting, shoveling, and carrying five-gallon buckets, six cord plants to a bucket. The work was intense enough that the work stopped Saturday at noon because there was a heat advisory.

Mort Nelson thought it was very well organized. He said, "It is a unique opportunity to be at Squaw Creek and do something so valuable."

Nelson was there all three days.

Sue Knight also attended the planting all three days. Knight said, "I was amazed we planted so much as we

did on the first day." She worked with Kim LaFolette and Mort Nelson. LaFolette dug the holes, Knight put in plants and covered them up, and Nelson toted the five-gallon buckets.

Also attending on the first day was  
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photo by Lindsey Landowski

The Saturday team planting cord grass in the open field.

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Photo by Mort Nelson

This picture shows how big the field was for planting cord grass. In the background are Sue Knight and Kim LaFollette.

worked hard, as did everyone else.

Brigette and Micheal Sander also both helped the first day. "We braved the heat, bugs and mud to plant the cord grass," said

cord grass. Breaking the routine, she found a baby garter snake. "With a lot of teamwork and lots of water to keep us hydrated, we managed to get 177 cord grass plants planted," said Brigette Sander.

On Monday, a crew of six from The Squaw Creek Youth Conservation Corps came to plant. They are from the local high school. They worked all day and planted about 1,000 pots of cord grass.

Organization of this intense effort was coordinated by Linsey Landowski, the newly appointed chief of Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge.

Brent Galliard. He brought a spade and dug holes. He reports that he

Brigette. Micheal dug holes while Bridgette filled in the hole with

# Fawn Survey

by MaryJo Osterberg

On a hot, muggy early June morning Karen Hayes and I journeyed to a large acreage in NW Missouri to participate in a fawn survey. Because of flooding from the 101 River we were forced to backtrack on our route but still managed to make it to the site on time. We were met there by Dr. Jon McRoberts and his three research technicians. Dr. McRoberts, postdoctoral fellow with the University of Missouri, School of Natural Resources, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences has been awarded a five year grant to study the survival rates of newborn fawns in Missouri.

He explained the process. Once rutting season is over sometime in winter deer are humanely captured with nets or clover traps. A clover trap is a wire box trap that holds the deer securely so they cannot injure themselves. The traps are checked daily. Captured female deer (doe) are sedated and technicians insert a vaginal tracking (VID). When a doe gives birth

the device is then pushed out and with the change in temperature a signal is generated to the field staff. The search for the newborn fawn begins.

On the morning we arrived the staff was picking up birth signals. We started out. The six of us made our way to the signal location and walking approxi-



photo by MaryJo Osterberg

Holding a baby fawn, only a few hours old, with a eye cover and a soft cushion to close its mouth.

mately 3 feet apart in a line started our search. The newborn fawns are hidden extremely well by the mother. After walking through hip high grass and heavy clover that grabbed at our boots with every step Karen finally spotted a fawn. The two research techs had walked right past her. She was nestled in the grass barely visible!

The research staff quickly netted her and placed a tiny, soft muzzle around her mouth but behind her nose so she still breath easily but could not open her mouth to bleat and call out for her mother. They took her measurements and carefully examined her for any signs of injury or malformation. She was perfect, weighed 3.8 pounds and was estimated to be less than 24 hours old. When the examination was over they fitted her with a small tracking collar. We were assured that the collar would expand as the fawn grew and after 6 months would disintegrate and fall off. During that 6 month period the fawn would be tracked daily. If the signal slowed down or stopped that could indicate the fawn was not moving and staff would make their way to the fawn to check on its status. Dr. McRoberts gave us time to get some pictures and because it was getting hot one of the staff gently picked up our little fawn and moved her to a shady spot in nearby woods. He removed the muzzle so she could call out to her mother. She did so immediately and loudly so we rushed off. We didn't want to scare the mother away. The fawn would be monitored several times that day to make certain she was OK and mom had found her and moved her to a new hiding location. We moved on to another potential birth site.

