

JAWS



MEGALODON

Largest Shark that Ever Lived

June 5, 2010 – January 9, 2011

The 60-foot, 2-million-year-old Megalodon looms life-size in this mega-exhibit of modern and fossil sharks! This traveling exhibit highlights the evolution, biology and misconceptions of Megalodon, an enormous prehistoric shark that once cruised all the world's oceans. Related to the modern great white and mako sharks, Megalodon was a dominant marine predator for 15 million years before vanishing 2 million years ago.

Megalodon was produced by the Florida Museum of Natural History with support from the National Science Foundation. The exhibit conveys current research findings of Florida Museum paleontologists, and showcases both fossil and modern shark specimens and full-scale models from several collections. People have collected Megalodon teeth for thousands of years, and today Megalodon has near-cult status. The exhibit explores fossil sharks as ambassadors for science and shark conservation.

Check our calendar, online or in this issue, for dates and times of special programming to complement the exhibit. In June and July, enjoy the exciting, hands-on Fun Friday programs offered by Museum Education staff. This summer, join us for lectures on related topics such as modern and fossil sharks.

The exhibit is sponsored locally by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science Foundation, Gertrude C. Ford Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, *The Clarion-Ledger*, The Walker Foundation, Comcast, Anonymous, Nissan North America, Inc., Regions Bank, Dr. & Mrs. Steve Zachow, Mississippi Power Company, Mr. & Mrs. Dudley Hughes, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, and other generous supporters. (See page 11 for complete sponsor listing.)

FEATURED TUESDAY LECTURE: Modern & Fossil Sharks—Was Megalodon in Mississippi?

You may have seen the movie "Jaws" - but you've never seen jaws like these. They belonged to a behemoth 60 feet long, whose giant mouth bristled with 276 teeth. It was the Megalodon, the biggest prehistoric shark of all times that ruled the seas more than two million years ago. It comes to life again in our current traveling exhibit *MEGALODON*,

Largest Shark that Ever Lived. George Phillips, Museum Paleontologist, will profile the exhibit and talk about the oldest shark remains from Mississippi which date back some 85 million years. Have remains of Megalodon been found in Mississippi? Come to the Museum's Noon Lecture July 6th to find out!

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Dear Members,

Please make plans to visit the Museum of Natural Science soon to see *MEGALODON: Largest Shark that Ever Lived* and don't miss the First Tuesday lectures and Fun Fridays associated with this incredible exhibit. Thanks to the sponsors and volunteers who are making this dynamic exhibit come to life. During the seven and a half months that MEGALODON will inhabit the Museum, visitors will learn about Mississippi fossil sharks, present day sharks and the world's oceans.

All of us are very mindful of the importance of the Gulf of Mexico right now as we wait to see what impact the massive oil spill will have on our lives and the rich life of our nearest ocean. The Museum is involved in coordinating the response to environmental damage and wildlife recovery. Kathy Shelton, a biologist here on staff at the Museum, is working with Unified Command in Mobile and with the SCAT (Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Teams) to coordinate Mississippi's involvement in wildlife retrieval efforts.

Since February 13th, approximately 50,000 people have experienced *Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl: Home Sweet Home*, an interactive education exhibit for young children. AT&T and the forestry community in Mississippi helped finance this engaging play space for our young audience. Thanks so much to all of you who made this experience possible for so many families.

State budget cuts have limited our services this year to many of our supporters throughout the state but I want to thank the entire Museum staff and our wonderful volunteers for their hard work and dedication to providing excellent service for both Mississippians and tourists that visit our state.

See you at the Museum!!

Libby Hartfield
 Libby Hartfield
 MUSEUM DIRECTOR

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science is to promote understanding and appreciation of Mississippi's biological diversity through collections, research, scientific databases, education, and exhibits; and to inspire the people of our state to respect the environment and to preserve natural Mississippi.



Katfishin' Kids Casting for Smiles!

Fun fishing at Turcotte Lab off Hwy 43 at Ross Barnett Reservoir, for ages 15 and under, accompanied by adults. Equipment, bait and lunch are FREE.

