



February 8 - 12, 2009

Course Descriptions

Land Management and Enhancing Habitat

Jody Pagan, Chief Biologist for Five Oaks Wildlife Services

Matt Conner, Refuge Ranger, White River National Wildlife Refuge

Daryl Jones, Program Coordinator, Natural Resource Enterprises Program - MSE

Our speakers effectively deliver information to landowners and community leaders that encourage informed decision-making regarding the management of land and assessing existing resources for value-added wildlife enterprises. Discussion topics include the importance of soil conservation, habitat management for increased wildlife, water conservation, and assessing your land for its strengths and areas of improvement.

The Business of Agritourism: Creating a Plan

Daryl Jones, Program Coordinator, Natural Resource Enterprises Program - MSE

Kathy Radomski, Director of Business and Industry Training, Phillips Community College UA

The course objective is for each participant to begin to develop an actual business and development plan for their land or community. Facilitators will train and coach participants in assessment techniques and plan development throughout the course. An assessment workbook is provided.

Nuts and Bolts: Risk Analysis and Management, Finance and Legal Considerations

Daryl Jones, Program Coordinator, Natural Resource Enterprises Program - MSE

Daryl has worked with Natural Resource Enterprise Program at the Mississippi State Extension Service for several years, and is an expert on explaining the risk involved with starting a nature tourism enterprise as well as the financial and legal issues property owners should consider.

Private/Public Lands: A Winning Combination

Agritourism's Role in Community Development

Shelly Plante, Nature Tourism Coordinator, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Shelly and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department have worked for over twelve years to establish what many consider to be the model for watchable wildlife driving trail development. A primary key to their success has been the enthusiastic participation of private landowners and farms that have joined in the trail system. Shelly will share the positive results she has seen for communities and landowners as they participate in and coordinate a wildlife enterprise with others in the region.

Involving Youth

Brinkley BEST Lab, Mary Meacham and Students

DeWitt EAST Lab, Carole Anderson and Students

In the summer of 2007 two high school student teams coordinated efforts with their EAST lab facilitators, Audubon Arkansas, and local experts to experience and learn about the different area habitats, habitat significance, wildlife identification skills, conservation measures and historical importance. Each team developed tools for their community's area retailers to use in communicating the richness of the Arkansas Delta to tourists. The students will share their experiences and offer insight as to how to engage youth in your community's projects. EAST facilitators will discuss project based and service learning and why it works for today's youth.

The Basics of Birding

Understanding Birders

Dr. Dan Scheiman, Bird Conservation Director, Audubon Arkansas

Birding is a growing interest across America that requires little capital investment on your part. Why are birds important? Why watch birds? How do you watch birds? Dan will introduce you to the skills and tools needed to spot and identify birds in the field.

To effectively market to birders you need to understand the audience. What motivates a birder? What might a birder need while birding? What might a birder expect from a tour operator? This class will address these questions and more.

Interpretation

Matt Conner, Refuge Ranger, White River National Wildlife Refuge

Tourists love genuine stories about our families, land, heritage and communities. Interpretation for your guests is an important skill that ties together habitat, wildlife, history and hospitality. Matt will guide you on the importance of identifying and sharing your stories while facilitating this interpretation workshop.

Photography: A Nature Tourism and Marketing Tool

Eric Maynard, Photographer & Director of Delta Rivers Nature Center, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Learn how to use photography to effectively market your enterprise, as well as how to attract photographers to your property with the promise of delivering spectacular wildlife and landscape shots.

Hospitality, Marketing and Public Relations

Shannon Roberts, Training Coordinator, Arkansas Small Business & Technology Development Center- UALR

How do you get tourists to your land or community when you don't have a Disney World on the back 40? Perhaps one of the most important concepts in running a business is efficient and cost-effective marketing to the appropriate customers. Some low-cost marketing strategies and a customer-focused marketing approach will help tourists find your 'field of dreams'.

When they arrive your guests need to feel as though they've come home. Good customer relations, etiquette, attentiveness, cleanliness and a positive attitude and atmosphere keep people coming back year after year.

Resources for Development

Dr. Rebecca McPeake, Associate Professor - Wildlife, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service

Many state and federal programs provide financial assistance for implementing conservation practices on marginal crop, pasture, and forest lands to strengthen sustainable land management practices which enhance your agritourism business. Becky will share valuable resources available to landowners to grow their agritourism business.

