Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, Dec. 30, 6 a.m.-6 p.m.
Reservations required. Free.

Wildlife & Landscape Photography
Saturday, Feb. 17, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.
$15, members $10

See details inside for both events.
From the Director

By John DeFillipo

On the crisp autumn night of Saturday, Oct. 28, the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center welcomed over 350 guests to the Wings Over the Wetland event. This magical evening was the high point of our biennial fundraiser, generating over $175,000 from 170 donors. These funds will help extend our mission to educate students and adults about water reuse and conservation, wetland systems and wildlife conservation.

The sounds of the Electric Campfire Band filled the air as guests explored the boardwalk and mingled around a cozy faux campfire (Kaufman County was under a burn ban). Live birds of prey, the awe of astronomy, a watercolor artist, an Airstream photo booth, cobalt campfire mugs and bales of hay rounded out the campfire-under-the-stars theme and provided a festive atmosphere for conversation and new friendships. A delicious buffet of Rosewood wagyu beef, beer can chicken, barbecue river salmon and all the fixings was prepared and served by The Spice of Life Catering with homemade s’mores and chocolate bread pudding for dessert.

Many thanks to our volunteers, staff, sponsors, donors, planning committee, host committee and event co-chairs, Patrick and Kristy Sands, for making our benefit a resounding success.

If you could not make the event but would like to support our cause, please donate on our website at wetlandcenter.com/WOW2017.html.

In this holiday season, my heart is especially full of gratitude and appreciation to the hundreds of people and numerous organizations that continue to believe in and support education about our precious water supply and amazing wetland habitat.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays to you and yours!
Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

$25,000 AMERICAN BALD EAGLE
The Rosewood Foundation
Patrick & Kristy Sands

$10,000 GREAT BLUE HERON
Grand Peaks Properties
Caroline Rose Hunt in honor of Kent & Ruth Buzzi Perkins

$5,000 ROSEATE SPOONBILL
Anonymous
Nancy & Jon Esber
Ellen & Paul Flowers
Haven & Travis Heinrichs
Al G. Hill Jr.

Lydia & Nick McCutchen
Bowmer & Helen Sands
Jacob & Melynda Sands
Julia Sands
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$2,500 BLACK-NECKED STILT
Alan & Kathy Decker
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Legacy Texas Bank

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Skybox Houston - YYC Global Logistics Centre
Jim & Alinda Wilkert

$1,000 GREEN-WINGED TEAL
Terry Sam & Debra Anderson
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$500 SNOWY EGRET
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Dr. Cheryl Kinney in honor of Kristy Sands
LookUp Kaufman
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Jed & Patrik Nau
Jo Stibbs
Ashley Tatum & Navyt Walker
Gary Wood Family
Thompson Realty Capital LLC
Carmen & Andrew Yang

Sponsorships as of November 3, 2017
ON THE EDUCATION FRONT

By Linda Dunn

Our new strategic vision is especially exciting for the education department because we will gain two new sustainable classrooms. Designed to create an immersive education environment, they’ll include conservation friendly features such as solar power and a water-catch system.

Our education programming is bursting at the seams, so these new spaces to accommodate more students are coming just in time. To know that we will be able to share what the Wetland Center has to offer with twice as many students and adults is a dream come true.

They say that past is prologue. If that’s so, the teachers, students and parents who join us in the future will be just as inspired by what we do here as those in the past. The comments included here represent just a few of the many we have received.

“I just wanted to tell you how excited I was about my visit to the JBS Wetland Center with my students the other day. What a fantastic experience. I thought the activities were age and ability appropriate, not always easy when you span ages like my group did. The Center is beautiful. The kids mentioned how cool it was to use the binoculars to see the ‘bird parts,’ and it was clear from the level of engagement in the classroom with the near-shore organisms (it was hard to get them to listen to us because they wanted to keep looking in their trays!) that the students enjoyed that activity as well. I look forward to visiting again, both on my own and with my students. Warm regards.”