The Mississippi Wildlife Federation, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, MomsLikeMe.com, *The Clarion-Ledger*, Sport Fishing Restoration, Winner Bait Company, Studio Chane, Academy Sports and Outdoors, and all local Wal-Mart stores are working together to bring this free event to children aged 15 and under to teach them all about fishing.

Bring the kids and join us for a fun-filled day where children can learn the basics of fishing. We'll teach them how to tie a knot, select the correct lure, bait hooks and cast. In addition, they will learn what a fish is and become familiar with it's habitat. We'll stock the pond with catfish and let them try their hand at fishing. Each child participating will receive a free t-shirt and goodie bag while supplies last.

This event is free to all and no equipment is needed. Mark your calendar and make plans to join us on June 5th for our eighth annual Katfishin' Kids!



SPECIAL EVENTS

Katfishin' Kids at Turcotte Lab
 SAT · JUN 5
 7AM to 10:30AM

Make a Splash
 FRI · SEPT 24
 8AM to 3PM

Slither, Crawl & Fly
 SAT · OCT 30
 10AM to 12NOON

Natural Christmas Crafting
 SAT · DEC 4 & 11
 10AM to 12NOON



Slither, Crawl & Fly Snakes, Bats, Spiders, oh my!

Join with the Museum staff to learn about creatures like snakes, spiders and bats that slither, crawl and fly! But don't worry: they're not as scary as you might think. Discover the facts and myths about these mysterious and often misunderstood creatures. Touch a snake, examine a bat specimen, observe a spider, and understand the beneficial role they play in the ecosystem.



Natural Christmas Crafting Fun holiday activities

Get in the holiday spirit with these hands-on natural ornament-making sessions. All ages welcome!

Christmas for the Birds
 DEC 4 · SAT · 10AM-12NOON

Learn how to create natural ornaments that will help feed the birds during the winter months.

Nature-Made Christmas
 DEC 11 · SAT · 10AM-12NOON

Make fun ornaments using natural and recycled objects.

Make a Splash Celebrating water education

This fun, interactive water day allows students to explore a variety of water-related topics. Students, teachers and volunteers participate in hands-on water conservation activities such as "The Migration Game" and "The Incredible Journey". Call the Museum at 601-354-7303 for more information.



2009 ENVIRONMENTAL HERO AND RECYCLER OF THE YEAR AWARD: MUSEUM DIRECTOR AND FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Award Winning Announcements

Museum has solid win in recycling

On behalf of the Mississippi Recycling Coalition, Mark Williams presents the 2009 Environmental Hero and Recycler of the Year for State Government Agencies award to **Museum Director Libby Hartfield** and the **Mississippi Museum of Natural Science Foundation Board of Directors**. The Mississippi Recycling Coalition is a non-profit consortium of organizations and businesses in the state that promotes recycling and reuse of solid wastes. The Museum was selected because its recycling programs and commitment to recycling have been continually demonstrated throughout the years and has been a true model for the public.



PROJECT WILD FACILITATOR OF THE YEAR: JOE MCGEE

He makes it look so easy and so much fun

Joe McGee has received Mississippi's Project WILD Facilitator of the Year award. Joe provides hands-on programs and teacher workshops covering southeast Mississippi. He shares the native wildlife and habitats of south Mississippi with children and teachers. His enthusiasm and knowledge of wildlife encourages all Mississippians to explore the outdoors with excitement and curiosity.

Cathedral High student wins best of show

The 2010 Mississippi Junior Duck Stamp Art Competition awarded **Taylor White's** color acrylic depiction of a "Pintail" as Best of Show. Ms. White is a student at Cathedral High School in Natchez, MS. The Junior Duck Stamp Contest has been sponsored in Mississippi for sixteen years by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, a division of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. This year, there were 445 artwork entries representing 12 different schools from throughout the state. Artwork was judged in categories of grades K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. Ribbons are given for first, second, third places and honorable mentions.



JR. DUCK STAMP 2010 BEST OF SHOW: "PINTAIL" BY TAYLOR WHITE



"Down Under" on top

The First Annual Back to Nature Photography Contest awarded **Anna Hennan's** "Down Under" as Best of Show. This contest is designed to encourage Museum visitors to venture out and capture the natural beauty of the wildlife and habitats seen on the grounds of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science and along the trails of Lefleur's Bluff State Park. For details on the Second Annual Back to Nature Photography Contest, visit www.msnaturalscience.org and click on The Latest or call 601-354-7303 for official guidelines and entry form.



