Oct. 12, 2013 FIELD TRIP to BAKER WETLANDS

Meet at 8 AM at Sojourner Truth Park

In place of our usual Saturday morning birding in the area, we are pleased to have member, **Susan Blackford**, volunteer to lead us on a **Field Trip** to Baker Wetlands, just south of Lawrence.

We will meet at Sojourner Truth Park at 8 AM and car pool to the wetlands, returning by 5 PM. If you have never been there this is a great time to go. It is usually alive with birds.

Bring a sack lunch, water, insect repellent, and wear good walking shoes. Register for the trip with Susan by leaving a message - including name, phone number or e-mail, and number of people going - at 785-537-6252 or e-mail at sjb0166@hotmail. com.

Or meet us there and go shopping or out to dinner afterwards.



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 42, No. 2~ October 2013

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Upcoming Events

- Oct. 7 Board Meeting 6 PM Home of Tom & MJ Morgan
- Oct. 12 FIELD TRIP Baker Wetlands Lawrence - leader Susan Blackford (see above)
- Oct. 16 PROGRAM Kansas Riverkeeper Dinner 5:45, della Voce, 405 Poyntz Groesbeck Rm, Public Library 7 PM (see page 7)
- **Oct. 26 DEADLINE BIRDSEED ORDER**
- Nov. 9 Birdseed PICKUP 8:30-11:30 AM UFM Parking Lot



Skylight plus Pete Cohen

I recently read of one our astronauts being quoted as saying that 500 years from now the thing people will remember of the 20th Century was the

first walk on the Moon. That speculation seemed worth a moment's considering, for it put into second place two world wars, the Great Depression, the explosive arrival of the automobile, the civil rights movement, the beginning of the internet and viable television, antibiotics and the polio vaccines, to say nothing of the Charleston or the Beatles. Each of which I would think affected more people more personally than the Moonwalk. As surprising and exciting as it was, it coincided with the disappearance of widespread convenient train travel.

No doubt the space race brought about a lot of technical results that are affecting us without our especially realizing it, but I believe the same could be said of the wars, and there won't be any ongoing memory of anything we don't realize.

So as a test I decided to make a moderate look back from the 21^{st} Century to what happened in the 16^{th} .

Deservedly or not Columbus popped up even though his first landfall was eight years before 1500, but the resultant Spanish invasion of the western hemisphere (whose name now memorializes another sea captain) extended heavily into the following century, affecting a great deal of the world then and to this day, likewise, the defeat of its armada in 1588. I learned to remember those events in school, along with the information about a fellow named Shakespeare (unless it was really Christopher Marlowe) who, by the remarkable use of language, showed the-world-as-it-is in stage-sized dimensions for the amusement of the masses at the Globe Theatre. His plays still have their aficionados.

I was taught to remember, too, Martin Luther, who objected to church practices, and Copernicus, who objected to the belief in an Earth-centered universe – objections that set in motion responses that also have current results. There was a man named Leonardo da Vinci, who contrived and conceived of a great many things and who, amid several artistic competitions with another man known as Michelangelo, completed in 1504 a painting named Mona Lisa, which is still around, as are some of his rivals' works.

On my own, I discovered that in 1513 Niccolo Machiavelli wrote out "The Prince," describing theworld-as-it-is in the plainest of prose, and giving the Devil a new nickname: Old Nick. He wrote it mainly to impress the ruling Medici and succeeded, at least, in impressing a high school kid by its difference from his assigned texts. When I asked an internet site to list 16th Century events, it remembered: Gerhard Mercator's way of mapping a round surface on a flat plane, the first wheel-lock musket, pocket watch, graphite pencil, and the first bottled beer in London. Not mentioned, and not the soonest in my memory of things learned, was the "Moonwalk" of that time: the first Earthly circumnavigation, at great human cost, by Magellan's men in 1519-22.

Whatever is remembered 500 years on, the stars will be slightly realigned from how we view them now. Polaris will be less perfectly in the north, appearing about 4% further toward the neighborhood of Vega, on the loop that will bring it back to its present position in 26,000 years. I assume the bright star, Arcturus, aimed at by the Big Dipper's handle, will appear a bit brighter as I understand it's atypically getting closer.

Meanwhile October starts out with the Moon, Mars, and Leo's bright Regulus gathering in the dawn of the 1st and 2nd Mars showing its reddish tint, while the star is brighter. The Moon will go off on its rounds while the other two keep company and change positions around the 15th. Somewhere near them on the 16th will be a speck of light that already has comet watchers on their toes with some hopeful – accent hopeful – plans, coincidently, for Thanksgiving Day and continuing through the time of Chanukah. More of which next month.

