

2005 Edition

Registry News

From the Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry Program

Oklahoma
Natural Areas
Registry



Introduction

A Note from Kim

The Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry has assisted with the voluntary protection of many sites across our state. Since its inception, the Registry program has assisted with the voluntary protection of more than 70 sites that cover more than 44,000 acres across Oklahoma. In many cases, the Registry program's achievements are accomplished with the assistance of individuals from various agencies, businesses, non-profits, clubs, groups and families. These partnerships are invaluable.

As many of you know, the Registry program once was partnered with the Oklahoma Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC). When the Registry program moved to the Oklahoma Biological Survey in late 2001, that partnership fell to the side. But during 2004, the

partnership was rekindled as new staff came on board and someone asked the inevitable question, "Why aren't any of the TNC preserves part of the Registry program?"

The Registry program and The Nature Conservancy are natural partners, since TNC's preserves originally were selected and designed around one or more elements that warranted protection. While the ultimate measure of protection (the privilege of owning land) has been bestowed upon the elements found on TNC preserves, recognizing these sites as registered natural areas is one way that the biological survey and the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory can show their support of TNC's important work.

So in this edition of the *Registry News*, we take a look at two of The Nature Conservancy's preserves and newly



The Kamps (left) and the Rooneys (right) are Registry neighbors in Cherokee County. Both couples pr



Pontotoc Ridge Preserve

*Element: Oklahoma cave amphipod (Allocrangonyx pellucides), Oklahoma beardtongue (Penstemon oklahomensis), tallgrass prairie, mixed grass prairie, eastern bottomland forest
Pontotoc and Johnston Counties, 3,000 acres*



Much of the big bluestem at Pontotoc Ridge was six to seven feet tall during the fall of 2004

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Pontotoc Ridge Preserve

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The Oklahoma cave amphipod is found only in the subterranean springs within the Arbuckle Uplift. They are an indicator species of good water quality.

thunderstorms and the emergence of the rattlesnakes from their winter dens. Summer is marked with butterflies feeding on purple spikes of liatris, the lush and quick-growing Indian grass and big

bluestem, and the hum of insects at night. Fall brings smoky days of hard work during prescribed burns, an abundance of white-tailed deer, a vast array of colorful leaves and the return of the rattlesnakes





Directions to Pontotoc Ridge Preserve From Ada: Take Highway 99/377 from the J.A. Richardson Loop toward Tishomingo. Continue south about 7.3 miles from the junction of highway 99a in Fittstown to the Pontotoc/Johnston county line. Turn east on Pontotoc Road and continue east for about one mile to the southwest portion of the preserve. From there, go north, following the turns in the road to the preserve's headquarters gate. Or contact Jim Erwin at (580) 777-2224.



An ADA-accessible trail winds through forest and prairie at Pontotoc Ridge.



A beauty berry bush next to a bench along the trail.

Four Canyon Nature Preserve

Elements: Reichenbach's hedgehog cactus (Echinocereus reichenbachii) (Mammillaria heyderi), Arkansas River shiner (Notropis girardi), (Phrynosoma cornutum) and mixed grass prairie natural community
Ellis County, 3,410 acres

By Kim Shannon and Chris Hise

Another newly registered site also is a property of the Oklahoma Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The land is situated in the southeastern corner of Ellis county, near the Packsaddle Wildlife Management Area. As with other preserves and projects of TNC, the Four Canyon Preserve was made possible with the assistance of several agencies. While most conservation agencies and organizations have the same ultimate goal of protecting and conserving the natural landscapes of Oklahoma and its native species, it is not always easy to coordinate efforts. But when those efforts do come together, good things like the Four Canyon Preserve are accomplished.

In May 2004, The Oklahoma chapter of The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, announced the creation of the Four Canyon Preserve along the Canadian River in Ellis County. The property is among the last remaining intact native landscapes in western Oklahoma and is considered a priority for protection work in the Southern



A Four Canyon Preserve vista.