BACK TO NATURE 2010 BEST OF SHOW: "DOWN UNDER" BY ANNA HENNAN

Madtoms: Mississippi's "Other" Catfishes

We love our catfishes in Mississippi

From classic table fare to blues music (see B.B. King's "Catfish Blues"), catfishes are woven into the cultural fabric of our state. It's not surprising that when we are visiting with folks at the Museum or taking calls on "Creature Comforts", the topic of conversation often concerns channel, flathead, or blue catfish. Matt E. Roberts, Museum Ichthyologist calls them "the big three." They reach lengths of 50, 61, and 65 inches, respectively! These are followed by other well known catfishes, the black, brown and yellow bullheads, which grow up to 24 inches in length. Among these relative behemoths are the little known madtom catfishes, usually topping out at five inches long. They are diminutive treasures to behold.

Madtoms are river and stream dwelling catfishes in Mississippi. They are distinguished from others by their small size and distinct relationship between the adipose and caudal fins. The caudal fin is the most posterior fin on fishes and is often called "tail fin." An adipose fin is really a fleshy lobe that occurs dorsally and just anterior to the caudal fin. The two are distinctly separated in other North American catfishes and in madtoms they are not.

Madtom coloration is another characteristic that demands attention, sometimes quite literally. Pigmentation varies from uniform in madtoms of the Schilbeodes subgenus to sharply contrasting bands of light and dark pigment in the subgenus Rabida. Madtoms of both groups are here in Mississippi and, all told, 11 different species swim in our waters.

A striking new madtom of the Rabida group was described recently (2004) from right here in Mississippi! The piebald madtom is marked with three dark brown to gray dorsal saddles. The second saddle extends down each side in the fashion of stirrups that contrast beautifully with surrounding tan/yellow coloration. Medial fins (dorsal, anal, adipose, and caudal fins) are also marked with alternating light and dark pigmentation. The result is a truly beautiful and unique contribution to Mississippi's biodiversity.

The piebald madtom is present in our archives here at the Museum, and these records played a role in the species' recent description. Documented occurrences are very rare though, and we have little information from which to gauge the species' abundance and distribution in our state.

Is the piebald madtom rare or abundant? Are its populations secure, or are they imperiled in some way? These are questions we will be seeking to answer in the coming years here at the Museum by conducting a state-wide survey targeting the species and making observations of its basic biology that can be used in drafting conservation measures if they are needed. We look forward to keeping you informed!



PIEBALD MADTOM



PIEBALD MADTOM (*NOTURUS GLADIATOR*) FROM THE HATCHIE RIVER. PHOTO BY CONSERVATION FISHERIES, INC.



GROUP OF PIEBALD MADTOMS (*NOTURUS GLADIATOR*) HELD IN AQUARIUM FOR OBSERVATIONAL STUDY. PHOTO BY CONSERVATION FISHERIES, INC.

ONGOING



MPB RADIO SHOW

Listen to Museum director Libby Hartfield and local veterinarian Dr. Troy Majure every Thursday morning at 9AM (rebroadcast at 9PM) as they take call-in questions from listeners about all of Mississippi's critters—big or small, furry or scaled, wild or domestic. Join the live fun with a call to the team at 877-672-7464.

FUN FRIDAYS

This summer, join the Museum's Education staff for Fun Fridays and experience interactive, hands-on programs coordinated with our current feature exhibit *Megalodon: Largest Shark that Ever Lived*. These family-friendly programs, for accompanied children, are offered every Friday in June and July.

FISH FEEDING

Meet some of our most fascinating aquarium inhabitants, every Tuesday and Friday at 10AM, and Sunday at 2PM.

CREATURE FEATURES

Scheduled or spontaneous, these informal programs feature live or mounted animals. Scheduled every Saturday at 10AM and 2PM, Creature Features make learning fun!

