



Spring 2017

Volume 31, Issue 2

# Spring Has Arrived! Or Has It?

By Ashleigh Long, Missouri Master Naturalist and Jacob Coffelt, Historical Interpreter, Missouri

## Inside This Issue

Spring Has Arrived! Or Has It?	1
Get Out of Your Chrysalis	2
Inspiration Springs Forth in Alaska	2
Director's Corner	3
Upcoming Certification	3
Spring is in Bloom in Houston	4
Paddlesports for All	5
Overcoming the Trials of a Harsh Winter	6
<i>The Secret Life of Bats</i>	6
Arkansas Report	7
Kansas Report	8
Louisiana Report	8
Oklahoma Report	9
Missouri Report	10
Texas Report	12
Bonus Pages	
Region 6 Workshop Photos	14
2016 Region 6 Awards	15

The theme of this issue is **Spring In Bloom.**

Have an idea for a theme for a future issue? We'd love to hear it! Send your ideas to [nai6.visions@gmail.com](mailto:nai6.visions@gmail.com)

As the calendar stated, spring has sprung on March 20th. The daffodils are blooming, the red buds are turning brilliant shades of purple, and the opening day of trout season has passed. Punxsutawney Phil told us on February 2nd, there were six more weeks of winter, though I think there is always another six weeks of winter each year. For Missouri, winter is still dragging on while spring is trying to bloom.

Missouri has had some very warm, spring days! Perfect days to plant gardens, clean out the barn, and wash the cars in the driveway. The very next day, it is so cold it is snowing! I don't know about any of you but winter had three months to show and never did. It had its chance and I am ready for barefoot walks through the field. Ready for gardens and honeysuckle (the non-invasive kind!) and fishing! Striped bass season is upon us and the spoonbill are almost ready too! Turkey season is also coming up,



even though I haven't seen any in my backyard yet. One thing not in short supply is the birds!

Songbirds have moved in, though I don't think they ever left to migrate. The birdbath is filled daily, except on the days it was frozen. I invested in a bird bath warming plate this year. It plugs into an extension cord and keeps the water warm enough from freezing but cool enough for the birds to bathe and drink. It is so exciting seeing all the birds enjoying it! I am impressed to see them all in the backyard, and to hear them as well.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Spring has arrived, *from Page 1*

I have noticed there is a faint sound of a Red-Eyed Vireo somewhere in the backyard but I have not spotted him yet. I am waiting patiently by



I found this chrysalis in the garden this spring. It's a good reminder to get out and enjoy all this season has to offer!

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## *Spring is here!*

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## Inspiration Springs Forth in Alaska

by Delia Lister, Kansas

What happens when you take a bunch of Kansas students to Alaska? Pure magic. As an instructor at Pittsburg State University, very little in my professional career has brought more fulfillment than to witness college students, some of whom have never seen the ocean, start to bloom with enthusiasm for biology AND interpretation!

John Muir said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." There is perhaps

the window with my Bushnells for his arrival.

That being said, I also have a cup of hot cocoa just in case old man winter comes calling again; but do so hope that the warm, pleasant

## Get Out of Your Chrysalis

By April Anderson, Missouri

**W**ith a name like April, I'm partial to spring's warm sun, gentle showers, lengthening days and emerging signs of life. Hiking in the woods, I'm excited by all of the buds swelling with life that has patiently waited for winter to depart.

Bright orange Ozark witch hazel prepares to set seed as spring beauties blanket the hills beneath stately oaks and hopeful saplings. Red-winged blackbirds return to local ponds, passing plump robins and busy bluebirds that have lingered all winter.

A morning cloak butterfly frolics

days and cool evenings are here to stay. There are many trails to be walked and many campfires to sit around with family and friends enjoying the spring that has decided to join us.

in the dappled woods, as a group of gnats congregate in another beam of sunlight. Warm air mingles with cool soil creating a misty billow of earthy perfume. Spring is here. In spite of protests from one last snowflake, a great blue heron lands beside the river. Hard white ice floes give way to muddy, tree-strewn waters, as the Mississippi continues its journey into a season that celebrates the beauty of renewal.