Greenhill School teacher

“My 12-year-old son and his cousin went to the Dallas Zoo Camp for one week this summer. The first three days of the week were spent at the zoo. Then for Thursday, the camp group met at the Wetland Center for a sleepover, and I picked the kids up on Friday afternoon. It was one of the best experiences my son had during the summer. The Center is a beautiful state-of-the-art facility with a large indoor meeting area, two classrooms, a beautiful deck overlooking the wetland and numerous boardwalks that take you through the wetlands for closer observation. The staff was phenomenal working with the youth. They learned so much about conservation and water usage ... important teaching points in today’s world. The kids even helped in preparation of their meals over an outdoor cooker, which was a highlight! You know it’s been a great time when kids give a resounding ‘can we go back next year?’!”

Zoo Camp parent

“Thank you for expanding my knowledge on wetlands and how they clean the water! The cattail plant pollen was so cool! I got a bunch of beautiful pictures of plants and the ducks on the ground and in the trees just chilling! Thanks for all the fun!”

Christian, Exxon Mobile Summer Camp

“I want to extend a huge thanks to you and the staff at the Wetland Center. The content was engaging, taught at a high level and covered many of the major components the students need to know about wetland ecology and water quality testing. I certainly appreciate the insight of the instructors. They were able to challenge the students’ critical thinking skills while providing meaningful opportunities for students to explore and enrich their learning. Please pass along my thanks to the staff.”

Wakeland High School teacher
“I really enjoyed the boardwalk and learning about and discovering macroinvertebrates. I wish we could have been there longer because it was a wonderful experience. Learning about how you clean the water really broadened my mind.”

Vivianna, 8th grader

THE EARLY RISER GETS THE BIRD

Join Us for the Christmas Bird Count

By Linda Dunn

From 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 30, we’ll be counting birds at the Wetland Center. Come be part of the always exciting Christmas Bird Count. Some birding experience is recommended.

This will mark our sixth year of CBC participation in a bird count that has been held across the nation since 1900. The count is important to us in preparing our wildlife management plan and to researchers and scientists worldwide.

We share a “count circle” with Trinity River Audubon Center in southeastern Dallas. Last year, our count circle identified 131 species and almost 222,000 individual birds. The vast majority were here at JBS.

To collect the information, the count circle is divided into sections with groups of four to five people. Each group includes one or two expert birders to identify birds and verify sightings. Birding begins before sunup so that owls and other nocturnal birds can be verified.

After a long but fun day of birding, we’ll gather back at the Wetland Center to tabulate sightings, enjoy dinner and swap bird tales. A report of this year’s bird count will be available by contacting the Center.

Where: JBS Wetland Center
When: Saturday, Dec. 30, 6 a.m.-6 p.m.
Who: Bird lovers with some birding experience
Cost: Free
Reservations Required: Call 972-474-9100 or email ldunn@wetlandcenter.com
By Linda Dunn

The gardens at the Wetland Center were planted by our Steward volunteers two years ago and have become a haven for many types of pollinators as well as a source of compliments from visitors. And in a measure of success, the plants just keep growing! So much so that they occasionally need a good cleaning and thinning.

I would like to give a huge thank you to Stewards Patricia Nichols, Jake Calvit and Bill and Kathy Nance who took up this task on two October mornings. They dug, sheered, trimmed and weeded, giving the gardens new life. Many plants had taken the command to go forth and multiply seriously (frostweed!), to the detriment of their less prolific neighbors. Those eager beavers were cut back or transplanted, bringing room and sunshine to those that were crowded.

But with the gardens still full of butterflies and dragonflies, the caretakers were careful to leave plenty of bounty. After the first hard frost and then again in late winter, the team will be back for more garden work.

As you can see from the before and after pictures, the gardens are in much better condition to allow all the plants to thrive and bring more beauty come spring. Patricia, Jake, Bill and Kathy are examples of how Wetland Stewards truly make the Center what it is … a special place to relax and enjoy what nature has to offer.