LECTURE SERIES

On the first Tuesday of the month (except Dec. and Jan.), the Museum offers lectures addressing a variety of natural science subjects. Unless noted otherwise, the lectures take place from 12NOON to 1PM in the Museum's Rotwein Theater. Lectures are free to Museum Foundation members or regular admission visitors. Please show your membership card at the gate.

BIRD WALKS

On the first Saturday of the month (except Dec. and Jan.), join experienced birders and Jackson Audubon Society members for a walk on the wild side. Bird walks for family groups and beginners are from 8AM to 10AM at Lefleur's Bluff State Park Campground. Fee: \$3. For more information, call Mary Stevens at 601.956.7444.

JUN - AUG • PRESCHOOL CLASS

Was I Big or What? (a close look at Megalodon, the largest shark that ever lived) Children will discover that many animals are "extinct"—no longer exist. They will appreciate the remarkable size of the ancient shark, Megalodon. Pre-registration required. Contact Joan Elder at 601-354-7303 ext.136 or by email. (joan.elder@mmns.state.ms.us)



JUN 5, 2010-JAN 9, 2011 • SPECIAL EXHIBIT

Megalodon: Largest Shark that Ever Lived
The 60-foot, 2-million-year-old Megalodon looms life-size in this mega-exhibit of modern and fossil sharks.

JUN 5 • SAT • 7AM-10:30AM • EVENT

Katfishin' Kids at Turcotte Lab

Fun fishing at Turcotte Lab off Hwy 43 at Ross Barnett Reservoir, for ages 15 and under, accompanied by adults. (See page 3 for details.)

JUN 11 • FRI • 10AM-12NOON

Fun Friday: All those teeth

JUN 12 • SAT • TEACHER WORKSHOP

Project WET Workshop

For details contact Rebecca Jones at 601-354-7303 or by email. (rebecca.jones@mmns.state.ms.us)

JUN 18 • FRI • 10AM-12NOON

Fun Friday: Megalodon bites

JUN 25 • FRI • 10AM-12NOON

Fun Friday: Wetland Wonders

JUL 2 • FRI • 10AM-12NOON

Fun Friday: Itty Bitty Monsters



JUL 6 • TUE • 12NOON-1PM • LECTURE

Modern & Fossil Sharks—Was Megalodon in Mississippi?

SPEAKER: George Phillips; Museum Paleontology Curator, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Jackson

Was the biggest prehistoric shark of all times in your backyard? Paleontology expert George Phillips presents the facts on the oldest shark remains in Mississippi from. See front cover for details.

JUL 9 • FRI • 10AM-12NOON

Fun Friday: Extreme

JUL 16 • FRI • 10AM-12NOON

Fun Friday: Take a bite out of sharks

JUL 23 • FRI • 10AM-12NOON

Fun Friday: Big Teeth

JUL 27-30 • TUE-FRI • TEACHER WORKSHOP

Teacher Workshops

For details, contact Angel Rohnke at 601-354-7303 or by email. (angel.rohnke@mmns.state.ms.us)



AUG 3 • TUE • 12NOON-1PM • LECTURE

Sharks Past and Present: From Megalodon to Megamouth

SPEAKER: Dr. Eric Hoffmayer; Shark Biologist, Gulf Coast Research Lab, USM, Ocean Springs

Sharks have been swimming in our oceans for nearly 450 million years. As a result of their evolutionary success, sharks come in many different shapes and sizes ranging from the whirltooth, to the wobbegong, to the goblin, to the whale shark. This talk will highlight the diversity of many extinct and living species of sharks, as well as some of the interesting shark projects being conducted in the Gulf of Mexico by the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory.

SEP & OCT • PRESCHOOL CLASS

Me? A Terrible Lizard? (fun with dinosaurs)

Children will appreciate the wide variety of dinosaurs that lived long ago as well as their habitat. Also, they will observe that some dinosaurs ate meat while others

enjoyed plant material. Pre-registration required. Contact Joan Elder at 601-354-7303 ext.136 or by email. (joan.elder@mmns.state.ms.us)

SEP 6 • MON • HOLIDAY

Museum Closed for Holiday

SEP 7 • TUE • 12NOON-1PM • LECTURE

How to Enjoy the Outdoors While Avoiding Mosquitoes, Ticks, Chiggers, and Other Pests

SPEAKER: Dr. Jerome Goddard; Medical Entomologist
People who love the outdoors are often plagued by mosquitoes, ticks, chiggers, and other biting arthropods. This presentation discusses the various arthropod pests affecting persons visiting the outdoors, shows pictures of the common offenders, and provides suggestions for ways people can protect themselves.



