



**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.**

## **NWAAS MEMBERSHIP REPORT DECEMBER 2016**

**Come to the Membership meeting, December 3,  
2016, at Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area  
Visitor Center, 2 PM**

**and stay for a Mitchell Pruitt talk on his Northern Saw-whet Owl research project**

From Mitchell Pruitt: "As a native Arkansan, I developed a love for the outdoors at a young age. At age 11, I attended the Arkansas Audubon Society's ecology camp, which is what originally piqued my interest in birds and nature. From there, it has snowballed into a lifelong passion and hopefully a career. I graduated from the University of Arkansas in May 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Environmental, Soil, & Water Science and am now working on my master's in biology. Over the last few years, I've been actively researching the Northern Saw-whet Owl in Arkansas. After discovering the species' occurrence in northwest Arkansas, we've moved to phase two of the research, tracking its movements in the area and hopefully getting a better idea of where our birds are coming from. Specifically, my research interests lie in birds of prey and conservation biology. When I'm not in the field or doing schoolwork, I can be found birding in Arkansas and beyond. I am also a nature photographer, interested in wildlife with an emphasis on birds, dragonflies, butterflies, herps (reptiles & amphibians), and wildflowers."

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## MULHOLLAN BLIND



A major accomplishment this year was completion of Mulhollan Blind on Lake Fayetteville. The blind was formally dedicated October 26, 2016. NWAAS is the official sponsor of the blind. Other organizations and many other people -- members of NWAAS and others -- made the blind possible. Read the details about the two-year project here:

<http://www.nwarkaudubon.org/mulhollanblind.htm>

**PLEASE READ REPORTS FROM CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS:**



**President Michelle Viney**

Michelle is a native of Rogers. She got involved with National Audubon in March 2008 as Conservation Program Manager for Audubon Arkansas in the northwest Arkansas field office. When NWAAS held its restructuring meeting in December 2008, she offered to come on the new Board as educational chair. She continues in this role. Her projects for the society have been varied, including the Toyota Together-Green Volunteers Days project. One of those events drew 160 people to work on removal of non-native invasives

from Lake Atalanta Park in Rogers. She also organized a Birding Basics training program at Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area (March 2012).

By 2014, when Doug James had accomplished his goals as society president (see Doug's section in this report), the Board decided to nominate as our next president a person from within the ranks who already "knew the ropes." That person is Michelle. She took over as president in January 2015. Michelle is the youngest member of the Board, with two young daughters, husband Lee, and starting in 2016, a leadership job in a local government's recycling and conservation efforts. That is to say, busy and active appropriately, in the field of conservation.

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## **RECENT PAST PRESIDENT, DOUG JAMES**

On December 17, 2008, Joan Reynolds, President of the Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society, convened the society's annual winter meeting held at Fayetteville Public Library. The purpose was to find new officers. As Joan wrote in a card sent out to the membership, "Hopefully, we will have enough nominees to keep the chapter going!" Because my graduate students initiated the chapter many years ago, I agreed to become the new President.

This created for me some needed tasks. At this time, NWAAS had several assets left to it by Dave Nolan (Here is background on Dave Nolan: <http://www.nwarkaudubon.org/Archive/Dave%20Nolan.pdf>.) These included: 1) a healthy endowment he left the Society, 2) a vast stamp collection 3) a small coin collection, and 4) considerable camera equipment. I was able to sell the stamps, coins, and camera stuff to add to his endowment.

Another task that faced me was finding enthusiastic board members to serve the Society some of which were to be elected and some appointed. The elected ones were nominated by committee. The others I appointed directly. The initial volunteer board organized from the December 2008 meeting underwent numerous personnel changes, with some board members leaving and new ones coming on. After a period of change, the board achieved workable stability. Bill Beall brought his expertise to the Treasurer position and did marvelously in preparing monthly financial reports and filing required IRS forms for the society. With help from Joe Neal, he and I revised the voluminous constitution for the Society and streamlined it considerably, which was accepted by the board. Joe Neal also organized a full schedule of field trips to view birds and plants. Joanie Patterson as Vice President was in charge of organizing meetings and also brought up Conservation issues. Richard Stauffacher has settled in as a skilled and the dedicated webmaster, with our website (see this at <http://www.nwarkaudubon.org/>) an important asset in

communication and publicity. Stephanie Barr and I continued the newsletter for the Society. Joan Reynolds and then Sandy Davies did a wonderful job as Secretary. Joan worked with Michelle Viney on setting up and managing the society's facebook page, another significant asset in communicating with members and the public (see this at <https://www.facebook.com/Northwest-Arkansas-Audubon-Society-172133076185122/>). David Chapman headed a committee to represent NWAAS in constructing the Mulhollan bird blind at Lake Fayetteville.

