

NATURE WALKS SCHEDULE – SPRING 2015

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 start of the walk.

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

1. American Woodcock and Falconry walk – Freels Bend

Date: Friday, February 27 (Saturday, February 28 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 Cottrell (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, bug spray if needed. We will see American woodcock flight displays, and we will have demonstrations from local falconers and raptor rehabilitators.

No pets please.

2. NEW FOR 2015: Frog Calls and Bat Monitoring – ETPP Ponds and Vicinity

Date: Saturday, April 4

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

Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Leader: Wade Gefellers and Kitty McCracken (ORNL)

Limit: 25 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: We will be visiting some beaver impounded wetlands and ponds to learn how the personnel at ORNL are monitoring local bat populations and how to identify local frog populations based on calls. We hope to hear pickerel frogs, spring peepers, and southern chorus frogs as well as others and we will use an Anabat detector to record ultrasonic bat calls. Walking will be on level dirt/gravel roads (distance <1 mile). Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes and bring bug spray and water. A reliable flashlight or headlamp is recommended since the walk will continue after sunset.

No pets please.

3. Wildflower and Old Growth Forest walk

Date: Sunday, April 12

Location: Meet at West Guardhouse, Oak Ridge Turnpike (Hwy 95)

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

Leader: Larry Pounds and Paul Durr (botanists)

Limit: 25 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: Walking will be off trail, in moderately rough terrain (distance about 1.5 miles). Since this is an off trail hike in rocky country, participants need to have good balance and stamina. We will see many native spring wildflowers as well as a stand of old growth trees which has been thriving for >240 years. Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray and water.

No pets please.

4. Bird Nature walk – ETPP Ponds and Vicinity

Date: Saturday, April 25

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/gravel roads (distance 1-2 miles). Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray, field guide to birds, binoculars, and water. We may 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.

5. Invasive Plant Identification and Treatment – Various Sites on the Oak Ridge Reservation

Date: Saturday, May 16

Location: Meet at West Guardhouse, Oak Ridge Turnpike (Hwy 95)

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Leader: Kitty McCracken and Jamie Herold (ORNL)

Limit: 20 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: After a brief introduction to invasive plants and management on the Oak Ridge Reservation we will visit multiple sites in the area (carpooling). Walking will be limited at each site but we will focus on identification, impacts to other local flora and fauna, and treatment options for invasive plants. Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring sunscreen, bug spray and water.

No pets please.

6. Reptiles and Amphibians Inventory – Solway Bend

Date: Sunday, June 7

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 sunscreen, bug spray and water. We will collect several turtle species, talk about local snake identification and discuss management of local herpetological populations. There will be plenty of opportunities for children to get involved and learn about the animals.

No pets please.