Answer the call to spend time truly enjoying spring this year and let it transform your life. – April Anderson, naturalist/writer (team.nature.ed@gmail.com)

compete with."

These students will likely never forget what Devil's Club looks like in the field, and why they should avoid it. They will never forget the taste of handpicked blueberries along the trail or the low thunderous sound of the Margerie Glacier calving into the water.

See Alaska, page 5



# Director's Corner

By Jay Schneider, Arkansas

## NAI Region Six Directors Report

Spring 2017

### COMBINED CIG & CIH Train-the-Trainers Course

**WHEN:**

September 24-30th

(FULL COURSE – CIG and CIH  
Train the Trainer)

September 24-28

(CIG Train the Trainer only)

September 29-30

(CIH Train the Trainer only)

**WHERE:**

Powder Valley Nature Center  
11715 Cragwold Road,  
Kirkwood, MO 63122

**Instructors:**

Andre Copeland and Emily Jacobs

Here is your chance to not only become a trainer for the Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG), but also for the Certified Interpretive Host (CIH) – yes BOTH! For the first time ever you can become a trainer for both certifications in one week and in one location. More information and registration is now posted on the NAI web link:

September St Louis CIG & CIH  
Trainer

Make your reservations now!

[https://www.interpnet.com/nai/nai/\\_events/Event\\_Display.aspx?EventKey=CIT092417B](https://www.interpnet.com/nai/nai/_events/Event_Display.aspx?EventKey=CIT092417B)

Spring is here, schools are visiting and summer is not far behind. Enjoy the seasons and take time to enjoy your resource and reinvest in yourself.

The Regional Workshop in Rogers in February was a wonderful gathering of Region Sixers. Old friends and co-workers, new friends, new students and old professors made this gathering another one for the history books. The weather held and a good time was had by all. Our workshop had 125 participants and we rose over \$5000 for scholarships and professional development at the auction.

In new business, the board brought to the membership a correction needed to be in compliance with the national by-laws. We are required to hold elections for our board officers for three years terms with the possibility of two terms in a row. We have been holding elections for two year terms for a number of years. The membership approved extending the current elected officers to three year terms in order to comply with these bylaws. Our region continues to grow with 770 members at the time of this report.

## Upcoming Certification in Region Six:

### Certified Interpretive Guide Courses

April 27 - May 2, 2017, Odem, TX, Nueces Delta Preserve

May 2-5, 2017, Houston, TX, The Houston Zoo

May 9-12, 2017 | Houston, TX, Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary

May 15-19, 2017 | St. Louis, MO, Saint Louis Zoo

June 6-9, 2017 | West Columbia, TX, Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site

June 13-16, 2017 | Houston, TX, The Health Museum of Houston

June 16-19, 2017 | Columbus, AR, Rick Evans Grandview Prairie Conservation Education Center

July 25-28, 2017 | West Columbia, TX, Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site

July 25-28, 2017 | Odem, TX, Nueces Delta Preserve

November 27-30, 2017 | Tulsa, OK, Oxley Nature Center

# Spring is in Bloom in Houston

By Amber Pepper, CIG, CIT  
HISD Science Teacher and Interpretive Trainer



In 2015, the Houston Independent School District began sponsoring Certified Interpretive Guide courses at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Since then, 20 docents and teachers working with Houston ISD 4th grade field trip students have taken the course. As a result, field trip tours are soaring to new heights and students are being engaged in new and exciting ways! HISD docent and participant John Granahan said, “As a former engineer, I tend to get off into the ‘swamp’ of details and information and have a tendency to lose my audience about halfway through the tour. I feel that after the CIG course, I now have the tools to make my tours more engaging and interesting. We did game-playing and role-playing exercises that engaged us through movement, speech, and our senses (tactile, visual, audible), which reinforced our learning processes...and of no small value, we all got to bond with other docents, whom we may have known only very impersonally before.”