Shortgrass Prairie ecoregion.

The Four Canyon Preserve encompasses 3,410 acres of river, floodplain, upland mixed grass prairie and protected canyon habitats, and harbors a number of species of state and federal conservation concern, including rare shore birds, obligate grassland birds, reptiles and plants. The property contains more than three miles of essential nesting/foraging habitat for the federally-endangered Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) and designated critical habitat for the federally-threatened Arkansas River Shiner (*Notropis girardi*).

Because of the area's critical habitat



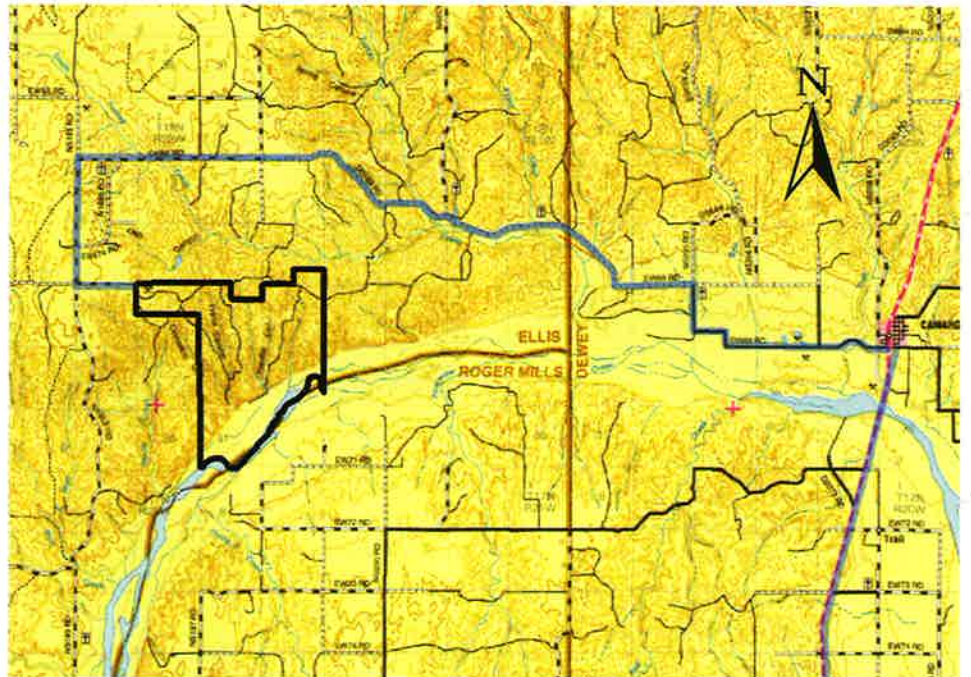


The Canadian River borders the Four Canyon Preserve on the south.

For more information about the Four Canyon Preserve and The Nature Conservancy's work in western Oklahoma, contact:

Chris Hise, Preserve Director
 P.O. Box 253
 Leedey, OK 73654
 (580) 488-2657

You can check out the Oklahoma chapter of The Nature Conservancy's Web site at: <http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/oklahoma/index.html>



The blue line on this map shows the route to Four Canyon from Camargo, OK.

TROG and the Potter Tract

Element: Gray Bat (Myotis grisescens), Ozark Big-Eared Bat (Corynorhinus y. y.)
Cherokee County, 189 acres

Dennis Potter and the Tulsa Regional Oklahoma Grotto are on a mission, a long-term mission. They want to protect the natural features and creatures of Crystal Cave and Blue Moon Cave.

To accomplish this, Dennis Potter and his brothers donated their property in 2003 to the National Speleological Society (NSS) to ensure its long-term protection. While TROG had been working with Dennis for many years on his property monitoring and gating the caves, a new level of partnership was created when the property was donated to the NSS and management responsibilities were appointed to a committee of well-qualified TROG members. Besides TROG, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also is a key partner in protecting the



The Ozark big-eared bat.



