



The Society for a Re-Natural Environment

Newsletter #102009

Dear *SRNE* Members, Friends and Associates,

It has been a long road to our first widely distributed newsletter. The past couple of years have been tumultuous, but the *SRNE* has been moving steadily forward. We have had to move our home base twice in the past 2 years. Nevertheless, there has been much traveling, continuing and new project development, and work to generate new opportunities for exploring, protecting and educating people about the Re-Natural Environment. We are now planted firmly in Central Illinois for the foreseeable future. Illinois, which ranks 49th out of 50 states for the amount of remaining native wild habitat (Iowa is 50th), is one of the most productive regions for our organization which is focused exclusively on segments of the non-human natural environment existing in severely human-dominated landscapes. We are enthusiastic about the seemingly endless opportunities for engaging both human and non-human populations here.

Our membership base has grown exponentially over the past two years. We warmly welcome our new members and hope to further expand the *SRNE* family in the coming months as we settle into our new location. Our new online form makes signing up for membership easy. Since interaction with current members has been a bit sporadic, we request that all of you who currently hold an active or expired membership card please contact us at society@societyrne.net at your earliest convenience so we can update our database. We also ask you to consider asking your friends and colleagues to look into becoming members. Due to the hard economic times, the urgency of our mission in the face of accelerating environmental problems, and a restructuring of our funding resources, we now offer all memberships by suggested donation only. This means membership is free to any of you who can't, or choose not to, financially support the organization. So please, spread the word.

The past couple of years have seen some exciting developments. The following is an overview of our activities for 2008-2009.

Habitat Acquisition Program: While based in Kansas City, the *SRNE* acquired four new re-natural habitats totaling 1.306418 acres. Unfortunately, one of the sites received some negative attention and has been removed. This accounts for a loss of .011983 acres. We also now have our first officially sponsored acquired habitat with a big thanks to Dan Wayne of Kansas City. Dan's financial support funded nine acquisition signs which facilitated our largest acquisition to date. If any of you are interested in sponsoring an acquisition please contact us for more information at society@societyrne.net.

Teach the Starlings in Kansas City, an expansion of the ongoing Teach the Starlings campaign which strives to teach all of the non-native, invasive European starlings in North America to say the name of the Man who introduced them here, Eugene Schieffelin. The project consisted of an exhibition at Paragraph Gallery, a multi-media presentation about starlings, and a guided tour on how to locate identify and teach starlings in Kansas City, MO. The presentation and tour were given by *SRNE* president BD Collier.

We presented the various manifestations of our **Native Seed Dispersal Programs** in an exhibition titled **Biodiversity is** at The University of Kansas's Natural History Museum in Lawrence, KS. That show developed into an expanded exhibition at The Kansas Union Gallery called **Reimagining the Environment at The University of Kansas**. At the later exhibition we distributed native seed balls to the KU community.

We had another opportunity to distribute seed balls at an exhibition at H&R Block Art Space in Kansas City. The exhibition also displayed elements and information from **The Highway Expedition** and **The Habitat Acquisition Program**. Over the past two years over 1000 seed balls have been distributed to the public.

Elements from **The Highway Expedition** were also shown in an exhibition called **Locate | Navigate** curated by Kate Hackman at La Esquina in Kansas City and in an online exhibition called **Conducting Mobility** curated by Claude Willey and Ryan Griffis.

BD Collier gave numerous multi-media presentations in 2008 including **Python Invasion**, a presentation about the threat non-native, invasive Burmese pythons pose to the lower United States.

2009 saw the birth of a new project, **The New Parrots of North America**, which is part of a major new programmatic direction called **The Anthropogenic Ornithology of North**. The project, focused on connections between the extinct native Carolina parakeet and the introduced non-native monk parakeet. The project was created as part of the Systems of Sustainability: Art, Innovation, Action event at the University of Houston in Texas.

We were invited to show **Teach the Starlings** in an exhibition titled **Troubles in Paradise** at Missouri State University in Springfield.

Several projects are slated for 2010. First is a multi-media presentation by BD of a new project currently under development called **On the Impact of flying Carp**. The presentation, which focuses on the invasive silver carp, will be given at Links Hall in Chicago.

Next is an exhibition at the New Harmony Contemporary Art Gallery in Indiana called **The New Birds of New Harmony**, part of **The Anthropogenic Ornithology of North America** program.

Finally, our upcoming project, **Advancing the Re-Natural Environment of Medford/Somerville, Massachusetts**, will be part of an exhibition called **InterFace** in the fall of 2010. The project is a major expansion of both the **Native seed Dispersal** and **Habitat Acquisition** programs. The SRNE is excited to be partnering with *The New England Wild Flower Society*, the oldest organization of their kind in North America, along with Tufts University for the project.

FIELD NOTES

There have been several field studies and expeditions undertaken by SRNE members this past year. As part of the research for **The New Parrots of North America** there were multiple expeditions to locate and document non-native monk parakeet populations in Brooklyn, NY, Houston, TX and Chicago, IL. We also were granted access to the bird collection at Chicago's Field Museum to research extinct native and introduced non-native birds for **The Anthropogenic Ornithology of North America**.

This past summer, BD Collier & Prof. Gabriel Gudding undertook a major expedition of the Lower Missouri River. In addition to exploring the re-natural state of this severely human-altered waterway, the expedition marked the initial field work for the new SRNE project **On the Impact of Flying Carp**. Unfortunately, severe weather and dangerous flooding cut the expedition short. Collier and Gudding will continue exploring waterways of the Mississippi River Basin to document the invasion of carp and other anthropogenic effects on this transformed ecosystem.

Collier also spent time observing and documenting pikas in the Canadian Rockies this summer as a follow up to his 2007 project **The Pika Alarm** [pikalarm.net]. Pikas are highly temperature sensitive and are threatened a changing environment. They may become one of the first animals to go extinct due almost exclusively to anthropogenic climate change.

If you have any comments or questions related to our programs or your own experience with the Re-Natural Environment, please email them to society@societyrne.net. We accept all submissions of project descriptions, announcements, research and observations for our next periodic newsletter. Submissions from members are considered first for publication in future newsletters. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list please email us at the above address.