When asked about the CIG course, docent Donna VanderWeide said, “It was an exciting, humbling and hugely beneficial week. We learned how to create a tighter, more informative presentation for our museum guests.

The end result was a more informed group of docents that are ready to take on the biggest challenge of any tour group!!” HISD docent, Elissa Forand, had this to say: “...my tendency was to enthusiastically “fact bomb” whomever was interested enough to tune in. The interpretive guide training showed me new (and much improved!) techniques to provide tours that are a much more engaging experience for the guests. (If you’re wondering, they’re more engaging to DO as a docent, too!) Everything about the course was worth it, and I’d highly recommend taking it if it’s offered again...I loved it!” As I science teacher and interpreter, I am thrilled to see the interest in interpretation growing and blooming. The more techniques we can use to engage our students, the

more information they will retain, and the more likely they will stay interested in science! We are creating life-long learners, one tour at a time!

If you are interested in attending a Certified Interpretive Guide course, there are several courses being offered in the Houston area this Spring and Summer. To register, please visit [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com).

May 2-5, 2017

Hosted by the Houston Zoo

May 9-12, 2017

Hosted by the Houston Audubon Society

June 6-9, 2017



Hosted by Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site

June 13-16, 2017

Hosted by The Health Museum of Houston

July 25-28, 2017

Hosted by Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site

# Paddlesports for All

By Dave Lindo,

Owner, OKC Kayak and Tulsa Kayak Paddlesport Superstores, Oklahoma

**W**ell, if five years ago, you or I went to the Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge on most any summer day, you would see a grand total of zero paddlers. Now on a given weekend this urban river sees over one thousand paddlers in the form of fishing kayakers, recreational paddlers, and a bunch of stand up paddle boarders. Matter of fact, kayaking and paddle boarding are the two fastest-growing recreational activities in the entire country.

In a state known for the Dust Bowl, it often surprises folks that there is such a large paddling contingent, but with the advances in kayak stability and a whole heck of a lot of extra goodies and creature comforts that now come with kayaks, folks can stand up, cast a rod and reel, take a dog or two aboard and more. This passive and quiet form of recreation, which really is a unique and healthy way to get close to

nature, is finding appeal with folks of all ages, shapes, and sizes.

Many folks with disabilities, whom would otherwise be excluded from participating are some of the biggest advocates for the sport. We take quadriplegics in tandem kayaks; paraplegics, and other amputees can typically easily paddle a boat solo. There are many nonprofits geared towards active and veteran service members who are struggling with physical or silent disabilities (PTSD, MST, and more) that find a trip to the local river to be quite therapeutic.

All this is not lost on the recreational advocates at the state, local, and federal level. The City of Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and several federal level programs now are going the extra mile to make sure that launching a paddlecraft in Oklahoma is a safe, accessible, and

easy process for all. Several new kayak launch ramp designs make it so the craft is cradled and stabilized from the shoreline until it is completely afloat. This eradicates one of the riskiest parts of paddling, the shore launch and landing. Previously, if a person was to tip over, this was when it would happen.

A recent meeting took place with the manufacturer of the specialized docks and the state and city officials, and it was determined that Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge would be the first recipient of the cool new launch ramps. If all goes well, a roll out at other popular paddling venues around the state is planned.

Next time you are at the lake and river, take a closer look. The person paddling past you might be missing legs, or paralyzed from the waist down.

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## Alaska from page 2

They were able to see how, thanks to Mr. Muir, the modern American conservation movement really began in the glaciers of this park.

In the classroom, students learn terms and concepts like succession and climate change. However, by traveling up Glacier Bay they were

able to observe successional changes from the tiniest beach strawberries to the mighty spruce-hemlock forest and everything in between. They were able to see direct evidence for climate change from one of the wildest places on the planet. They were able to explore the interface and interdependency between both marine and terrestrial ecosystem.