Left to right: Bill Nance, Kathy Nance, Patricia Nichols, Jake Calvit
After their summer hiatus, our American bald eagle pair has landed back in the wetland for another season of nest building, courtship and, we hope, success in raising the next generation.

We thought you might enjoy this timeline of the eagles and their relationship with JBS.

2008
• Adult eagles observed in the wetland.

2009
• No nesting activity observed.

2010
• Juvenile eagles observed with adults.

Fall-Winter 2011-2012
• Nesting activity takes place on an existing energized Oncor transmission tower.
• Two juveniles observed with adults.

Summer 2012
• Adults and juveniles leave the wetland.

Fall-Winter 2012-2013
• Adults arrive back in the wetland.
• Courting and nest building take place on the existing Oncor tower.
• JBS 1 and JBS 2 eaglets observed in the original nest location.

Spring 2013
• Adults hunt and feed their young.
• JBS 1 and JBS 2 grow and strengthen.

May 2013
• Partnership forms between Oncor, Falcon Steel and the Wetland Center for continued monitoring and eventual safe relocation of the nest.

June 2013
• JBS 1 and JBS 2 fledge the nest and flourish in the wetland.

Summer 2013
• Adults and JBS 1 and JBS 2 leave the wetland.
• Plans move forward for relocation of the eagle nest.

September 2013
• Adults return early, requiring relocation efforts to be postponed until summer 2014.
• Oncor installs bird deterrents on adjacent transmission tower structures.
• New tower facsimile erected on wetland property in advance of relocation the following summer.

Fall 2013
• Adults observed in nesting behavior on original nest location.

Winter 2014
• JBS 3 and JBS 4 spotted in original nest location.

Spring 2014
• Adults and JBS 3 and JBS 4 gain attention from local media and are monitored to ensure their safety on the energized transmission tower.
• JBS 3 and JBS 4 fledge the nest.

Summer 2014
• Adults and JBS 3 and JBS 4 leave the wetland.
• Monitoring continues with Oncor’s biologists for eventual relocation of nest to new tower.

July 12-13, 2014
• Eagle nest relocated to safe new tower structure 1,200 feet from the original location.
• High-definition camera installed above nest for monitoring.

Fall 2014
• Adults return to the wetland but try to rebuild nest on the original tower location.

continued next page
Fall 2014
• Every few days Oncor removes the sticks to deter rebuilding.

November 2014
• Success! Adults finally locate the new tower and quickly move in to reclaim their original nest.

December 2015
• Winter 2014-2015
• Monitoring camera has many issues with the live feed, transmitting images intermittently.

Spring 2015
• JBS 5 spotted above the rim of the nest by ground observation. Biologists believe the stress of the relocation causes the female to lay only one egg.
• JBS 5 fledge and thrives in the wetland.

June 2015
• Adults and JBS 5 leave the wetland.

September 2015
• Adults return to the new nest location.
• Nesting behavior observed up close for first time.
• Monitoring camera working great and observation continues.

December 26, 2015
• Severe thunderstorms and tornadoes hit near eagle tower. Lightning strikes tower and short circuits camera system.

Winter 2016
• Ground observation confirms eggs have been laid.

Spring 2016
• Ground observations catch JBS 6 and JBS 7 peaking over the rim of the nest.
• JBS 6 and JBS 7 fledge the nest and thrive in the wetland.

June 2016
• Adults and JBS 6 and JBS 7 leave the wetland.

August 2016
• New camera system installed ahead of the 2017 breeding season.

September 2016
• Adults return and continue courtship and building of the nest.
• Excellent images come from the camera.

January 2017
• For the first time, egg laying is observed via the monitoring camera.
• Two eggs are laid four days apart.

Spring 2017
• JBS 8 hatches March 2, and JBS 9 hatches March 5.
• JBS 8 fledge May 15, and JBS 9 fledge May 27.

