

FRIENDS OF RETZER NATURE CENTER

SUMMER/FALL 2017 NEWSLETTER

Umbrella, anyone?

As we move into the last half of summer, we can look back at one of the wettest summers in recent memory – replete with pesky weeds and mosquitoes. According to one local weather observer, we’ve had more than five inches of precipitation in each of the past four months, and rain has been recorded in the Waukesha area on 40 percent of those days. We’ll likely exceed our annual precipitation total before Labor Day. How has this crazy seasonal weather affected bird nesting and foraging success, predator-prey interaction, seed dispersal, and other environmental concerns at Retzer? What have you observed on an early morning or early evening walk through the nature center’s grounds? As dialog, awareness and concern increases with regard to global climate change and possible regional climate scenarios, it’s imperative that natural sites like Retzer Nature Center be preserved as a meaningful hedge against the increasing impact of local development and as a place for purposeful phenological inquiry.

Alaska Natural History Tour



Fourteen members of the Friends of Retzer Nature Center recently flew to Alaska on a two week long natural history tour of the state. The trip was led by Board member David Block, who

has organized travel programs in Alaska many times, and included overnight stays in Sitka, Juneau, Skagway, Valdez, Seward, and the Denali National Park area.

The first week focused on ferry travel through southeast Alaska's beautiful Inside Passage. Photo highlights included the totem poles in Sitka National Historic Park, the restored gold rush dwellings at Skagway National Historic Park, the rugged landscape of White Pass and the Yukon, and the massive icepack at Juneau's Mendenhall Glacier.

The second week focused on minibus travel through the southcentral part of the state, led by Tour Designs North driver and guide Steven Helgason. Photo highlights included cloud free Mt. Denali plus grizzly bears, caribou and moose in Denali National Park, the calving Beloit Glacier in Prince William Sound, puffins and sea lions at Seward's Alaska Sea Life Center, trail vistas of Exit Glacier in Kenai Fjords National Park, and a sockeye salmon run up a Kenai stream.

For more trip coverage, check out the blog on our new website at www.FriendsofRetzer.org.

Update on Educational Center Renovations

Renovations to the Educational Center at Retzer continue on schedule, with fall completion of the new Recycling and Water Interactive Exhibit top on the list. In addition, the adjacent Planetarium is getting an impressive technological upgrade. The Friends are also providing funds for new animal area enclosures and an interactive wall monitor display in the hallway.



Apple Harvest Festival

Mark your calendar. The annual Friends of Retzer Apple Harvest Festival is slated for Saturday, September 23rd. The event runs from 9am until 5pm. The entrance fee is \$5 per vehicle, but if you show your Friends membership card you'll get in free.

As usual, the county will have countless varieties of apples for sale in their Apple Market, together with fresh apple cider, caramel apples, and homemade apple pie. Craft exhibitors will have unique items to sell. In the Children's Area, there will be a tent for storytelling, plus arts and crafts tables. "Passports for Adventure" stops will be scattered throughout the Nature Center. Accompanying outdoor music this year will be a county sponsored beer garden featuring a local microbrewery.

Once again, the Friends will operate a used book sale and offer a silent auction to raise funds for future initiatives. Both will run from 9am until 2pm in the room next to the Apple Market garage. If you have slightly used books related to nature or a silent auction item you'd like to donate, please drop them off at the front desk any time between now and September 15th.

The Friends will also oversee the festival's hayride, and need four volunteers selling tickets and four volunteers collecting tickets and assisting people on and off the rides. Shifts run from 10:30am to 1:00pm and from 1:00pm to 3:30pm. Please email Elaine@FriendsofRetzer.org or David@FriendsofRetzer.org if you'd like to volunteer with any of our sponsored activities. You may also call Retzer Nature Center at 262-896-8007 to volunteer for any of the other festival events scheduled that day.



Other Upcoming Fall Events

Howl-O-Ween: Friday, October 13th from 6pm until 9pm. The entrance fee is \$15.00 per vehicle. Once again, if you show you Friends of Retzer Membership card you can get in free. Costumes are encouraged.

International trip meeting: Monday, October 2nd from 6:30pm until 8pm. Information will be shared concerning upcoming natural history tours to Panama and Costa Rica in Winter/2018 and to Alaska in Summer/2018.

Membership Renewal

If you need to renew your Friends of Retzer membership, you can do so either by mailing a check to the Nature Center, stopping by at the front desk, or paying via our new website at: www.FriendsofRetzer.org. Membership helps us support vital projects and programs at the Nature Center, and provides discount benefits to those on the membership list. Many thanks!

Membership Levels:

- \$ 20.00 Hummingbird (Individual)
- \$ 25.00 Robin (Family)
- \$ 50.00 Cardinal (Donor)
- \$ 75.00 Owl (Donor)
- \$ 100+ Eagle (Donor)