One of the most memorable experiences was attending an evening interpretive talk with ranger Mary

Lou. Upon returning, student Tayler Frazier said "I have witnessed first-hand what my degree can do! I can finally explain to my family what I want to do with my degree!" This semester both Tayler and Katie are on track to earn their CIG in my Natural History Interpretation Class.

Our next trip to Alaska is scheduled for July 2018. I can't wait to watch more landlocked Pitt Kansas students spring to life!

# Overcoming the Trials of a Harsh Winter

By Emily Burke, Missouri

For those of us living in the Northern hemisphere – especially those of us in the northern half of the contiguous United States – spring is not only a time for new life, but a time for renewal after the harsh cold of winter. Winter tests the fortitude of many a young plant, and the return of longer days, along with their warmth and sunlight, brings forth the results of the trial.

Did the plant survive the more banal hazards of winter – the frigid temperatures, and the hungry foraging of the local critters? Perhaps this plant was lucky, and, with a healthy root system, and plenty of sustenance stored in a taproot or rhizome from the year before, it bursts forth new stems and leaves from the warming soil in a fashion that seems almost joyous. Maybe some random woodchuck raised the stakes by taking a testing bite of a tempting root.

For me, the harsh trial of winter started last July, and the random woodchuck was a fire.

It was mid-morning when I received a text from a coworker accompanied by a shocking image

– our office and shop at Thousand Hills State Park had burned to the ground. The image my phone was displaying showed the anchor of my home away from home engulfed in a blaze.

“Was anyone hurt???” I replied, hoping that the excessive punctuation would convey the urgent concern I couldn’t voice.

Thankfully, the answer was no.

Assured that my coworkers were safe, I was free to let my thoughts wander to what had, indeed, been lost.

First, my mind went to Mortimer, an American toad I had caught as an educational animal three years previous, who never kicked and squirmed when I handled her at programs, opting to just fire the Super Soaker when she’d had enough. Then there was all of the equipment – the projector, laptop, the park’s DSLR camera, which was my near constant companion at work. There was a small library’s worth of books on interpretation, and nature study, and storytelling for children. There were the binoculars, butterfly nets, magnifying

glasses, skulls, pelts, insect collections, and owl pellets. There was a huge steel cabinet full of crafting supplies which, among other things, contained an enormous plastic jug filled with mostly broken crayons, something which continued to emit a steady stream of smoke long after the fire itself had been doused. There were seven years of program comment cards and thank you letters from visitors.

The park itself remained.

I remained.

I know more than one fellow interpreter who has been faced with a random woodchuck of their own, and, while I always admired their fortitude, I never gave thought such an upheaval befalling me.

Having survived through the winter, I now understand why so many of us have managed to weather everything from day-to-day uncertainty to personal crises. The passion for our resources, the supportive connections with one another, the drive to, in some small way, make the world a better place.

We can bloom, again.

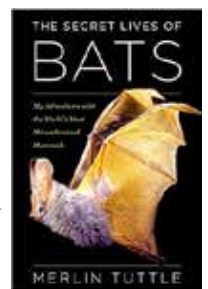
## ***Must Read 2017: The Secret Lives of Bats*** by Jerrel Geisler, Texas

Recently, as part of my volunteer work as a Texas Master Naturalist, I began volunteering with the Houston Bat Team. The Houston Bat Team gives interpretative talks at the Waugh Street Bridge bat emergence on weekends in Houston.

One day I was in Half Price Books and came across a book about bats. At first I thought “I can always use another

resource book”, so I grabbed it and headed to the register, without even looking at it. (I was in a hurry). After I got home, I started reading it and it ended up to be more than just a resource. It was *The Secret Lives of Bats* by Merlin Tuttle. Tuttle is the founder of BCI (Bat Conservation International). It is a wonderful survey of his travels across the world, how he

founded BCI and several great stories about bats in Texas and other Region 6 states. If you ever wanted to know more about bats and BCI, then it is the book for you.





