



Knobs and Knolls

July 2015

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Annual Meeting

Our annual membership meeting this past May was a great success.

The meeting began with informative presentations by King University investigators who have been and will be doing research projects at the Park. Caleb Corona and Dr. Han Ong described their recently conducted study of algae populations in Steele Creek Lake, and briefly reviewed their findings. Following that, Dr. Laura Ong described the arboreal disease monitoring study which she plans to begin at the Park this summer. Both of these projects have received financial support from the Friends Research Support Program

Special recognition was given to Ruth Clark and Mary Clark for their key roles in establishing and maintaining the Steele Creek Herbarium. In particular, Ruth's inspiration, expertise and tireless work have resulted in the most extensive herbarium housed at a non-academic facility in the region!

Terry Napier updated those present on the current status of the Park, and plans for the Nature Center expansion. Following this, Sherry Willinger reviewed our accomplishments for the year, and anticipated activities for the coming year.

Extensive amendments to our organization's bylaws were presented, discussed and approved unanimously by those in attendance.

Finally, Board members were elected to begin serving new terms this July. (See additional information elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Gardening with Native Plants



Columbine



Azalea



Virginia Bluebells



Dwarf Iris

Make Wildlife Feel Welcome With Native Plants!

Nature spent eons evolving a symbiotic system for flora and fauna where they could survive together without harm to each other... then Humans started transporting plants and animals around the earth and upset the balance.

As a result, today native plants are being overwhelmed and disappearing because of the rapid growth of non- native invasive plants.



It falls to us to revitalize native plants in our landscape. Growing natives brings the landscape alive with colors, wildlife and the sounds of the flora and fauna living in harmony. It's better for the environment, provides you with the easiest care for plants, and supports butterflies, birds, bees, and other pollinators.

Landscaping a native habitat doesn't have to be complicated or costly. Just adding a few native plants, a water source, and a feeder would suffice. Butterflies and hummers like bright colored flowers with flat surfaces or short flowering tubes; butterflies are partial to purples and hummers prefer reds and orange.

Environmentally friendly basics of native plant landscaping include using drought-tolerant or area native plants; mulching (shredded leaves are ideal); providing extra water the first two years till the plants are set; removing invasive non-native plants; and trying to reduce lawn area in favor of native plants, shrubs, and trees.

Stagger blooming times of the native plants to cover the entire growing season for attracting wildlife all season. Look at the lists on the website or in the resources at the end of this article. For spring try Virginia bluebells, wild geranium and columbines. For mid-season try bee balm, phlox and trumpet vine. For summer try asters, coneflowers, and butterfly weed.

There are so many colors and seasonal varieties to choose from. Just experiment and enjoy giving back to nature.



Top 10 Native Plants for the Southeastern U.S.

Black Tupelo Willow Oak Sweetbay Magnolia American Elderberry
Yaupon Holly Sweet Pepperbush Swamp Milkweed
Trumpet Honeysuckle Climbing Aster Narrowleaf Sunflower

Rose Trillium



Coneflowers



The following are fruit, nut or seed bearing native trees and shrubs:

Cherry	Crabapple	Mountain Ash
Dogwood	Hawthorne	Low Bush Blueberries
Holly	Mulberry	Serviceberry
Sumac	Red Cedar	Raspberry

The following native perennials and annuals provide seeds and nectar sources:

Asters	Bee Balm	Purple Coneflower
Bergamot	Coreopsis	Butterfly Weed
Goldenrod	Sedum	Joe-pye Weed
Sunflower	Penstemon	Trumpet Vine

The Native Plant list is long, so check with Sullivan County Extension Office, UT Agricultural Dept Website, National Wildlife Federation Website, or the following resource books and nurseries for more information:

“Gardening with the Native Plants of Tennessee” - Margie Hunter - UT Press Knoxville TN

“Great Natives for Tough Places” - Niall Dunne - Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, Inc.