Venus is the brilliant evening star and Saturn will be nearby, setting soon after 8 o'clock, with reddish Antares in Scorpio also nearby, particularly at midmonth with the Moon dropping by on the 8th. Orangeish Aldebaran, the eye of Taurus, comes up below the Moon mid-evening the 21st, then Jupiter moves from the upper left to the upper right of the Moon in the dawns of the 25th and 26th. The Moon is new the 4th at 7p35 and full the 18th at 6p38.

© 2013 Peter Zachary Cohen

Harvesting the Fire-Kindler Dru Clarke

Late August, according to my progressively cloudy memory, is the time to load up the oversize galvanized tin bucket and head out to certain back roads - somewhat surreptitiously, as I looked in my rearview mirror a lot, and to the left and the right more than usual, not wanting to alert passersby to my task at hand. Most road edges had been sprayed with an oily mix of smelly herbicide that had browned and withered the woody shrubs and low-hanging branches of deciduous trees, giving it all the premature look of late autumn, or a marginal apocalypse. The roadside grasses and forbs had been mowed on major thoroughfares, making them a sort of lawn for someone's benefit, though I'm not sure whose. This strip is the "easement" which functions as places to lay cable and gas and waterlines, and emergency "lay-bys" to avoid oncoming passing vehicles, and supposedly, too, to see better the wild life who threaten to, and sometimes do, cross in front of you. (Unmowed, it gave them a place to crouch and hide to avoid detection until it was safe to cross. The benefit seems to be pretty one-sided.)

But, the crews of the noxious weed department of the county hadn't gotten to "my" two patches of wild elderberry plants before I was able to harvest the lacy corymbs of fruits atop six foot tall stalks. I had staked out these plants a few years ago and was gratified to find them alive and fruitful. The plant flourishes in wet areas, like ditches and stream sides and is an elegant member of the Caprifoliaceae or honeysuckle family. The genus is Sambucus, and I thought of Sambuca, a syrupy anise-flavored liqueur popular in Mediterranean locales. (Elderberry is an additive, tho' not the main flavor, although it may have originated as an elderberry spirit in Civitavecchia, Italy, long ago). Its common name "elder" derives from the Anglo-Saxon "ellen," meaning "fire-kindler" as the dry pithy stems would be good for this purpose.

Collecting the clusters requires one to negotiate a thicket of lush growth, often steeped in stagnant water or oozing mud, and, of course, lurking beasties – chiggers, for one. You have to really want elderberries to collect them. The clusters break off relatively easily from the plant, but progress is slow because not all of them are ripe at the same time, and you have to work your way through the patch to locate those ready for picking. So you have the opportunity to admire the graceful compound leaves, reminiscent of walnut leaves, and graceful posture of the entire plant.



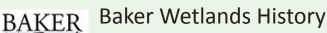
I planned to try

my hand at making jelly from the ripe berries, but the unripe ones need to be discarded as they are toxic. I emptied the entire two bushel bucket in about four hours, painstakingly rolling each berry from its stem, staining my fingers a royal hue. Mashed, then cooked, then strained through several layers of cheesecloth for several more hours, all of these berries yielded about three cups of juice, augmented with some water. Every part of the plant can be eaten or utilized in some way (the flower heads can be dipped in batter and fried like funnel cakes, but emerge looking like lace doilies), and figure in many folk remedies purported to alleviate symptoms of everything from arthritis to zoster. (Well, I'm not positive about the latter, but elderberry is used for rashes and sores and inflammation, and zoster produces all of those afflictions.) Many Eastern European peoples believe that hanging a bough of elderberry over a doorway will ensure the longevity of a marriage: this might be worth trying in homes where unions are in jeopardy.

My jelly did not jell, although I followed directions meticulously (well, sort of). I even "remade" it, still, it didn't jell. But the syrup that resulted was delicious and is excellent on yogurt crepes or lemon sherbet (what I call the frozen yogurt made from Iris Jubilee's milk). The leftover syrup jar in the fridge must have absorbed some airborne yeast as this morning's crepes were especially winey.

In the wild, elderberry feeds a host of species. In its habitat, it provides shade and stabilizes soil in wet places. It is a joy to behold, and I'm happy, happy, happy that these patches escaped the long arm and nozzle of the noxious weeds folks. I'd like to believe that the omission was deliberate and that someone else planned to harvest *Sambucus*. And I hope their jelly jells, or not. It's all good.

