

NATURE WALKS SCHEDULE – SPRING 2014

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 four 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 start of the walk.

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

1. American woodcock and Falconry walk – Freels Bend

Date: Friday, February 21 (Saturday, February 22 if inclement weather)

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

Time: 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Leader: Jim Evans and Vincent Pontello (TWRA), Katie Cuttrell (CRRC)

Limit: 30 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: Walking will be on trails, not in overly steep terrain (distance < .5 mile).

Participants need to have sturdy shoes and should dress in layers. A reliable flashlight or headlamp is suggested as some of the walk will be at dusk or after sunset. Recommended items include water, binoculars, field guide to birds, field guide to stars, bug spray if needed. We will see American woodcock flight displays, and we will have demonstrations from local falconers and owl rehabilitators.

No pets please.

2. Wildflower walk – Rainy Knob on Freels Bend

Date: Sunday, April 13

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

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Leader: Larry Pounds and Paul Durr (individual)

Limit: 25 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: walking will be off trail, in moderately rough terrain (distance about 2.5 miles). Since this is an off trail hike in rocky country, participants need to have good balance and stamina. We will see rocky sink holes, the unusual green violet and many other native spring flowers.

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

No pets please.

3. Bird nature walk – ETPP Ponds and Vicinity

Date: Saturday, April 26

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

Time: 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 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 red-headed woodpecker, many migrating warblers and maybe a sora as we venture around the ponds and some wetlands near the Clinch River and Poplar Creek.

No pets please.

4. Fish and Aquatic insects – Bear Creek

Date: Saturday, May 17

Location: Meet at west entrance to North Boundary Greenway on Hwy 95, just east of Hwy 95 and Hwy 58 junction

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

Leader: Trent Jett and Michael Jones (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 1

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: 20 (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. There will be plenty of opportunities for children to get involved and learn about the animals.

No pets please.