“Wildflowers of TN, the Ohio Valley and Southern Appalachians”-Horn & Cathcart
Sunlight Gardens - Andersonville TN - www.sungardens@aol.com - (free catalog)

Native Gardens - Greenback TN - www.native-gardens.com - (free catalog)

Nature Center Expansion

After years of waiting, a major expansion of the Nature Center is finally about to happen!

Thanks in large part to the new Park entrance fee, funding for the expansion has been approved by Bristol Tennessee's City Council.

Members of our Board of Directors recently met with Terry Napier, Jeremy Stout and Mark Freeman, the architect with whom the City is working to revise the previous developed plans for the expanded facility. The purpose of the meeting was to review and provide input to those plans, to learn of the anticipated time-table, and to discuss how Friends will play a key role in providing input and funding for new displays, exhibits and other furnishings for the Nature Center.

Over the coming months we will be working closely with Terry, Jeremy, and Mr. Freeman to assure that we continue to provide our input as the project progresses. To this end, we encourage you to send us your thoughts and ideas! Feel free to contact us at mail@friendsofstelecreek.org or P.O. Box 1763, Bristol, TN 37620.

We will also be developing and implementing a major fundraising campaign. We will keep you informed as to our progress and how you can help to make our newly expanded Nature Center one we can all be truly proud of!

Newly Elected Board Members!

Welcome to Tracy Pierce as our newest Board member. Tracy was elected at the annual membership meeting to fill a Board vacancy created by the resignation of Sheri Hiter this past spring. She brings both her passion for the Park and her financial expertise to the Board. We look forward to her many contributions as we begin what should prove to be a very busy year!

Also at the annual membership meeting, current Board members Charlotte Duncan, Robin Feierabend, Sharon Foster and Isabel Ladd were each reelected to serve new three year terms on the Board.

Board Officers for 2015-16

At the June reorganizational meeting, the Board of Directors elected a new slate of officers for 2015-16. Sherry Willinger will continue to serve as President, while Sonie Schermer will retain her position as Vice President. New Board member Tracy Pierce will assume responsibilities as Treasurer and Robin Feierabend will serve as Secretary. The Executive Committee for 2015-16 will consist of the four elected officers plus Isabel Ladd.

2015 Summer Nature Camps

Summer nature camps are winding to a close, and what a summer it's been! Summers are always busy in the park but we mixed it up and tried something new this year: instead of the usual six weeks of unique camp offerings, this year we aimed for nine! Another experiment this year was to double up on some camps, offering two camps concurrently during two of the total seven weeks!

All in all, it has been an excellent camp season. Despite the extra offerings, attendance has been down slightly. As of the time of this writing, 74 paid registrants occupy the 135 total camp slots, but it has been busy nonetheless! Insects and Creepy Crawlies, Paleontology, Survival Skills, and Botany are just a few of the topics covered this year. And of course, Nature Photography has continued to be a big hit (with a special thanks to Friends for providing cameras for all our campers!). We look forward to entering some of those photos into the photography contest this fall!

Jeremy B. Stout
Nature Center Manager



Sights of Summer at Steele Creek Park



Friends Bylaws Extensively Revised

At the annual membership meeting in May, extensive amendments to our organization's bylaws were approved. Although many of these were relatively minor adjustments in wording to bring the document up to date, a few substantive changes were made.

Of most significance to our members was the removal of the fixed dates of our membership year (July 1st through June 30th). The Board is in the process of establishing a revolving membership year, such that memberships will run for a full year after payment of membership dues, regardless of when the dues are paid. Renewal notices will be sent to each member a month or two prior to their membership expiration. This should make it easier for folks to maintain their active membership and for us to keep our membership rolls up to date.

The provision limiting the terms of Board members to 8 consecutive years was also removed. Our biggest challenge has been finding and maintaining a sufficient number of active Board members, rather than having Board members who stay on longer than is good for the organization.