Summer 2017
• Adults and JBS 8 and JBS 9 leave the wetland.

October 4, 2017
• Adults return to the wetland.

November 2017
• Adults work on their nest for the next set of wetland eaglets.
By Linda Dunn

“Photography is a love affair with life.” – Burk Uzzle, American documentary photographer

Those who entered our Beauty of the Wetland photo contest obviously share a love affair with this wondrous place. A special thanks to all who participated, and congratulations to the winners.

The entries were judged on originality, technical excellence, artistic merit, composition and overall impact. Best-of-show and first-place winners received two tickets to our Wings Over the Wetland event, a $200 value. The second- and third-place photographs will be used in a rotating exhibit at the Center.

**Best of Show**
John Manuel from Combine with “Sunset over the Walkway”

**Landscape**

*1st Place* – Peggie Howell from Forney with “Birds & Water”  
*2nd Place* – John Manuel with “Welcome to the Wetland”  
*3rd Place* – Peggie Howell with “Vista”

**Wildlife**

*1st Place* – Terry Adams from Colleyville with “Dickscissel”  
*2nd Place* – Linda Holt from Kemp with “Heron”  
*3rd Place* – Terry Adams with “Heron”

**Waters of the Wetland**

*1st Place* – John Manuel with “Sunny Reflection”  
*2nd Place* – John Manuel with “Purple Skies & Waters”  
*3rd Place* – Linda Holt with “Dragonflies”

** Macros**

*1st Place* – Jackie Glancy from Mesquite with “Bees”  
*2nd Place* – Peggie Howell with “Dragonfly”  
*3rd Place* – John Manuel with “Dragonfly”

Enjoy the first-place winners on the following page.
John Manuel's "Sunny Reflection"

Jackie Glancy's "Bees"

Terry Adams' "Dickscissel"

Peggie Howell's "Birds & Water"
Teachers Serving Teachers

By Edith Hilborn

Here at the Wetland Center, we educators have such a pleasant, stress-free job of teaching people of all ages and backgrounds about water and the wetland environment without the trials of managing a class of students for the entire school year.

Our public school teachers, though, carry the burden of hard work and long hours with little or no accolades and are personally held accountable for student progress. Working with the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) standards and administrating the STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) test can be quite challenging. To help out our school teachers, we’ve restructured several of our programs.

Although our lessons have always been aligned with the TEKS and available to teachers online, we have streamlined them and made sure the standards are met in a more efficient way. Teachers can arrange field trips knowing in advance that our programs will enhance their classroom instruction in the areas of wetland ecology, bird adaptations and wildlife ecosystems.

We’ve also developed training workshops for teachers based on these programs. Our programs not only satisfy state standards, but our workshops also give teachers a slew of new ideas to take back to their classrooms.

Two of the North Texas Municipal Water District’s member cities, Mesquite and Rockwall, sent fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade teachers to the Center during the summer for training in these programs. Over 60 teachers attended each session, and the reviews were overwhelmingly positive.

We appreciate all that our public and private school teachers do for their students. When they bring their kiddos to the wetland, their students gain much more than just a field trip. They receive unique environmental education in the science TEKS required by the state. It’s an A+ for everyone!

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First Impressions...

By Stephanie Weber

After working at the Center for about two months, it is safe to say that I have found my calling. I absolutely enjoy being able to come in every morning seeing the sun rise over the wetland and starting my day here. Couple that with the fact that I get to teach students about the natural wonders of the wetland and its role in the grand scheme of the environment as well as its purpose in the municipal water supply.

But if I had to pick out the most gratifying thing about my job, I’d say it’s seeing that sudden spark of wonder in the students’ eyes when they become aware of the beauty of the wetland. Or maybe it’s knowing that a light bulb goes off in their head when they learn a new ecological topic and realize how much of an effect they personally have on the environment.