As I prepared to retire at the University of Arkansas after 64 years of service (June 2016), Michelle Viney, agreed to replace me as President. So I bid you all farewell at 91 years in age. I've enjoyed my 6 year tenure immensely from December 17, 2008 through 2014. I wish you all the best of luck in the future!! (Doug remains on the NWAAS Board) --Sincerely, Douglas A. James

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## **FIELD TRIPS: Having fun is just as important as seeing the Bald Eagle**

Field Trip Leader Joe Neal

We try for some kind of field trip each month. I try to mix up places and purposes. Different habitats are just as important as different bird species. It doesn't serve the purpose of a regional organization to just have trips around Fayetteville. We move around and often have trips for specific purpose. Our trip to Chesney Prairie Natural Area is at Siloam Springs and we do this one in July, when the prairie flora is at maximum. We go to the shortleaf pine forests in the Ozark National Forest because that's where we find Brown-headed Nuthatches and other plants and animals closely associated with native pines. Ninestone Land Trust in Carroll County is not only beautiful; it's also a place where innovative land management is underway. We take an ecological approach and we follow our interests. It may mainly be birds, but at other times, native flowers, or dragonflies, or the noontime potluck on the porch at Ninestone. We also link up with efforts by others. One field trip is the Fayetteville Christmas Bird Count, another International Migratory Bird Day, and Birder's Weekend at Devil's Den State Park. Finally, there is always the dilemma of whether to go on Saturday or Sunday. Sometimes there's no choice, but otherwise, we mix them up. Some can only field trip on a Saturday, others only on Sunday. People come on field trips for many reasons. They tend to come BACK if they have fun, so having fun is just as important as seeing the Bald Eagle.

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## **Vice president and conservation**

Joanie Patterson

As Vice-president of NWAAS, I am in charge of finding speakers for our December and January meetings. This is both challenging and fun, as I have the chance to meet new and interesting people. However, Mitchell Pruitt, the speaker for our upcoming December meeting I already know well, as perhaps do many of you. As you can tell by the title, "Saw-whet Owls in Northwest Arkansas" is about his exciting Saw-whet Owl research, just starting its third season. (Read his biography in this issue.) The meeting will be at the Hobbs State Park Visitor Center on Saturday, December 3, 2016, at 2 pm.

I'm also Conservation Chairperson. However, I do not act unaided, as various board members often bring up items of concern. One organization alone is not strong enough to tackle urgent issues, but working together, conservation groups can make a difference. NWAAS has partnered with other Arkansas organizations on several issues, such as protecting the Buffalo National River, fighting over-development in our parks and connecting our children with nature. A current issue I support is the Arkansas Mud Drive, that seeks to create more shorebird habitat by flooding agricultural fields after crops are harvested. What issues matter most to you? Each one of us can and should do our part. I hope that you will discover what you can do to make our world a better place.

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## **Secretary's Report**

Sandy Davies

The duties of the secretary are to attend the meetings, if at all possible, and record the important decisions and relevant remarks made by the board of directors at the meetings. It is a very easy job and one in which one can learn so much from the other board members. As secretary for the last few years it has been fun hearing about the progress of the Mulhollan Bird Blind (which is now finished), the field trips and the many more important conservation projects. Every one of the board members has been so encouraging and supportive of me during the last few years that I have been secretary; and I want to thank them for their support. My husband, David Davies, and I are building a retirement home on some of his family property on Petit Jean Mountain and will be moving there this year. So, I will be resigning from my position as secretary at NWAAS. We will join the River Valley Audubon Society (which we were members of when we lived on Petit Jean Mountain previously) when we move. I want to encourage anyone who is interested in becoming involved in the Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society to consider volunteering to serve as secretary. It is an easy and fun way to make a contribution to the conservation of Arkansas' beautiful birds and our environment.

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**PUBLICITY REPORT FROM OUR WEBMASTER,  
RICHARD STAUFFACHER**

Publicity functions for Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society are mainly handled through the society website

<http://www.nwarkaudubon.org/index.html>

the society Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/Northwest-Arkansas-Audubon-Society-172133076185122/>

and the society blog

<https://northwestarkansasaudubonsociety.wordpress.com/>

I maintain the website and blog, and Joan Reynolds maintains the Facebook page.

By way of explaining why the website was down for a while, we recently came through a situation with the website where our hosting company that we've been with for a long time was having more and more problems. They were a re-seller for a parent company who transferred a block of domain names (including ours) to another parent company who also had our hosting company as a re-seller. Our host company was also dealing with hack-attacks at this same time and was unable to function effectively. This led to confused and contradictory actions by the companies involved that resulted in our website being closed down for a while because the original parent company erroneously believed that our domain name registration had not been renewed. Fortunately, with some help from the new parent company I was able to transfer the domain name to the society's direct ownership and the website to a new hosting company where it is currently being hosted. Since the original parent company transferred the domain name, there is an ICANN regulation that bars the re-transfer of any domain name until after 60 days so we had to wait that out. And there is a rule that requires a 5-day waiting period between when a transfer authorization code has been provided and the transfer requested (everything set up and approved), before the transfer can actually happen. Also the old hosting company is a proprietary type hosting company, so the website pages could not be transferred and had to be re-created on the current (non-proprietary) host server. We believe that the new website is up and running with all the content that was on the old one, and thank you for your patience!

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**Bill Beall, Treasurer since 2009**

NWAAS's largest source of income is dues sharing from National Audubon Society which amounts to about \$1700 per year. Our other sources of income are local dues, contributions and endowment fund earnings which amount to about \$1300.

Elimination of the printing and mailing of the newsletter has reduced our operating expenses by about \$900 annually with our remaining operating expenses amounting to about \$300.

We spend the remainder of our income for conservation causes in northwest Arkansas and youth scholarships. In the past two years we have contributed to the following causes: Ozark Natural Science Center, National Audubon Society CBC, Paige Mulhollan Waterfowl Blind, Ninestone Land Trust, Audubon Ark. Buffalo River Fund, Morning Star Wildlife Rehab. Center, and several nw Ark. science/conservation programs. Youth Scholarships have been provided to AAS Halberg Ecology Camp and Ozark Natural Science Center.

We also served as clearing house for the collection of contributions and payment of expenses in the construction of the Paige Mulhollan Waterfowl Blind at Lake Fayetteville.

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