

## NATURE WALKS SCHEDULE – SPRING 2024

On the Oak Ridge Reservation, located in east Tennessee, over 1100 vascular plants, 72 fish, 34 mammals and over 200 bird species have been observed. This year the public is invited to six nature walks designed to highlight not only the rich flora and fauna diversity of the reservation, but also to demonstrate the work being done to sustainably manage and conserve this resource. Walks will take place on several locations across the Oak Ridge Reservation beginning in late winter through late summer.

Reservations for the following events must be made in advance by noon the Thursday prior to each walk by contacting Nick Oldham 865-341-3670 ([oldhamnv@ornl.gov](mailto:oldhamnv@ornl.gov)).

More information about these walks is available by contacting Trent Jett at 865-574-9188 ([jetttr@ornl.gov](mailto:jetttr@ornl.gov)).

### 1. Wildflower and Old Growth Forest walk

Date: Sunday, April 14

Location: Meet at West Guardhouse, Oak Ridge Turnpike (Hwy 95)

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Leader: Larry Pounds (botanist)

Limit: 25 (children are allowed)

Description: We will see many native spring wildflowers as well as a stand of old growth trees which has been thriving for >240 years. Walking will be off trail, in moderately rough terrain (distance about 1.5 miles). Since this is an off trail hike in rocky country, participants need to have good balance and stamina. Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray and water. Be aware that there may be some shallow wet areas we will be walking through, boots are recommended.

No pets please

### 2. Bird nature walk – Freels Bend

Date: Saturday, April 27

Location: Meet at the parking lot behind (i.e. south of) the ORISE building at the corner of Bethel Valley and Pumphouse Roads

Time: 8:00a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Leader: Sarah Darling, Kelly Roy, and Neil Giffen (ORNL)

Limit: 25 (children are allowed)

Description: Walking will be over dirt/gravel roads (distance 1-2 miles). Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray, field guide to birds, binoculars, and water. We should see birds of prey and many sparrows in the extensive native grass fields, migrating warblers in the early successional and mature forested areas, and wading birds in the waters along the Clinch River.

No pets please.

### **3. Frog Calls and Bat Identification – Jones Island Road**

Date: Friday, May 10

Location: Meet at Melton Hill Dam Tailwater boat ramp (Hwy 95)

Time: 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Leader: Nikki Jones and Sarah Darling (ORNL)

Limit: 25 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: We will visit beaver-impounded ponds to learn how ORNL personnel monitor frog populations. We hope to hear a variety of frogs including pickerel frogs, spring peepers, and southern chorus frogs. Participants will learn to identify frogs based on calls. We also will see bats foraging overhead and will utilize equipment for participants to identify bat species by their calls. Walking will be on level dirt/gravel roads (distance <1 mile). Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring bug spray and water. A reliable flashlight or headlamp is recommended since the walk will continue after sunset.

No pets please.

### **4. Reptiles and Amphibians Inventory – Solway Bend**

Date: Saturday, June 8

Location: Meet at the parking lot behind (i.e. south of) the ORISE building at the corner of Bethel Valley and Pumphouse Roads.

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Leader: Lindsey Hayter and Kathy Strunk (CRESO)

Limit: 20 (children are allowed)

Description: We will collect several turtle species, talk about local snake identification and discuss management of local herpetological populations. There will be plenty of opportunities for children to get involved and learn about the animals. Walking will be through fields and over level dirt/gravel roads (very limited distances). Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring sunscreen, bug spray and water.

No pets please.

### **5. Skulls and Skins Identification at Historic Freels Cabin – Freels Bend**

Date: Saturday, July 13

Location: Meet at the parking lot behind (i.e., south of) the ORISE building at the corner of Bethel Valley and Pumphouse Roads.

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Leaders: Sarah Darling and Nick Oldham (ORNL)

Limit: 25 (children are allowed)

Recommendations: We will discuss and learn about the wildlife that live on the Oak Ridge Reservation by learning skull and skin identification. Discussion will also include management techniques and monitoring methods such as passive trapping and camera and acoustic sets. We will have a collection of life-like skulls, scat, and track for participants to see up close. We will also have real furs and skins for everyone to see and touch. The walk will be held at the historic Freels cabin. Walking will be through fields and over level dirt/gravel roads (very limited distances). Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring sunscreen, bug spray and water.

No pets please.

**6. History Talk at Historic Freels Cabin – Freels Bend**

Date: Sunday, October 13

Location: Meet at the parking lot behind (i.e. south of) the ORISE building at the corner of Bethel Valley and Pumphouse Roads.

Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Leader: Mick Wiest (host)

Limit: 30 (children are allowed)

Description: We will discuss the history of the Oak Ridge Reservation and the families which lived in the area. The walk will be held at the historic Freels cabin which will be open for touring.

Walking will be through fields and over level dirt/gravel roads (very limited distances). Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring sunscreen, bug spray and water.

No pets please.