# Arkansas state report

Compiled by Don Simons

Our 2017 Region 6 workshop, held in Rogers, Arkansas, was a big success. I don't have the final details but I cute little bird tells me it made a profit. During the Awards Banquet, eight awards went to Arkansas interpreters. Congrats to all!

**Lauren Marshall** reports that nine educators from the **Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC)** went on a bear data collection trip (bear den diving) which will add relevant information to their Black Bear Program. These trips are special opportunities to hug a cub.



Quail restoration is a top priority right now and we are trying to let people know to be on the lookout for Northern Bobwhite Quail in Arkansas. National Pollinator Week is June 19-25th and the **Central Arkansas Nature Center** plans a full week of pollinator programs. We encourage everyone to give your own pollinator programs and bring awareness to more than just butterflies and bees. Great things continue to happen at our four education centers and nature centers and we look forward to summer break.

**Kelly Farrell**, Chief of Interpretation for Arkansas State Parks, reports: exhibit fabrication has begun for Hampson Archeological Museum State Park and the new visitor center at Jacksonport State Park. Additionally, twenty-two seasonal interpreters were hired for **Arkansas State Parks** this year.

Arkansas State Park's **Natural Resource Inventory Database (NRID)** will soon receive its 100,000th entry.

Leadership Committee is in final development of application criteria for college scholarships and internships funded by the state park specialty license plate fund. This past year we partnered with the Arkansas Humanities Council to administer school field trip grants from that same fund. Fifteen have been granted so far to schools all over Arkansas, helping cover bus and sub teacher costs.

**Mount Magazine State Park** will host the Arkansas Audubon Society Spring Convention and new special event called Hummingbird Special during the International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) in May. Tana Beasley from the AGFC will band hummingbirds, **Lori Spencer** will speak about pollinators, and **Still on the Hill** will be live in concert.

# Kansas state report

Compiled by Pat Silovsky



Congratulations to **Breanna Sayers**, the Americorps member stationed at the Great Plains Nature Center, who was given the award for **Best O.K. Kids Event of 2016** by Kansas Wildscape at the annual conference of the Kansas Recreation & Parks Association on March 2. She'll be wrangling this year's GPNC O.K. Kids event also, which will be Saturday, June 3 ,so that is bound to be another great day! Also at the KRPA conference, Jim Mason received the **2016 Branch Award for Outstanding Park Professional**.

The GPNC has a new pocket guide on **Common Kansas Spiders**, authored by the Kansas spider guru Hank Guarisco. The Butterflies, Shorebirds and Waterbirds pocket guides have been reprinted, so all of the 13 titles are available once again. The GPNC Pocket Guides may be picked up for free at the GPNC or can be mailed out for \$3 per copy. Each GPNC Pocket Guide is also available as a PDF download from [gpnc.org](http://gpnc.org)

The GPNC is saying goodbye to **Christy Hanne**, who has been a stalwart member of their Owls Nest Gift Shop staff for many years now. She is joining the ranks of the unemployed-by-choice and we wish her and Bob lots of fun in their new untethered status! **Cassie Standley** is taking Christy's place as Gift Shop Manager, adding this additional responsibility to her existing work as Volunteer Coordinator. Congratulations Cassie!



# Louisiana state report

Compiled by Rusty Scarborough

Sorry no report  
this month!





# Oklahoma state report



Compiled by Donna Horton

One year ago, a tornado tore through north Tulsa and across Oxley Nature Center on March 30, 2016. No people were killed, but the tree holding a Bald Eagle nest in Oxley Nature Center's North Woods came down, along with hundreds of other trees in the mature flood-plain forest. No one knows what happened to the unfledged eaglets; it is likely that they died. On the latest Christmas Bird Count in December, observers spotted a new eagle nest, several hundred feet from where the old nest tree had stood. This spring, while rebuilding efforts continue across the damaged business areas and neighborhoods of Tulsa's north side, a pair of Bald Eagles is raising a new family of eaglets in Oxley's North Woods.