Winter in the Ozarks

property. The Potter Preserve is managed with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of

bridge (see photo below).

The caves on the Potter Nature Preserve have an interesting history. In the 1930s Crystal Cave was commercialized and had a swimming area at the front of the cave. An article titled "Cave Country" from a 1934 issue of *The Kansas City Southern Magazine* called Crystal Cave, "the largest and most beautiful cave in Oklahoma — truly a place of wonders, and many others caves in the vicinity have not been fully explored or developed. We are informed that this cave is in a park, owned by Atchley & Son of



The natural limestone bridge of the Potter Preserve



The gates designed and built by TROG are bat friendly. Both the rare and common bat species that use this cave can fly between the bars of the gate.

Stilwell, containing 16 springs, a huge natural bridge of quartzite and a large electrically lighted pool of clear cool water, known as Lake Sequoyah."

While Crystal Cave no longer is the largest cave in Oklahoma (that honor goes to another cave within the Ozark Plateau National Wildlife Refuge) its beauty, natural resources and vital ecological role within the Ozarks are appreciated more than ever by a partnership of individuals and conservation groups.



NSS and TROG Information

With more than 12,000 members and 200 grottos (like TROG), the National Speleological Society does more than any other organization to study, **explore** and conserve cave and karst resources; protect access to caves; encourage responsible management of caves and their unique environments; and **promote** responsible caving.

NSS Contact info:
2813 Cave Avenue
Huntsville, AL 35810-4431
(256) 852-1300
Web site: www.caves.org
E-mail: nss@caves.org

TROG contact info:
Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Central Tulsa Library in the Fourth floor conference room. The central library is located in downtown Tulsa at 4th and Denver.
Web site: www.trogok.org
E-mail: swallace@upperspace.com



Mark Your Calendars!

Here are some upcoming events going on around the state. The Registry program participates in many of these events and others are included for your information.

▷ May 13 and 14:

28th Annual Wildflower Workshop in Ponca City

This annual event is held in a different city or town each year. Friday's activities include presentations about Oklahoma's native plants and related topics, a dinner and awards to this year's ONPS photo contest.



Field trips to various sites in Kay and Osage counties will be held on Saturday the 14th to view wildflowers at their best!

For registration information, call Joanne Orr at (405) 521-4037

▷ June and July:

The Nature Conservancy will be conducting butterfly counts at many of its preserves during June and July and you can participate!

Below is a list of dates and contact information.



June 11 at Pontotoc Ridge. Meet at the preserve office at 10 am. Contact Walter Gerard at (918) 747-4771.

June 14 at Keystone Ancient Forest. Meet at 9 am at the convenience store parking lot at the 209th W. Ave. exit of Hwy 412, just west of Sand Springs. Contact John Fisher at (918) 245-8662 or jfisher@tnc.org.

June 18 at Four Canyon Preserve. Meet at 10 am at the preserve entrance (13 miles west of Vici on Hwy 51 and eight miles south. Contact John Fisher at above info.

June 25 at J.T. Nickel Preserve. Meet

at 9:30 am at preserve headquarters in Sawmill Hollow. Contact Walter Gerard at above information.

July 2 at Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. Meet at 9:30 am at the Visitor's Center. Contact Walter Gerard for more information.

▷ August 13th:

Annual Vickery Bat Flight Field Trip

More details will be mailed to registrants and past participants in early July.

Remember to register early (once you receive a letter) since there will be limited space for this exciting trip!



▷ August 27 and 28:

Oklahoma Wildlife Expo 2005 at the Lazy E Arena in Oklahoma City



Come discover new and exciting ways to enjoy your outdoor Oklahoma. It's an outdoor experience where visitors fish, shoot, kayak, rock climb, mountain bike, see and touch wildlife and learn about recreation in the great outdoors. And it's FREE!

For answers to your questions, call Expo coordinator Rhonda Hurst at (405) 522-6279 or contact her via email at rhurst@odwc.state.ok.us.

