

•**On an Open Fire** — The Nature Tent also will be the site to taste some homecooking with cast-iron skillets on an open fire. Presented by James and Karla Eilbeck, the cooks will fix up several batches of biscuits or cinnamon rolls during the two-day festival. There will be samples for everyone, starting at 8 a.m. so pull up a chair and chat with the cooks while they prepare some biscuits and cinnamon rolls.

•**Petting Zoo** — Marsha's Petting Zoo will again feature beautiful, clean, gentle, exotic and unusual animals from all over the world, plus pony rides, on Saturday, April 8.

•**Refuge Tours** — View native wildlife on the 8,000+ acre Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, including the endangered Attwater's prairie chicken, on the early morning tours on Saturday and Sunday, April 8 and 9 from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. The tour is free of charge.

•**Street Dances/Music** — DJ Joe Hernandez will provide the music on Friday, April 7 from 5 to 9 p.m. prior to Patsy Torres' performance from 9 to 11 p.m. On Saturday, Hernandez will return from 3 to 9 p.m. and then Ryan Thomas & the Roosters will perform from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Borderline will perform from noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday, April 9. For more information, contact Tanya Wiese at (979) 234-7469.

•**Talent Show** — The free event, which will be emceed by Brent Beasley, will be held on the square in downtown Eagle Lake on Saturday, April 8. Call Shawn Carr at (979) 234-5686 for more information.

•**Walking Bird Tour** — Saturday and Sunday, April 8 and 9 at 8:30 a.m.

NWR to offer free tours

Personnel at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service volunteers have teamed up to offer free guided tours of the refuge during the Sixth Annual Eagle Lake Prairie Chicken Festival to be held April 7-9.

The celebration was conceived in 1995 through cooperative efforts from Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce, Houston Audubon Society, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to provide a mechanism to enhance the awareness of the endangered Attwater's prairie chicken's plight.



Guided tours of the refuge will begin in downtown Eagle Lake at 7 a.m. and leave every hour until 4 p.m. on Saturday, and Sunday, April 8 and 9.

Although there is no guarantee that visitors will be able to see endangered Attwater's prairie chickens in the wild, the best tours to take to possibly see the birds would be in the early morning.

The tours will take visitors into an area that is normally closed to the public and will touch on such topics as refuge management techniques, prairie chicken recovery efforts, and coastal prairie ecosystem issues. Tours are expected to last less than two hours and admission is free.

Those interested in learning more about these tours should call the Attwater Prairie

Chicken National Wildlife Refuge at (979) 234-3021, Ext. 12.

Petting zoo to feature pony ride

Children visiting the Sixth Annual Eagle Lake Prairie Chicken Festival will be sure to enjoy a stop at a Petting Zoo with Marsha and Mike Smilie.

The petting zoo will feature beautiful, clean, gentle, exotic and unusual animals from all over the world.

Among the featured animals will be bottle-raised kangaroos, baby llamas, baby deer or antelope, pot-bellied piglets, dwarf African pygmy goats, a mini-donkey, Japanese Silkie chickens, calves, lambs, ducks and bunnies.

A pony ride also will be set up as part of the petting zoo area.

The Smilies emphasized that their petting zoo is U.S.D.A. licensed and sure to be a hit "for the smile of a child."

The petting zoo is sponsored by Colorado County Rice Mill.

For more information about the petting zoo, call (281) 399-1714.

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