Congratulations to Amy Morris of Oxley Nature Center in Tulsa. Amy was the Oklahoma high scorer of the "Brian Barnette All-American Interpreters' Quiz", conducted at the NAI Region VI Workshop in Rogers, AR. We are proud of you, Amy!

Which is more interesting to people picking up brochures from an information rack: cattle drives or road trips? This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Chisholm Trail. At the close of the American Civil War, Texas cowboys rounded up huge herds of longhorn cattle and walked them north to railroad loading pens in western Kansas, for eventual shipment to eastern markets. One of the most famous cattle drive trails was the Chisholm Trail. To best publicize the anniversary's celebration events at historical museums and visitor centers, the Oklahoma Historical Society created a "rack card" for statewide distribution. To everyone's great surprise and glee, it has proven to be more popular than the similar promotional literature for Oklahoma's Route 66 travelway. Wow!

It looks like there may be hope for Lake Texoma State Lodge, sold off by the state of Oklahoma to a private developer more than 10 years ago. The developer razed the state resort lodge and park cabins but failed to make good on promises to rebuild. In October, the Chickasaw Nation finalized some of the paperwork necessary for them to build a three-story resort hotel and casino at the site of the former state lodge. Future development may include lake front cottages.

Neil Garrison has been retired for nigh on eight years. Lest you think that he has kicked back and is living a life of leisure, think again! For thirty years, his employer was the City of Oklahoma City. Since retirement, Neil has been attending bimonthly meetings of the "Retired Oklahoma City Employees Association." Neil was particularly looking forward to the meeting in December of '16, because that festive event always includes a catered holiday meal, which is always an elaborate undertaking that is sure to please the old taste buds. To Neil's shock, however, the Association president approached him prior to that event and asked him to be the entertainment at the December gathering. Now, as many of you already know, Neil can't sing, and he sure as heck can't dance, and his skills with any sort of musical instrument is darn near non-existent. Neil asked for clarification, and the club president explained that she had heard that he was a good story-teller. She asked him to give a short talk to the assembled crowd preceding the holiday meal. Neil accepted the challenge. The topic of his speech was a humorous recounting of all of his volunteer activities/adventures since he retired. Fortunately, Neil reports that the crowd laughed at all of the right intervals and seemed to enjoy what he had to say.

The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History in Norman, Oklahoma hosted a full week of educational activities for the kids during the spring break recess of the public school system. Each day of the week was dedicated to a particular theme. The topic for the activities on Friday, March 17th, was a celebration of the rich cultural history of our state. Neil Garrison

# Missouri state report

Compiled by Michelle Soenksen



Chris Pistole from the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center reports that thanks to generous grants they received, a new feature is being installed at the Audubon Center. It is an outdoor natural play area called The Eagle's Nest Nature Landing. It will have natural elements to play on, including a life-size eagle nest including sticks to add to the nest, a bird wingspan display to measure their own "wingspan", a "woodchuck burrow" to climb through, a hollow tree playhouse, a bamboo tipi/fort to build and play in, a wooden puppet theater/performance stage, and some music instruments to play including an akimbira and thunder drums. The open house will be on Earth Day, Apr. 22nd, after a public workshop by MDC on naturescaping in the morning.

The Audubon Center will be promoting the new Audubon initiative, Plants for Birds, at the Webb City Farmer's Market on May 20th. This is an incredible market that attracts many shoppers. It has previously won an award for best farmer's market in Missouri! They'll work with some of the growers to focus on the importance of pollinators in our world and give away some milkweed seedlings.

Donna Whitehead, Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center Director, will be retiring in late July. The position has already been advertised through National Audubon's web site and the plan is to have the new director hired and able to work with Donna before taking the reins for at least a month before her retirement.