© Dru Clarke 9/13



For centuries the Wakarusa River flooded, and as it did so the larger particles settled out of the flood waters closer to the bank, and very fine particles would settle into the lower locations to the north. Over the centuries, a natural levee was created along the Wakarusa River due to the buildup of these larger particles. The area away from the river to the north ended up remaining lower and consisting of very fine silty soils. For example, the area around the Boardwalk is approximately five feet lower than the ground along the river bank, nearly one mile to the south. The build-up of extremely fine soil particles as well as being lower is what has made this area a wetland over the centuries past. The very fine soil particles keep water from percolating down through the soil very quickly.

Haskell Era

WETLANDS

In 1883, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) began purchasing land to establish the Haskell Institute, a boarding school for American Indians. Between the late 1890s and 1902, BIA purchased the four parcels in Section 18. It was indicated that this land was to become part of the Haskell Farm and be a component of the educational mission of Haskell Institute as well as to grow food for its occupants.

Haskell archives indicate that between 1917 and 1927 a number of projects were carried out by the federal government on Haskell's behalf that were aimed at draining the area for agricultural use. Much of the land was "bedded," which refers to the construction of linear raised strips alternating with troughs to drain an otherwise very flat field.

In 1934 the educational mission at Haskell changed and no longer included agricultural training. BIA began leasing the ground to local farmers. Then in the 1950s, a significant portion of the acreage was declared by the Department of the Interior as surplus land. Parcels of this land were given to the city to construct Broken Arrow School and South Junior High; to the county to build Broken Arrow Park; to the State Biological Survey, which was later transferred to the University of Kansas; and another 20 acres to the Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission, which later became the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. What remained was an odd-shaped parcel of approximately 573 acres.

One of the purposes of forming the State Biological Survey was to acquire the remaining Haskell property in Section 18 for the purpose of creating a wildlife refuge. Dr. E. Raymond Hall, then director of the University of Kansas Natural History Museum and the State Biological Survey, was mainly responsible for the early efforts to save the Haskell Bottoms, as it was commonly referred to. Several other attempts were made to have the University of Kansas carry out the effort with funding coming from the state. None of those plans were successful.

Baker University Acquisition

Before his retirement, Dr. Hall came to his longtime friend, Dr. Ivan L. Boyd, at Baker University. They concluded that a smaller university with less red tape, bureaucracy and overhead might be able to make the process of preserving this property work. In April 1967, the property was transferred to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Through the encouragement of Hall and Boyd, Baker University President James Edward Doty filed a successful application in May 1968 to receive the parcel of land for the purposes of education, research and preservation of the remaining virgin wet meadows. Baker University received the property free of charge through a 30-year Quit Claim Deed in August 1968.

During these early years, Dr. Boyd also had to contend with a substantial land fill and several pieces of large, abandoned construction equipment. The dump had been originally created by Haskell Institute, but the lack of gates encouraged local residents to use it as well. He established 50 study plots to the north of the present gas company site to conduct their various germination studies. From these studies, several fairly diverse prairie plots were established.

In 1969 the National Park Service added the Baker Wetlands as part of the National Natural Landmark program. This particular designation was



Greater Yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca), high-stepping through a flooded Carnahan Cove. Photo by Dave Rintoul, September 26, 2011

greatly aided by Dr. E. Raymond Hall, former director of the University of Kansas Natural History Museum and the State Biological Survey, and was largely based on the potential for restoring the area to natural habitat. At the time of the designation, less than 8 percent of the area was in natural habitat.

Wetlands Return

Dr. Boyd became aware of the possibility of funding through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to restore wetlands. Working with Jim Minnerath and Greg Kramos, a plan was devised to use Partners for Wildlife Program funding to reverse the drainage patterns established by BIA in the 1920s. Breaks in the levees over the decades had allowed water to flow in at high stages but just as quickly, flow out as water receded. Beginning in 1991, these breaks were repaired, several access roads were elevated so they would remain functional, several levees were constructed to develop manageable pools and water control structures were installed. These activities increased water levels after rains for short durations while still allowing the water to disappear fairly quickly.

He discovered a large plume of clean water coming out of the bank of the Wakarusa River. Upon investigation, it was discovered to be coming out of a large pile of rocks on the bank, but the river was too high for the source to be seen. This was before the availability of inexpensive GPS units, so the students lined up at each of the sink holes and chimneys with a pole and flag and discovered that they were all in a straight line. A search in the Haskell archives Continued



produced a map of an elaborate scheme to tile the entire section. Through various investigations it was determined that only a portion of this plan had been completed. Another grant in 1995 allowed excavation of the tile close to the river. Once excavated (the tile was 20 feet deep at that location), a 50-foot section of the tile was destroyed and plugged with clay to prevent it from working. This had a major positive impact on water retention: It was like putting the plug back in the bathtub!

