

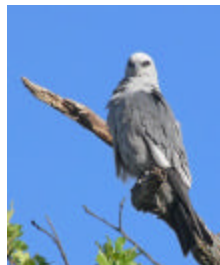
Audubon Society of Central Oklahoma

2008, Volume 1

Date: January, 2008

KITE FLIGHT NEWSLETTER

Editor: Jane Cunningham



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We will also only post items for sale relevant to the outdoors, wildlife, birding, bird feeding, conservation, and Audubon.

Jane Cunningham - President

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Letter from the President

DEAR MEMBER:

First, I must say that I truly hope all of you survived our ice storm without harm and were able to have a pleasant Christmas.

2007 has proved to be a fruitful year for our chapter. Through the trials and tribulations of starting such a large project, we now have approval from The City of Oklahoma City to start the 1st Lake Hefner habitat restoration project. We have also received 2 grants to fund the project, and have gained more active members who wish to help with the project. We feel our chapter is on a roll to becoming a successful conservational force in central Oklahoma. It has taken a great deal of work, and we are very grateful for these things. The Lake Hefner project is slated to begin early this year.

The year of 2008 will bring us many challenges. We are blessed with the opportunity to do the Lake Hefner project, and our goal is to prove that we can design, execute, and complete the best habitat restoration project ever within Oklahoma City. But, in 2008, we want to appeal to you, to get and stay involved with chapter activities.

As our habitat restoration project progresses, much of our time and focus will be spent on project operations. We will also have general meetings through May and will

continue to participate in special events such as The Edmond Arbor Day Festival, and possibly the Oklahoma Wild Life Expo along with other events. Even if you could help us setup a meeting now and then, or be in charge of programs, or refreshments, or even run for an officer's position, it would help us greatly. Our general meetings have turned out to be comfortable, interesting, and informative. We now have them at the Mayflower Congregational Church on NW 63rd near Lake Hefner.

This is the 2nd newsletter we've published since the beginning of 2007. Again, I hope that you will read it, enjoy it, and if you get an urge to "Think Globally, and Act Locally", contact one of us. National Audubon was formed to "engage millions of people of all ages, and backgrounds in conservation". DID YOU KNOW THAT?

One last tidbit....we have formed a birding group called the "SPOTM Birding club". That stands for Spur Of The Moment. We go birding with short notice. If you would like to be in that birding group, please let us know. We can phone you or e-mail you when we decide to go birding locally.

Warm Regards,

Jane Cunningham



Past Events

The Oklahoma WildLife Expo occurred in September and proved to be an interesting and somewhat challenging event to exhibit outdoors in the birding area, from daybreak to sundown. The wind was vicious.

The up side is that we gained Jim Lincoln as a new and active member, and we were able to get more of the word out about our chapter and our Lake Hefner project. In addition, we saw many birders and conservation-minded people that stopped by to chat.

We even had a visit from a local country western singer/celebrity, Blake Shelton, who since then sang at the Oklahoma Centennial celebration, and was also on a nationwide TV show.



Blake Shelton with Jane Cunningham at the Oklahoma WildLife Expo, September 2007

Editorial by Dawn Holt

It is a pleasure to find common ground in the company of those who understand birds and other wildlife are not just animated yard ornaments to be lured and enjoyed when the whim strikes and then forgotten as the next diversion pops up. Such understanding is rooted in a grasp of the number and magnitude of challenges wild creatures face in trying to adapt and endure as their world changes at escalating speed. Such understanding recognizes that careful plant selection and maintenance affects long-term specimen survival as well as continuity of food and shelter for wildlife. Such understanding acknowledges that trees and plants which provide that food are themselves more than just living decorations or convenient backdrops to be cyclically placed and replaced if they die or fail to rise to unrealistic expectations. Finally, such understanding inspires activism in two efforts: to increase general awareness about species' needs and to promote appropriate landscaping that helps remediate the seemingly relentless fragmentation of quality habitat corridors.

Conforming to the strategy to "think global, act local", both of these constructive goals can be advanced locally through the thoughtful design, implementation and stewardship of the Audubon Habitat Restoration Project now in progress at Lake Hefner as an educational venue. This collection of native plantings ultimately will raise community awareness, cultivate habitat, develop into an inviting area for birds and bird watchers, and enhance the environment aesthetically.

Many quotes convey the observation that those who plant trees are investing in a future beyond themselves. Thus it was my pleasure to be invited to invest in the future of our bird species and other wildlife by contributing to the immense amount of work already well under way on many fronts to make this arboretum a reality. We can all

participate in this undertaking as an opportunity to help maintain a hospitable environment for park visitors and for the animals, both magnificent and humble, about whom Henry Beston eloquently wrote, "They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendor and travail of the earth."

Whether in an arboretum (like the habitat restoration project), or at home, appropriate plant species selection is a balance of many factors. Sun and water requirements, soil conditions, mature size and shape, seed or fruit production, robustness and longevity, allergen or toxin potential, species mix, maintenance needs, seasonal "show", present and future uses of the space, relative positioning and design intent all affect plant choice and location in the landscape.