SEP 9 • THU • 4PM-7PM

Teachers' Back to School Night

Teachers - this is a great way to start the new school year! Get resource materials, program ideas, and activities that can be used to bring environmental and natural resource education into the classroom.

SEP 24 • FRI • 8AM-3PM • EVENT

Make a Splash

This fun, interactive water day allows students to explore a diversity of water related topics. (See page 3 for details.)



OCT 5 • TUE • 12NOON-1PM • LECTURE

Seagrass and Submerged Aquatics of the Mississippi Coast: Changes in the Coastal Environment and Research Needs

SPEAKER: Hyun Jung "J" Cho, Ph.D.; Associate Professor of Biology, Jackson State University

Coastal seagrasses and submerged aquatic beds have been declining due to natural and man-induced disturbances. Dr. Cho will discuss her research, restoration efforts and the potential impacts of changes in the seagrass community on the coastal ecosystem. This presentation will

also introduce the beauty and diversity of aquatic plants of coastal Mississippi.

OCT 30 • SAT • 10AM-12NOON • EVENT

Slither, Crawl & Fly

Join with the Museum staff to learn about creatures like snakes, spiders and bats that slither, crawl and fly! (See page 3 for details.)

NOV & DEC • PRESCHOOL CLASS

Time For a Nap! (all about bears and hibernation) Children will understand the need for hibernation as well as the process itself. They will note that bears are not the only animals that hibernate. Pre-registration required. Contact Joan Elder at 601-354-7303 ext.136 or by email. (joan.elder@mmns.state.ms.us)



NOV 2 • TUE • 12NOON-1PM • LECTURE

Ecology of Kaxil Kiuc Biocultural Reserve: The Yucatan Peninsula

SPEAKER: Dr. Markus Tellkamp; Yucatan Research
Dr. Tellkamp will talk about his research at Kaxil Kiuc: the Helen Moyers Biocultural Reserve on the Yucatan Peninsula where he studies the ecology of this 4,000 acre dry tropical deciduous forest. This reserve, with its incredible biological and archaeological resources is located in one of the oldest forest in the Puuc region and serves as the center for the Millsaps College "Living in the Yucatan Program".

DEC 4 • SAT • 10AM-12NOON • EVENT

Christmas for the Birds

Participants of all ages will learn how to create natural ornaments that will help feed the birds during the winter months.

DEC 11 • SAT • 10AM-12NOON • EVENT

Nature Made Christmas

Participants of all ages will make fun ornaments using natural objects.

DEC 24 & 25 • FRI & SAT • HOLIDAY

Museum Closed

Note: Dates are subject to change.

FOR TEACHERS

WET AND WILD CEU CREDITS

The Museum offers two environmental education programs, Project WILD and Project WET, with CEU credits available.

WORKSHOPS

JUN 12 - Project WET
JUL 27 - WILD about Reptiles
JUL 28 - Aquatic WILD
JUL 29 - Flying WILD
JUL 30 - Project WET

RESOURCES

To schedule a workshop or field trip, reserve a resource kit, download classroom materials, or learn more about how our Museum can help meet your classroom needs, call Angel Rohnke or Rebecca Jones at 601-354-7303 or visit www.ms-natural-science.org.

FOR PRESCHOOLERS



The Museum's "hands-on" Preschool Discovery Room is designed specifically for pre-kindergartners, ages 3-5. It is open when a staff member or volunteer is available. The schedule is subject to change. Call Joan Elder at 601-354-7303 ext.136 or email joan.elder@mmns.state.ms.us for more information.