Source: Baker University, www.bakeru.edu/wetlands

Immediate Future

In the immediate future, Baker University has agreed to begin a restoration project that fulfills a component of the mitigation required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers because of the construction of the South Lawrence Trafficway destroying 56 acres of wetlands. Wetland Resoration Project

Long-Range Plans

The long-range planning for the Wetlands is greatly influenced by the pending completion of the South Lawrence Trafficway. Rational & Benefits of Mitigation

A Bird list has been compiled by Dr. Roger L. Boyd and Dr. Calvin L. Cink of the Baker University Biology Department and other ornithologists in the area can be found on their website: http://www.bakeru.edu/wetlands.

The current list of 269 species has been compiled from records dating from 1968. There are 97 species that have been confirmed as nesting in the area. Your additional sightings are welcome. Documentation may be necessary before a species is added to the list. Baker Wetlands 1365 N. 1250 Rd. Lawrence, KS 66046 785-594-3172



2013 Birdathon Clyde Ferguson



This year eight observers counted 125 species and sponsors donated \$2651.06 for their efforts! The observers were Jim Koelliiker, Roma Lenehan, Susan Slapnick, Patricia Yeager, Michael Donnelly, Barry Michie and of course, Clyde Ferguson. Thank you to all.

This 24-hour birding event (April 27-28) had typical Kansas weather – cool and windy in the mornings, and hot and still on Saturday afternoon. Their top sightings were: Dunlin, Greater Scaup, White-Winged Dove and a Rusty Blackbird.

Even with a broken fibula, Clyde Ferguson made the Birdathon happen. His commitment to this event may be why Jim Koelliker calls it the "Clyde Ferguson Annual Spring Birdathon." And this year marks the 27th year - at least there are records since 1987.

In 1986, Clyde Ferguson and Cecil Best were going fishing and decided to also count birds, and then see if anyone would donate something for each species they saw for NFHAS. Well, they counted 60 species that day and caught some fish. Clyde says they saw a screech owl on that first count – but haven't seen one since. They also had a sweep of the swallows! Cecil thought they could do better if they got organized for the next year – and the rest is history.

As Jim Koelliker will tell you, the real work is all the hours of soliciting donations, keeping the records and carefully accounting for and handling the over one hundred contributions. So it is official – this is the **"Clyde Ferguson Annual Spring Birdathon."**



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Kansas Riverkeeper

SAVE THE DATE: OCT. 16 - 7 PM Program by Laura Calwell

Groesbeck Rm. Manhattan Public Library Dinner with Laura - 5:45 at della Voce, 405 Poyntz

Kansas Riverkeeper Dedicated to Protecting the KAW

In 2001 Friends of the Kaw became a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance, an international water protection organization of over 190 members.

The Riverkeeper advocates for the river by acting as leader, scientist, educator, spokesperson and investigator. Our current Kansas Riverkeeper is Laura Calwell. Laura is a former Friends of the Kaw president (1998-2002) and she brings strong leadership and organizational skills as well as experience as an educator to this position.

BIRDSEED SALE

ONLY ONE THIS YEAR!

As you can see from the order form - we are having one bird seed sale this year! We hope you take advantage of it. ORDER must be received by Oct. 26, the PICKUP date is Nov. 9th - 8:30-11:30 AM at the UFM Parking lot. (The board divvie-up the tasks to make this happen.)



photo by Dave Rintoul

BUTTERFLY GARDEN - CLEANUP SOJURNER TRUTH PARK

Cleanup Blitz - 6:00 p.m. Oct. 14

Just over the railroad tracks south of Howies Recycling on 10th St.



Northern Flint HIlls Audubon Society P.O. Box 1932 Manhattan, KS 66505-1932

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Membership Information: Introductory memberships - \$20/yr., then basic, renewal membership is \$35/yr. When you join the National Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society. You will receive the bimonthly Audubon magazine in addition to the Prairie Falcon newsletter. New membership applications should be sent to National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership renewals are also handled by the National Audubon Society. Questions about membership? Call 1-800-274-4201 or email the National Audubon Society join@audubon. org. Website is www.audubon.org.

Subscription Information: If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in NFHAS local activities, you may subscribe to the Prairie Falcon newsletter for \$15/yr. Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, and mail to: Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS, 66505-1932

RARE BIRD HOTLINE: For information on Kansas Birds, subscribe to the Kansas Bird Listserve. Send this message <subscribe KSBIRD-L> to <list serve@ksu.edu>and join in the discussions.