This time we were not so lucky. Although we located a fresh birth site in a heavily wooded area and searched for several hours in those woods, brush, wet marsh and tall grass we finally called it day. But we were assured that

the day was considered a success thanks to Karen's good eye. "Any day we manage to find a newborn is a good day. Many days we come back empty handed." stated Dr. McRoberts. So hungry, hot, sweaty and tired we made it back to the field house, said our good-byes, promised to come back next

said it all better than I could. "I am so thankful for the amazing opportunity of helping locate a newborn fawn. She was so incredibly little. The whole process of wading through the grass, learning how they keep track of the does, and searching for a newborn fawn, was very enjoyable. I was so



Karen Hays hold the baby fawn while MaryJo Ostenberg smiles and looks on.

year and left for home. It was a wonderful day, another new experience. Karen and I both are so happy and feel privileged to call ourselves a Missouri Master Naturalist and member of our Loess Hills chapter. Karen

impressed with the dedication of the research staff. They most willingly shared their knowledge with us. I had no idea of the meticulous planning entailed in carrying out this project. The entire day was a learning experience."

# Experience the Magnificent Ozarks in Springfield

by Ann Thorne

The Springfield Master Naturalists Advanced Training, Experience the Ozarks, was held May 1 – 3. Eleven Loess Hills Master Naturalists attended.

Sessions started on Friday for the pre-conference sessions. Bonnie

endangered species. He also noted coreopsis and shooting stars. Nelson enjoyed the hike.

Lynn Tushaus and Ann Thorne went to Rocky Barrens Glade. The leaders were Kevin Hedgpeth, a wildlife management biologist, and

trees. Bramlage thought it was very informative.

On Saturday morning, Dan McCann went to the session Archeology and Primitive Tools. McCann learned about what tools Native Americans used—like a blow dart tool used for small game. He was also introduced to the different types of tools used in gardens and cutting tools. In the afternoon session, McCann went to Flintknapping, and learned to make a spear or arrowhead by chipping away with high silica stones. Bryan Simmons, who gave the demonstration, did an excellent job, said McCann.

Many of the Loess Hills chapter members, including Charles Bramlage, Laura Kahl, Lynn Tushaus, Ann Thorne, Corrina Gray and Terry Gray, went on Hiking the Ozarks. Everyone liked the walk. There were sinkholes, woods, and lots of wildflowers. At the end of the hike, the group took a tour of the building where the Springfield Master Naturalists meet. The building is ecologically sound, and a beautiful building as well.



photo by Dan McCann

From left to right: Charles Bramlage, Lynn Tushaus, Ann Thorne, Bonnie Goldberg, Laura Lee Shaffler, Laura Kahl, Mort Nelson, Karen Hays, Dan McCann. Not pictured: Corrina Gray and Terry Gray.

Goldberg took the Stream Ecology Float. The friend that shared her canoe was Osage Trails chapter member Van Wiskur. She said it was a very gentle ride. They stopped for lunch on a gravel bar and talked about the history of the James River and the recent success at cleaning up the stream. “The float trip was great,” said Goldberg. “I hadn’t been in a canoe in over 20 years.”

Mort Nelson went to the Linden Prairie and walked there. The person leading it, Jeff Cantrell, educator and naturalist, the Department of Conservation, was “truly an expert,” said Nelson. He pointed out

Rhonda Rimer, a naturalist history biologist, both with the Department of Conservation. Both of the women enjoyed the hike, especially looking for scorpions under rocks, wildflowers (including endangered species such as bladder pods) and the snake that that Hedgpeth showed.

Practicing Permaculture was the session Charles Bramlage decided to attend. The session was about sustainable farming on 20 acres of land. Richard Herman, owner of the farm also showed how to graft fruit



photo by Ann Thorne

Kevin Hedgpeth holds a snake typical to the area.