Effort invested in planning for these factors at the front end of a planting decision can help avoid the financial and environmental consequences of poor choices, including extra time and expense to remove or replace specimens, excessive maintenance, missed opportunities, and premature plant mortality. At best, such consequences can be discouraging to people. At worst, for wildlife they can lead to eventual degradation and instability of the environmental resources on which they depend, often exacerbated by catastrophic but recurring events like the recent ice storm.

Given the growing recognition of the global importance of sustainability and the role that appropriate plant choice and placement play at all levels of sustainable stewardship, many informative sources are available for consultation about regional plant characteristics and selection.

Step up as a volunteer in the Lake Hefner Habitat Restoration project to make our local environment better for us and for the birds.

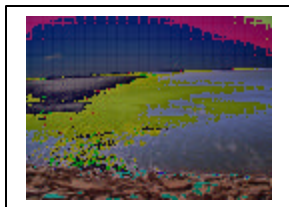
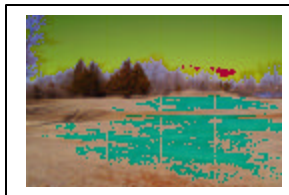
D. Holt, Masters of Landscape Architecture

Our Lake Hefner Habitat Restoration Project.....UPDATE

Our agreement with The City of Oklahoma City will be going before the council for final approval on January 8th. This agreement is a maintenance and policy agreement. Our chapter of National Audubon will be land stewards, and this agreement is a renewable agreement with The City.

We have had a few setbacks going through the process, but finally, we will be able to begin to do the work, plant native shrubs and trees, install native boulders, and take care of this land, making it more habitable for all wildlife. We will also provide educational signage to the public to identify the various native shrubs, trees, and wildlife that one could expect to see there.

The newest news is that we received support for this project from two sources. First we received \$10,000 from Chesapeake Energy, (a local community involved large Oil and Gas company). Secondly, we received a \$10,000 grant from The Oklahoma City Community Foundation. We thank both of



them for helping support this project!!!!

Recently we had our first work planning meeting for the project, and are very lucky to have gained the help of: **Mike Scharrer, Rick Wicker, Dawn Holt, and Adrienne Holmes, Jan Chapel, and Vasca Stanley.** We need people who are passionate about conservation that want to walk the walk.

Our next project planning meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 5th in the morning at 8:30 AM. Should you wish to attend, please notify Jane Cunningham by calling 405-721-5711. The meeting will be held at the Valliance Bank building at 1601 NW Expressway, in the conference room on the bottom floor.

For this next meeting, we will be working out our logistics and the first area of concentration. Johnson Bridgwater, our landscape designer, said that with weather permitting, we might be able to plant some of our larger 2" caliper trees first. We also want to get our large boulders placed. A ground breaking ceremony will be held and announced to the press when the time is right, so if you would like to attend, please let us know.

Species of the Month by Mark Sherwin - Cedar Elm, a.k.a. *Ulmus crassifolia*

Prolific, inconspicuous, and highly tolerant of the world in which it lives, the Cedar Elm has earned its rightful position in the evolutionary rollercoaster of this planet. The Cedar Elm or *Ulmus crassifolia*, can be found all over the United States, however prior to 1960 was introduced to central Texas and Oklahoma with western Mississippi genomes (Sherman-Broyles 1992). So while majorities of the Cedar Elms you see are actually in fact the same individual that makes up the Oklahoman population, small genetic variations do exist. Coincidentally, Florida hosts the least genetically diverse Cedar Elms due to its geographic isolation from the primary population. Diversification is better, especially when it comes to genetics.

Ulmus crassifolia, is a deciduous tree, meaning its leaves fall off during cooler, drier conditions in efforts to conserve energy. *Ulmus crassifolia* grows to 15-27 meters tall (50-90 feet)(Gilman,Watson 1994). Believe it or not, the tree does bear small green, inconspicuous flowers. These small reproductive structures show themselves in the fall rather than spring, and samaras (winged seeds) follow thereafter in hopes of one day germinating and reaching adulthood.

Ulmus crassifolia, is highly resilient. Perhaps the main reason for the trees success is how tough it is, it can survive drought, air pollution, and less than favorable soil nutrient levels. Once *Ulmus crassifolia* is introduced to the lake Hefner habitat restoration project not only will it be beautiful to look at but will simultaneously give nutrients back to the soil and provide much needed habitat for the indigenous wildlife of Oklahoma.

Works cited:

1. Geographic Distribution of Allozyme Variation in *Ulmus crassifolia*
S. L. Sherman-Broyles, S. B. Broyles, J. L. Hamrick
Systematic Botany, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1992), pp. 33-41
2. Environmental Horticulture Department, Fact Sheet ST-651, Florida Cooperative Extension Service,
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date:
October 1994. Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

2008 Chapter Meeting ScheduleMain Presentations:

January 8th - Duane Angles presents his slides from Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico along the Rio Grande

February 12 - Dr. Bill Radke will narrate and show us his recent trip to Antarctica

March 11 - Dr. Chris Butler will show slides and describe his research on Cowbirds and their habitat parameters in Texas

April 8 - open

May 13 - Short slide show of Alaskan Trip with music

Please come meet with us!!!

Place: Mayflower Church, located at 3901 NW 63rd, (West of Portland Avenue)

Time: 7 PM - 7:30 PM - Meet n' Greet

Meeting begins at 7:30 PM

Refreshments and snacks

will be served

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