▷ September 9 and 10:

BioBlitz! 2005 at Oxley Nature Center in Tulsa

Join the staff of the Oklahoma Biological Survey and other scientists from around the state and region to assist with the 24-hour survey of the biota at the Oxley Nature Center or just come and observe!



For more information, contact Ian Butler via e-mail at ian_b@ou.edu or call (405) 325-1985

Or see the Web site <http://www.biosurvey.ou.edu/bioblitz.html>.

▷ October:

(specific date to be announced) Oklahoma Native Plant Society Annual Meeting

A weekend of botanizing, food and fun. For additional information or to register, check the ONPS Web site often at:

<http://www.usao.edu/onps/>.



▷ November 5:

Oklahoma Academy of Science Technical Meeting at Oklahoma City University

The OAS Fall Technical Meeting draws academic, professional, industrial and lay persons with an interest in science. The program includes oral and poster presentations of scientific research and academy business.



The OAS fall field meeting will take place in October. Check the Web site below for a specific date and more details.

For more information, see the OAS Web site: <http://oas.ucok.edu>.

Also, please feel free to call or e-mail Kim at kimshannon@ou.edu or (405) 325-7658 regarding any of these events!

Poster #2 Rare Animals and Plants of Oklahoma

Chances are you've not come across many of Oklahoma's rare plants and animals. From the swift fox, the Oklahoma salamander and the Ouachita rock pocketbook to the lesser prairie chicken, Oklahoma phlox and the Arkansas River shiner, Oklahoma is home to a remarkable diversity of flora and fauna.

To get better acquainted with some rare plants and animals, the second in a series of posters from the Oklahoma Biological Survey now is available! This poster features many animals and some plants that are ranked as rare by the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory. Our second poster is similar in design to our first poster, Oklahoma's Botanical Heritage, in that it features rows of various animal groups, including birds, invertebrates, fishes, amphibians and reptiles, mammals and plants. The back of the poster is filled with species descriptions, state and federal ranking information and contact information for the agencies and institutions that participated in the production of the poster. The Oklahoma Biological Survey produced this poster with assistance from the Tulsa Zoo, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, the Bebb Herbarium, the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory and the Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry. Johnny King Design of Tulsa produced and designed the poster.

If you would like a copy of the poster for yourself or for a school, library, club or organization, contact Kim Shannon at one of the phone numbers below or via e-mail. Quantities of up to 10 posters can be mailed to you. There also are various places around the state where you can pick up a poster. In Norman, you can come to the Oklahoma Biological Survey. In Oklahoma City, you can get a poster from the folks at



Martin Nature Park or from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. In Tulsa, posters can be found at the Oxley Nature Center. In southwestern Oklahoma, posters are available at the nature center of the Quartz Mountain Nature Park. Also, check out the Biological Survey's Web site for more places across Oklahoma where posters will be available in the near future.

To request a poster or posters, contact Kim Shannon.

Norman office: (405) 325-7658

Cell phone: (405) 623-8022

E-mail: kimshannon@ou.edu

Web site: www.biosurvey.ou.edu



Shooting Stars at Pontotoc Ridge Preserve

The shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*) can be found at Pontotoc Ridge. While it is not a rare plant in Oklahoma, it is not seen frequently. But when you do see one, you know it!



Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry



Questions? Comments?

For more information about the Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry, contact Kim Shannon at:

Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry Program

Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory

111 East Chesapeake Street

Norman, OK 73019-5112

Phone: (405) 325-7658

www.biosurvey.ou.edu/heritage/registry.html



Free Registry boundary signs are available for all Registry participants. They can be obtained through an Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry Program representative. The signs measure approximately 11" x 11" and are made of white plastic with blue lettering, like the one to the right.

There now are four different Registry signs available. If you would like signs for your Registered property, please call the number above.

Articles in this issue of Registry News were written by Kim Shannon.

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