Dana Hoisington reports that Prairie State Park has begun monthly preschool programs at the Barton County Library-Liberal Branch. Rebecca Knox has taken it upon herself to reach out to these little ones and get them inspired about nature. The program is offered in the morning and afternoon, so that if moms have a commitment for half the day they can still attend. As we learned at the Region VI conference in Rogers, Arkansas from Stacy Gray and Hollie Berdeja, moms are eager for programs that they can do with their little tykes. Especially hands on activities. One that was especially popular was on owls. They learned about Missouri's owls, dissected owl pellets, and even went on a virtual owl prowl in the library! Pictures of owls were placed strategically around the library and they had to find them. Calls were used to help them locate the owls.

John Miller (Branson) reports that the February 25th Vulture Venture was a huge success. The weather and the nearly 300 vultures did not disappoint the visitors. The star of the show was Socrates, an adult Turkey Vulture from the WOW Museum in Springfield. The next big event for Shepherd of the Hills is Family Fishing Fair on June 10th.



John also reports that a new CIG class was conducted February 13-17th at the WOLF School in Springfield this past February. Co-presented by Dave Catlin and John Miller, 5 new members and CIGs were added to our NAI ranks. Pictured from left to right: John Miller, Paul O'Donnell (white shirt), Dave Catlin, Ryan Hawkins (on rock), Sam Stewart, Jessica Gillespie (on rock), Misty Mitchell, Sara Anderson. Congratulations to these new CIG graduates.

# Missouri state report continued

Joanie Straub (Jefferson City) reports that Kathy Cavender received the 2016 OUTREACH AND EDUCATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE at the tri-annual O&E Division Conference on March 22nd in Branson MO.

Kathy Cavender is the Nature Center Manager at the Runge Nature Center and has been with the MO Department of Conservation for over 27 years.

She is just the third manager at the nature center and has helped connect over 1.2 million visitors to nature.

Her keen knowledge of natural resource interpretation is evident at the nature center programs and events, all of which has helped visitors connect to a place and foster a sense of wonder and respect for that place. Kathy consistently develops and fosters a culture of excellence and superior customer service among staff and volunteers, which has been recognized and appreciated by those within and outside of the Department.



Tamie M. Yegge reports Robyn Parker is the new assistant nature center manager at Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center beginning February 16. Robyn comes to the position with a strong knowledge base of interpretation, volunteer management, and leadership. Robyn has a BS in Education from Missouri Baptist University

and is currently working on her master's degree in public administration. She is a Certified Interpretive Guide through the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) and is seeking certification as a trainer through NAI.

Michelle Soenksen from Sam A. Baker State Park reports that the parks annual Birds over Baker Day will be held on May 27. This event celebrates birds with hikes, activities, crafts, door prizes, with the World Bird Sanctuary as the finale. Volunteers are needed to help with this event. If interested, contact Michelle at michelle.soenksen@dnr.mo.gov.

Kendra Swee reports that the Missouri State Parks held their Winter Interpreters' Workshop January 25-26, 2017 at Echo Bluff State Park. The roughly 60 attendees enjoyed two days of sessions covering intermediate interpretive techniques, natural and cultural resource stewardship, and general park and historic site topics. The group participated in an interpreters' roundtable to spur discussion and the development of ideas on a variety of significant and timely topics regarding Missouri State Parks interpretive staff members.

The Association of Missouri Interpreters will "Create Their Own Path" to Steelville, MO September 11-14, 2017 for the organization's annual conference. A variety of field trips are in the works that celebrate the natural and cultural history of this section of the Ozarks. They might even visit a river or two while staying in the "Floating Capital of Missouri" and will enjoy the ambiance of the 1920's Wildwood Springs Lodge. Visit the Association of Missouri Interpreters website at [www.mointerp.net](http://www.mointerp.net) or LIKE them on Facebook to keep up with the conference planning!