A provision was added requiring the Board to establish, maintain and regularly review written financial policies, something that we have not done in the past. Related to this, the requirement that our annual financial review be conducted by a certified public accountant was removed, since we have generally not used a CPA for this procedure. The specific procedure for the annual review will be written into the financial policies approved by the full Board.

A copy of the [newly amended bylaws](#) has been posted to our website, along with [a summary of all changes](#) that were recommended and approved at the meeting.

Did You Know?

Steele Creek Park is home to one of the largest populations of Tennessee dace (*Chrosomus tennesseensis*), listed as a species in need of management in Tennessee and endangered in Virginia. In 2001, Kevin Hamed (former Nature Center Manager and leading expert on the Tennessee dace) contributed many of his live research specimens to the Chattanooga Aquarium for their collection.



Tennessee dace (male)



Tennessee dace (female)

(Photos courtesy of Jason Davis)

The Tennessee dace – one of many reasons to protect the beauty and diversity of Steele Creek Park!

2015 Wildlife Weekend Photography Contest and Show

We will again be sponsoring an amateur photography contest and show to be held in conjunction with Wildlife Weekend this fall. Amateur photographers of all ages, including children and teens, are encouraged to participate. Eligible photographs must be taken at Steele Creek Park in Bristol, Tennessee and be focused on the natural aspects of the park. Prizes will be awarded, based on the general interest, creativity, and technical merits of the photographs. Professional and/or experienced amateur photographers from the Bristol area will serve on the panel of judges. All entries will be displayed at the Wildlife Weekend celebration, scheduled for October 9th and 10th at the Park.

This year's celebration is of particular interest since the theme will be "Focusing on Nature Photography". In addition to the usual variety of children's activities, interpretive walks, and demonstrations, several presentations will cover topics related to nature photography, and there will be opportunities for hands on learning for photographers of all ages and experience.

The Wildlife Weekend Photography Contest and Show is always a popular part of Wildlife Weekend. Every year the quality and variety of entries seems to increase. This is a great opportunity for us to promote the beauty and diversity of our park through photography. Most importantly, it's an opportunity for park-goers of all ages to have fun through the creativity of photography and the wonder of nature.

The deadline for submitting photographs is Friday, September 25th, 2015.

[Winning photos from last year's contest](#) and
[Complete rules and application forms for this year's contest](#)
now available on our website.

2014 Wildlife Weekend Photography Contest Winners



Adult First Place "Dragon Hunter" by Jennifer Knecht



Youth First Place "Mayfly" by Katie Harr

Summer Nature Center Activities

Don't miss these upcoming Nature Center activities:

Saturday, August 1st (9:30 am)

Kids' Nature Awareness: Fun for the whole family! Meet Larry at the nature center for fun and games and learning, too! We'll explore habitats, hone our senses, and learn about our park during this program.

Friday, August 7th (11:00 am)

Slagle Hollow Scenic Hike: Meet Jeremy at the Nature Center for an adventurous hike into one of the most remote areas of Steele Creek Park. Trek where few have been and enjoy beautiful scenery. Bring water and a snack for this hike!

Friday, August 14th (4:00 pm)

Butterfly Walk: Meet Don at the Nature Center for a mild walk looking for these beautiful summertime gems!

Friday, August 21st (4:00 pm)

Insect Photography: Bring your camera and meet Larry at the Nature Center for an easy walk learning to capture breathtaking images of dragonflies, butterflies, and more!

You can keep up with what's going on at the Park and with Friends by following our webpage at <http://www.friendsofsteelecreek.org>.

We appreciate feedback about our communication. Let us know if you find these newsletters interesting and/or useful. If you have suggestions for topics to be covered, or other formats that we could use, let us know by e-mail at mail@friendsofsteelecreek.org.

If you prefer to not receive these newsletters, simply let us know at mail@friendsofsteelecreek.org.