

NATURE WALKS SCHEDULE – SPRING 2012

On the Oak Ridge Reservation, located in east Tennessee, over 1100 vascular plants, 72 fish, 34 mammals and over 200 bird species have been observed. This year the public is invited to six nature walks designed to highlight not only the rich flora and fauna diversity of the reservation, but also to demonstrate the work being done to sustainably manage and conserve this resource. Walks will take place on several locations across the Oak Ridge Reservation beginning in late winter through mid summer.

Reservations for the following events must be made in advance by noon the Thursday prior to each walk by contacting Tracy Clem, 865-574-5151 (bodinetm@ornl.gov). If inclement weather forces postponement of an event, it will be announced on ORNL's Information Line at 865-574-9836 (i.e. 574-XTEN) at least two hours before the scheduled walk.

More information about these walks is available by contacting Trent Jett at 865-574-9188 (jetttr@ornl.gov).

1. **NEW FOR 2012: American woodcock and winter Astronomy “night walk” – Freels Bend**

Date: Saturday, February 25 (Sunday, February 26 if inclement weather)

Location: Meet at the parking lot behind (i.e. south) the ORISE building at corner of Bethel Valley and Pumphouse roads.

Time: 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Leader: Jim Evans (TWRA), David Fields (ORION)

Limit: 25 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: Walking will be off trail, but not in overly steep terrain (distance < 1 mile).

Since this is an off trail hike, participants need to have sturdy shoes and should dress in layers. A reliable flashlight or headlamp is suggested as most of the walk will be after sunset. Night vision is very sensitive to white light, so you may consider a red filter or red LED light. Recommended items include water, binoculars, field guide to birds, field guide to stars, bug spray if needed. We should see American woodcock flight displays, winter constellations, and Jupiter.

No pets please.

2. **Wildflower walk – Rainy Knob on Freels Bend**

Date: Sunday, April 15

Location: Meet at the parking lot behind (i.e. south) the ORISE building at corner of Bethel Valley and Pumphouse roads.

Time: 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Leader: Larry Pounds (individual)

Limit: 20 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: Walking will be off trail, but not in overly steep terrain (distance about 3 miles). Since this is an off trail hike, participants need to have good balance and stamina. This is rocky country. We will see rocky sink holes and a cave entrance. We will also see the unusual green violet and other native spring flowers.

Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray and water.

No pets please.

3. Bird Walk – Poplar Creek/ETTP Beaver Pond and Vicinity

Date: Saturday, April 28

Location: Meet at ETTP visitors overlook, Oak Ridge Turnpike (Hwy 58)

Time: 7:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Leader: Jim Evans (TWRA)

Limit: 25 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: Walking will be over level dirt/paved roads (distance 1-2 miles). Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray, field guide to birds, binoculars, and water. We should see osprey, red-headed woodpecker, and many migrating warblers.

No pets please.

4. Fish and Aquatic insects – Bear Creek

Date: Saturday, May 12

Location: Meet at west guardhouse, Oak Ridge Turnpike (Hwy 58)

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Leader: Mike Ryon and Trent Jett (ORNL)

Limit: 15 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: We will visit lower Bear Creek where we will learn about the local fish and aquatic insect populations that are native to the Oak Ridge Reservation. Techniques for collection of aquatic organisms will be demonstrated and participants will have an opportunity to help. Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray and water. Wear older shoes or rubber boots if you would like to get in the creek and help!

No pets please.

5. Reptiles and amphibians inventory – Solway Bend

Date: Sunday, June 3

Location: Meet at the parking lot behind (i.e. south of) the ORISE building at corner of Bethel Valley and Pumphouse Roads.

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Leader: John Byrd (CRESO)

Limit: 15 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: Walking will be through fields and over level dirt/gravel roads (limited distances). Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray and water. We will collect several turtle species, talk about local snake identification and discuss management of local herps populations.

No pets please.

6. Invasive plants – various sites on Oak Ridge Reservation

Date: Saturday, July 14

Location: Meet at west guardhouse, Oak Ridge Turnpike (Hwy 58)

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Leader: Mike Ryon (ORNL)

Limit: 20 (children under the age of 10 not allowed)

Recommendations: This walk will be mostly carpooling to different sites on the reservation to discuss the variety of invasive plants and impacts to local flora and fauna. Walking will be limited at each site. Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray and water.

No pets please.