## Coming: Theme for Summer Issue of *Visions*

The summer issue of *Visions*' theme will be: **FACTS, MYTHS, and FALLACIES in Interpretation**. In a new world of "fake news" and "alternative facts", are there "facts" that people "think" are correct when visiting your sites, that you have had to "correct"?

Are there myths that still haunt your interpretive programs or presentations?

Please share stories of times you have had to overcome and/or "re-teach" the facts.

*Deadline: June 20, 2017*

# Texas state report

Compiled by Tara Humphreys



Congratulations to the **WaterWorks Education Center** in Houston, who recently installed new interpretive panels to aid visitors' experience before they even enter the building. Panels interpret City of Houston fire hydrant styles and purpose, local watershed features, rain water harvesting, Xeriscape gardening, and a large panel giving an overview of the City's Northeast Water Purification Plant. The panels were designed by **Jerrel Geisler** with inspiration from the book; Signs, Trails, and Wayside Exhibits. The fabrication was done by IZone.



Additionally, the **WaterWorks Education Center** is set to host their annual **WaterWeek Festival**. The festival is the seventh such event at the center and the 24th celebration of water, water conservation and the environment in the Houston area. It will take place April 24-28, 2017. They will entertain over 400 elementary and middle school students each of the five days. Please notify Jerrel Geisler at [jerrel.geisler@houstontx.gov](mailto:jerrel.geisler@houstontx.gov) or call 832-395-3780 for more information.



**Texas State Parks** just completed a busy spring break! Lots of people visited parks, and some sites, like **Enchanted Rock State Natural Area**, reached capacity and closed to additional visitors during several days of spring break.

Interpreters at all sites were busy delivering programs, such as hiking at **Franklin Mountains State Park** and kayaking at **Daingerfield State Park**.



# PUBLICATION INFORMATION

## DEADLINES FOR *VISIONS* ARE:

Spring: March 20 • Summer: June 20 • Fall: September 1 • Winter: December 1

### Articles submitted for publication in *Visions* should be sent to:

Katie Raney, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Bastrop, TX, 512-308-1475 ext 229, [katie.raney@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:katie.raney@tpwd.texas.gov)

### Information can also be sent to any of the Region 6 State Coordinators:

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# BONUS PAGES: NAI REGION 6 WORKSHOP, ROGERS, AR - 2017

PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY JOHN MILLER, EMILY BURKE, RUSTY SCARBOROUGH, AND OTHERS



# 2016 REGION 6 AWARDS -PRESENTED AT ROGERS, AR. WORKSHOP

2016  
**Outstanding Book Award**  
*Butterflies and Moths of Arkansas*  
 By Lori Spencer ↓



2016  
**Outstanding Written Article**  
*Awaken Your Nocturnal Nature*  
 By Megan Ayers →



2016  
**Outstanding Multimedia Award**  
*Visitor Center Exhibits at Davidsonville Historic State Park (AR)* ↓



2016  
**Outstanding Interpretive Site Publication**  
*Ernie Miller Center 30th Anniversary Coloring Book*  
 By Ernie Miller Nature Center (KS) ↑

2016 Richard Baldauf  
**Outstanding New Interpreter Award**  
*Casey Marshall* ↓

2016  
**Excellence in Interpretive Service**  
*Dr. Theresa Herrick* ↓

2016 ↑  
**Outstanding Special Event**  
*Insect-O-Rama*  
 Springfield Nature Center (MO)



2016 Outstanding Interpretive Program ↓  
*Ozark Highlands Radio*  
 Ozark Folk Center State Park (AR)



2016 →  
**Distinguished Professional Interpreter**  
*Hollie Sanders - Arkansas*



## 2016 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Abbi Atkinson - Arkansas Tech University  
 Hannah Buschert - North Carolina State University  
 Vidya Balasubramanyam - University of Missouri - Columbia

2016 ↑  
**Lifetime Achievement Fellow Award**  
*Neil Curry*