

You want me to do what? Listen for frogs in the Savannas after dark? I've done the moonlight kayak tours and know how peaceful the Savannas can be after dark. Give me a night vision scope and let's go look for panthers, coyotes, or even the infamous skunk ape. (Skunk apes only appear around Halloween, so mark your calendar). But frogs?!

Everything I've done at the Savannas has been a great learning experience & again this event lived up to those expectations.

Frog watching is more than just a fun thing to learn at the Savannas. Jamie explained that the data we collected would be sent to Frogwatch USA., a part of the National Wildlife Federation. (<http://www.nwf.org/frogwatchusa/>) It's a volunteer based monitoring program whose purpose is to collect amphibian data and raise citizen awareness about species and habitat decline. The nice thing about this type of research is that anyone, young or old, regardless of education level can do this. No master's degree needed here, just a desire to help and a little patience.



Jamie started with a presentation on frogs that described each frog & included a sound clip so you could hear each one's distinctive call. After a couple sound bytes played, I began to recognize them from my own backyard. I knew frogs didn't make a "ribbett" sound, and I didn't know so many diverse sounds were actually frogs. Some were easy to identify, like the barking tree frog. Others were more obscure and required several replays to get the main sounds down.

Once done with the presentation, we loaded up with flashlights, clipboards, weather gauges, and lots of anticipation. Our first stop was near the education center where we stood silently for 3 minutes to just listen. Ever taken a trip out into nature and just listened? I highly recommend it, even if you are not looking for frogs. As we stood quietly, my mind tried to piece together the sounds; some sounds I easily knew, then there were several others that I had heard in the presentation. After the 3 minutes of listening, we discussed what we heard and documented the species, time, & weather conditions.

As darkness fell, we headed deeper into the Savannas aiming for the boardwalk at the kayak launch. Walking through the Savannas at night, you soon realize you are not alone and nature is very much alive. 3 more monitoring stops were done and we documented more frogs.

Once back at the education center, we shared stories of what we heard while enjoying cookies and soda. The sunset was beautiful, the stars were brilliant, and we all learned an important aspect of nature & were able to contribute valuable data which will make a difference. All right in our backyard.....keep your eyes on the calendar for the next Frogwatch, you'll be amazed at what your ears will see.