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Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society 2013 Bird Seed Fundraiser

> Order DUE: Oct. 26, 2013 PICKUP: Nov. 9, 2013 8:30 - 11:30 am UFM Parking lot 1221 Thurston, Manhattan

Return with payment to: NFHAS attn: Birdseed P.O. Box 1932 Manhattan, KS 66502

Bird Seed Descriptions:

Thank you for your support!

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEEDS are the preferred seed of many small feeder birds and attractive to more spe cies than are striped sunflower seeds. Black oil supplies more energy per pound than striped.

STRIPED SUNFLOWER SEEDS contain larger hearts than black oil sunflower seeds and are particularly suitable for larger songbirds.

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED CHIPS are high in energy and can be used in tube feeders. It is especially liked by Pine Siskins. Hulled sunflower seed is consumed by a variety of birds, large- and small-beaked.

MILLET White millet is a favorite of most small-beaked ground-feeding birds; Red millet is also readily eaten. Quail, doves, juncos, sparrows, towhees, cowbirds, and red-winged blackbirds are attracted to millet.

CORN CHOP, or cracked corn kernels, like millet, is attractive to a variety of birds, especially ground-feeders. It also attracts crows, starlings, doves and squirrels.

THISTLE SEED is very attractive to Gold Finches and all other finches that are here over winter. It is excellent for tube feeders.

SAFFLOWER is a favorite with Cardinals, and squirrels really do not like it.

PEANUT PICKOUTS are chunks of peanut hearts and are very attractive to woodpeckers, nuthatches, chicka dees, titmice, jays, wrens, and more.

FLINT HILLS FEAST is the premium seed mix: 30% black oil sunflower seed, 20% striped sunflower seed, and 50% white proso millet (with no milo or fillers).

CHEAP CHEEP MIX is less expensive but still attractive to many species. It is 40 % cracked corn, 40 % white proso millet, and 20 % black oil sunflower (with no milo or fillers).

REGUALR FORMULA FINCH MIX consists of 50% sunflower chips and 50% thistle seed.

SUPER FORMULA FINCH MIX is a less expensive option for tube feeders than 100% thistle seed. It consists of 70% sunflower chips and 30% thistle. This is very popular with most tube feeding species.

SUET CAKES, in addition to having other nutritious ingredients, the main ingredient, high calorie beef fat, helps birds maintain body heat in cold winter months. Bird seed, berries and peanut butter are mixed in with suet. Enjoy woodpeckers, wrens, nuthatches, and chickadees.

(Taken from Audubon At Home Bird Feedin Basicsg, http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_feeding/index.html)

Sales Support Local Chapter Activities

As with all of our fund-raising activities, proceeds from our seed sales go toward supporting the educational and conservation projects of the local chapter. All of our labor is voluntary. Taxes are included in the price of our seed. Even though we are a not-for-profit organization, we are required to pay tax on any retail sales. Any additional donation you may wish to include with your order is appreciated.

Quality Seed, Easy Handling

The products we offer are high quality seeds. Our mixes were created to satisfy the needs of local bird populations at reasonable costs. We have tried to make it easy for you to purchase the amount of seed you want without having to handle heavy, awkward bags. Our seed comes in 10 and 25 pound bags. We try to obtain the seed in paper bags whenever possible.

DESCRIPTION	BAG WT LBS	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL	
CHEAP CHEAP MIX	10	\$5.50			
"	25	\$12.50			
"	50	\$23.25			
CHIPS	10	\$13.50			
П	23	\$29.95			
FINCH MIX	10	\$14.00			
11	25	\$30.70			
FLINT HILLS FEAST	10	\$7.45			
H	25	\$14.00			
11	50	\$26.95			
MEDIUM CHOP	25	\$13.50			
II	50	\$23.95			
PEANUT PICKOUTS	10	\$17.25			
П	25	\$40.45			
RED MILLET	10	\$6.75			
11	25	\$14.95			
11	50	\$28.45			
SAFFLOWER	10	\$16.45			
"	25	\$35.95			
	50	\$67.45			
SUET CAKES - high energy	EACH	\$1.35			
peanut butter	EACH	\$1.35			
berry	EACH	\$1.35			
SUNFLOWERS (BLK)	10	\$7.45			
11	25	\$16.45			
II	50	\$29.95			
SUNFLOWER (STRP)	10	\$6.75			
II	25	\$20.25			
11	50	\$38.95			
THISTLE	10	\$13.45			
11	25	\$29.95			
WHITE MILLET	10	\$5.95			
H	25	\$10.45			
11	50	\$19.45			
	Delivery service ava	ailable – Manhatta	an city limits –	Please include addt'l \$5.	
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