PRESCHOOL DISCOVERY ROOM HOURS

MON-FRI 1-4PM
SAT 9:30AM-12NOON & 1-4PM
SUN 1-4PM

TIME FOR TWOS (ages 2 & under)
2nd TUE 1-4PM

STORY TIME (ages 3 to 5)
WED 1:15, 2:15, & 3:15 PM (AUG-MAY)
TUE & THU 10:15 & 11:15AM (JUN-JUL)

PRESCHOOL CLASSES
PRE-RESERVATION REQUIRED
(AUG-MAY) MON-FRI 9AM, 9:45AM, & 10:30AM
(JUN & JUL) WED & FRI 9AM, 9:45AM, & 10:30AM



COW NOSED RAY

Cow-Nosed Ray Born at Museum

Visit the aquariums to see this special addition and Megalodon's other cousins

With the arrival this summer of the MEGALODON shark exhibit the Museum aquariums wanted to be able to display a megalodon shark in one of our aquariums. Alas they are extinct, so we went with the next best thing, other types of elasmobranchs. Elasmobranch are cartilaginous fishes that include the sharks, rays and skates. The Gulf of Mexico has many species of elasmobranchs and the Museum aquariums are now highlighting a few of these species.

For the last several months there has been a hound shark on display in the Barrier Island aquarium. Recently, baby bonnet head sharks have been added to the Mississippi Sound aquarium. These small sharks are often mistaken for hammerhead sharks. However the cephalofoil (hammerhead part of the head) is much smaller. They only grow to about 3-4 feet, making them the perfect shark for a smaller public saltwater aquarium. Atlantic stingrays are also very common in the gulf and will soon be added to the Mississippi Sound aquarium.

And lastly, the entire staff is elated over our latest addition to the elasmobranchs at the Museum. We now have a baby cow nosed ray that was actually born here at the Museum. In April, the aquarium staff went to the Mississippi coast and joined museum associate Pete Floyd who helped us catch an adult cow nosed ray measuring about 2-3 feet across. He felt fairly sure she was gravid and may deliver a pup. Well, he was correct! In early May she delivered one baby measuring about 8-10 inches wing tip to wing tip. As soon as everyone has finished going through quarantine they will be added to the Mississippi Sound aquarium.

So, while we may not be able to display a live megalodon shark for you, we do have several other cartilaginous cousins of the megalodon shark to check out in the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science aquariums.



JEFF MCCRAW DISCOVERED THE WHALE SKULL IN A STREAM NEAR BENTON, MS IN YAZOO COUNTY



LATE EOCENE - ARCHAEOCETE SKULL CLOSE-UP

Ancient Whale Fossil Discovered

Mississippian uncovers skull in fossil oyster bed

Central Mississippi is a hotbed for fossil whale hunting! At least a half dozen times a year, the Museum of Natural Science receives reports of Mississippi residents stumbling across the remains of one of our State's greatest natural treasures – fossil whales. The most recent discovery brought to our attention was the report of a large triangular bone in a stream near Benton, Mississippi. Jeff McCraw of Bay Springs, Mississippi, was looking for petrified wood (Mississippi's State Stone, by the way) when he stumbled across a peculiar skull later revealed to be that of an archaeocete, or ancient whale. The skull was lying in a bed of fossil oysters right side up; however, the head was incomplete as the upper half (including the brain case) had been removed by stream erosion. The clayey and limy sedimentary layer from whence the skull (and oysters) was extracted dates to the latter part of the Eocene Epoch, specifically to about 38 million years ago. At that time, much of Mississippi was submerged beneath a large marine incursion of the Gulf of Mexico into the Mississippi River Valley, resulting in complete inundation of the Jackson Metro Area in rather deep water. Well, deep enough to accommodate whales anyway!



CREW

Volunteers Pull Museum Trails into Shape

Take a hike and enjoy the trail improvements!

In the last two years, 24 Eagle Scout projects have enhanced the function, safety and aesthetics along our existing trails and have allowed us to develop the new fern garden trail from scratch. The scouts have cut trail, built decks, benches, railings, and hundreds of feet of retaining wall. Several scouts have focused their projects on the LeFleur's Ridge scout camping area near the Mayes Lake end of the trail, and have provided it with picnic tables, a fire ring, benches and platforms for portable toilets. Bat houses at the campground, and a chimney swift tower in front of the Museum, are two recent scout projects that focused on wildlife.