Karen Hayes and Dan McCann went to the Sunday session, American Burying Beetles, led by Dr. Amy Smith. The beetle, once found in 35 states, is now a federally endangered species. Hays said that the beetle makes a plate-size hole in which it buries fly larvae with the young mites so that they can eat the fly larvae. McCann and Hayes were amazed at the depth of the information the woman presented.

Many Loess Hills members went to Bird Banding, taught by Dr. Janice Greene, Biology Professor, Missouri State University. Loess Hills members included Laura Kahl, Ann Thorne, Lynn Tushaus, Corrina Gray and Terry Gray. The professor put up a mist net about 20 feet from where everyone was standing, and the first bird she caught was a Swainson's thrush.



photo by Ann Thorne

Laura Kahl holds the Swainson's thrush. She could hear his heart hammering.

She asked if anyone wanted to hold it, and Kahl raised her hand. She said, "I got to hold the tiny bird in my hand. I could feel his little heart hammering in his chest. He was people-watching while we were bird-watching." There was a hawk nest overhead up above and Corrina and Terry Gray focused on that, but they did see Kahl holding the Swainson's thrush. Later, the professor caught a Pronotary warbler, noted for its yellow head and grey wings.

"The training conferences are the best—I love them," said Corrina Gray. "They are awesome!"

# Loess Hills Helps Dunn Ranch for Prairie Day

Janet Mason



photo by Michael Sander

Saturday, June 27, was the first Annual Prairie Days at Dunn Ranch, which supports The Nature Conservancy at Dunn Ranch. Activities for the day included a tour

of the bison at the ranch, multiple prairie-related nature stations staffed by biologists near the Loess Hills concession stand, and great prairie vistas to the east, south, and west.

Brent Galliard was set up to point out what kind of birds were on the prairie. For the viewers, he pointed out a variety of birds, including American kestrel, ring-necked pheasant, lark sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, Henslow sparrow, and bobolink, among others.

The bison tour was about an hour, with participants seated on a lowboy trailer behind a tractor. It included observing a bison herd grazing and ruminating in the corner of a prairie pasture with expert commentary by the farmer-driver and by the biologist. About 150 people attended the event.

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# Loess Hills Members Help Wings Over Weston

by Ann Thorne

**W**ings Over Weston took place May 9<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m. Due to heavy rains several days before the festival, the site was moved from a park to the Bee Creek Tobacco Barn a quarter mile south of the main park entrance. More than 80 people volunteered this year from several organizations, including Osage Trails and Loess Hills Chapters of Missouri Master Naturalists, Burroughs Audubon, The Wildlife Society of Missouri Western, and Platte County Parks, the Conservation Department and the Missouri State Parks.

Each person from Loess Hills had a different activity to participate in. Bob Spurgat helped build birdhouses. “The children enjoyed

in screws and also pound nails. The people at the birdhouse station had a steady line of children who wanted to make birdhouses.

of monarch butterflies, which attracted a good deal of attention from people looking at the monarchs and learning what nectar they like.

The total number of people who came for the festival was 931. On Friday, Wings Over Weston had 172 4th graders from 5 different schools. Adults and children on Saturday totaled 658.



photo by Ann Thorne

Bonnie Goldberg, dressed as Mother Earth, embraces Nancy Nielan, who belongs to Osage Trails Master Naturalists.



photo by Ann Thorne

Bob Spurgat helps a small girl make a birdhouse.

making the birdhouses. It was something they could take home,” said Spurgat. He said they had to learn new skills. They had to turn

Charles Bramlage helped children build a hummingbird feeders. He said the children really enjoyed it. Lynn Tushaus also worked with children to make hummingbird feeders.

In the afternoon Bramlage also worked in the plant sale along with Ann Thorne and several other people.

Bonnie Goldberg, dressed like Mother Earth, oversaw the Bird Olympics and the story tents. In Bird Olympics, children and their families could compare their athletic abilities with those of birds.

Osage Trails had an exhibit



photo by Ann Thorne

Pam Weidman tends the booth on monarchs in Missouri.