In my short time here, I’ve already set one goal: building up an environmental badge program for both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Being a Gold Award Girl Scout myself, I know how important it is to have quality environmental badge programs that focus more on ecology and our impacts on the environment rather than on general outdoor skills. So in the near future, I hope to have some wonderful badge programs for all you Scouts out there.

Overall, I love my job. It gives me great satisfaction that I can pass on my passion and environmental knowl-
Social Butterflies

By Carol Garrison

The Wetland Center is socially active! Our aim is to embrace the power of social networking and really boost our use of these sites to spread the glory of the wetland and what we do here.

We’re focused on building our “likes” on Facebook (currently over 3,000), and we invite you to visit and post often. We’re also finding Meetup through the Dallas Hiking Group to be a great way of bringing first-timers to the Center. And thanks to Lannie Johansen at the Rosewood Corporation, our Instagram followers have increased more than 500 percent since the beginning of 2017.

Don’t forget we’re on Twitter too. I’ve taken over management of our Twitter account, so look for regular postings. Among other things, I’ll be updating the ever-changing wildlife populations during their seasonal migrations.

Our social media posts would not be the same without our Stewards. Master naturalist Kathy Nance and husband Bill, an accomplished photographer, pretty much started our Facebook page and continue to be dedicated to publicizing the latest and greatest about the Center. Tom Fleming regularly shares his amazing photography and observations of our wetland inhabitants, from the smallest beauty to our grand bald eagles. We couldn’t do social media without them.

Check us out on social media. Then put down that screen and come join us.
Going Beyond Your Cameraphone
Photography for Wildlife and Landscapes

By Shannon Love

Ready to be a better photographer – and maybe win that next photo contest? Join Wetland Steward David Hamblet on Saturday, Feb. 17, as he shares what he has learned over 35 years of experience in photography.

“I focus on how to see the way the camera sees,” David says, “and how to use the various tools to capture images that speak to their viewers.”

The course will benefit beginner to midlevel photographers the most. Advanced photographers can also benefit by seeing a different approach to common themes. David keeps technical jargon to a minimum.

In the first hour, David will discuss the common equipment used in wildlife and landscape photography. You’ll learn about digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera bodies, lenses, teleconverters, filters, tripods and other miscellaneous items. He’ll also talk about the common features found on cameras and how and when to use them.

The second part of the class will look at exposure and identify the key elements to a “correct” exposure and going total manual versus semi-manual. You’ll also explore how to use a histogram and the Zone System to adjust your exposure. The class will finish with focusing techniques to capture wildlife and controlling depth of field.

When: Saturday, Feb. 17, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.
Who: Beginners and midlevel, but all can benefit
Cost: $15/members $10
Registration: Email ldunn@wetlandcenter.com

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 2
Open 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Advanced Bird Tour
7 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Walk & Talk Bird Tour
7 a.m. – 9 a.m.

Saturday, December 16
Open 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Bunker’s Pond Trail Walk
10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, December 30
Christmas Bird Count
6 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Reservations Required

JANUARY

Saturday, January 6
Open 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Advanced Bird Tour
7 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Walk & Talk Bird Tour
7 a.m. – 9 a.m.

Saturday, January 20
Open 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Bunker’s Pond Trail Walk
10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 3
Open 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Advanced Bird Tour
7 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Walk & Talk Bird Tour
7 a.m. – 9 a.m.

Saturday, February 17
Open 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Bunker’s Pond Trail Walk
10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Photography for Wildlife and Landscapes
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Equipment & Techniques for Wildlife & Landscape Photography

with speaker David Hamblet

Date: Saturday, Feb. 17, 2018
Time: 1 pm – 3 pm
Cost: $15 / $10 for members
Registration: ldunn@wetlandcenter.com
Address: 655 Martin Lane
Seagoville, TX 75159
Phone: 972-474-9100

Topics Include:
- dSLR bodies
- lenses
- teleconverters
- filters
- tripods
- exposure
- manual focus
- histograms
- Zone System
- depth of field