The smallest work crew on a scout project has been about 4 boys with one or two dads or scout leaders. The largest crews have a dozen boys and 4 or more dads or scout leaders. So, please consider that the work of over a hundred scouts and the sweat and support of several dozen parents and troop leaders is reflected in what you see as you walk along the trails behind the Museum and in the park. The trails would not be what they are without the work of the Eagle Scouts of the Andrew Jackson Scout Council.

This winter, we staged the first ever privet pull day on Saturday, February 20th with the help of all sorts of volunteers. Some were adult Museum volunteers, some were Hinds Community College students, and some were parents and children who heard about it through the Museum's website. Chinese privet is an invasive shrub that grows up to 15 feet tall, but spreads quickly in the swamp forest and can grow so dense that it completely shades-out and excludes native understory flowers and shrubs. The volunteers beat back the privet frontier on 200 feet of the red trail that runs along the swamp terrace between the slough and Eubanks Creek.

It is very satisfying to walk this section of trail now and see a diversity of native plants trying to get a foothold where the privet once was. Things like elderberry, blackberry and pokeweed come up quickly to fill the void, but we want to encourage paw paw and silverbells, too, and new seedling trees as well. To keep up with the work, we will need to stage more privet pulling next winter. Privet keeps its small oval shaped leaves in winter and is easy to identify and pull or cut in an otherwise leafless forest. Winter work days also avoid the poison ivy, heat, chiggers and mosquitoes; a.k.a., the "Four Horsemen" of LeFleur's Bluff State Park. Stay tuned for the 2011 privet blitz.



RETAINING WALLS AND GRAVEL



NATHAN BARTOSIC CHIMNEY SWIFT TOWER IN FRONT OF MUSEUM

FEATURED NATIVE FLOWER:



Coral Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)

Visit the Museum's Native Plant Garden and nature trails where you'll find trail markers and signs identifying plants and habitats. Many of the plants to be seen during your visit are considered rare and display unique flower shapes and colors throughout the seasons. So come on outside and discover the rich variety of Mississippi flora to be found during a relaxing stroll or vigorous hike!



ZACK HANCOCK OBSERVATION DECK ON PURPLE TRAIL

FOR VOLUNTEERS

Fossil Road Show, NatureFEST, International Migratory Bird Day, and lots of excited students visiting the Museum on field trips...spring has been buzzing with activity and we could not do without our faithful volunteers.



Smokey Bear and Woody Owl are protected by Congressional law and are used with permission from the US Forest Service. All Rights Reserved. 16 USC 580p-4 & 18 USC 711a

The friends of Smokey Bear deserve a big thank you for supporting his regular daily visits: Clyde Hare, Kristin Foss, Lainey Johnson, Don West, Bolton Kirchner, and Hunter Richardson. We hope everyone enjoyed exploring *Smokey Bear and Woody Owl: Home Sweet Home* as much as we enjoyed spending time with you there – watching the water flow, roasting marshmallows, building with tree blocks, going fishing, planting trees, and even climbing the (rock) walls.

Several volunteers brought our indoor forest to life over the last few months, including NRCS Earth Team volunteers and our friends from Girl Scout Troop 5332.

This spring, volunteers Jim Leonard and Peggy Lay achieved the 500 hour milestone of service award, including a \$50 gift certificate from The Dragonfly Shop.

This summer we are looking forward to helping our summer campers become nature detectives, and sharing the waters with a huge prehistoric shark! Volunteer training for adults who want to help visitors discover *MEGALODON: Largest Shark that Ever Lived* will be on June 8 from 10AM-12NOON, and will feature a question and answer time with paleontologist George Phillips. *MEGALODON* will be with us this summer at the Museum, where the recent volunteer contributions have been comparable in size!

BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

This is a great time to join our volunteer community. Teen Volunteer information is also available. Please contact volunteer coordinator Ann Peden at 601-354-7303 or ann.peden@mmns.state.ms.us to get started.

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LOCATION

The Museum is located on I-55 at Lakeland Drive—within LeFleur's Bluff State Park.

