



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

February 2008

Program – Traditional Pot Luck Dinner and Craft & Eco-Art Night
Thursday, February 14th at 6:00 PM at EIRC, Sewell
Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks (856-468-6342)

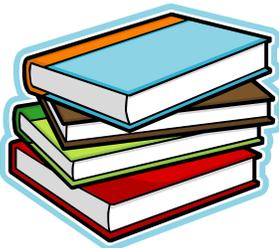
In February, when winter holds the world in his icy grip, it's a great time to gather in the warmth of good company and get creative. That's what we'll be doing in the Gloucester County Nature Club. Our February meeting will be the Traditional Pot Luck Dinner & Craft Night. We will meet at 6:00P.M. at EIRC for an evening of good food, fellowship and the fun and creativity of arts and crafts. There will be lots to do and share:



Pot Luck Dinner - Everyone is asked to bring an entrée or dessert and a plate & utensils for his or herself. **Also please note that the dinner begins at 6:00 P.M.**

Crafts & Hobbies - Come share your craft project, hobby or interest (particularly if it has a nature theme) with fellow club members. Show us the fun things you can do and the beautiful things you can make. We want to make this a hands-on activity we can all join in. If you have a craft or idea you would like to demonstrate and share with us, contact Rich Dilks at 856-468-6342 or by email at rad721@aaahawk.com.

Eco-Art Project - Think of the art of Andy Goldsworthy. Remember the delightful creations we saw in the "Voices From The Land" program? You will have the opportunity to construct and take home your own eco-art project. By the creative use of the simple natural objects found all around us, art is born and beauty is discovered, Be creative, whimsical or profound. We are asking our members to gather and bring to the February meeting natural objects that they and others can use for eco-art. You can bring seedpods, acorns, leaves, sticks, dried grasses, stones, any natural object. Be creative with your choices and we will all be surprised with what we create.



Silent Auction - There will also be a silent auction of vintage and classic nature books. The books for this event have been generously donated by Mr. Bob Cassel.

Field Trip – Long Beach Island (Winter Birding)

Saturday, February 16th, 10:00 A.M. to about 4:00 P.M.

Trip Leaders: Karl Anderson and Gale Cannon

This is a traditional winter birding trip, to see waterfowl, gulls, and shorebirds plus an occasional landbird or raptor. Some not-too-common species usually seen on this trip include harlequin duck, long-tailed duck, common and red-throated loons, and purple sandpiper. Possibles include common eider, Iceland gull, three species of scoter, rough-legged hawk, and short-eared owl.



Directions: Meet at the Barnegat Lighthouse parking lot at the north end of Long Beach Island. From western Gloucester County, the best route is via Route 295 north to Route 70, Route 70 east to Route 72, Route 72 east to Long Beach Island, and north on Long Beach Boulevard to the lighthouse. The distance from Woodbury is about 75 miles; travel time about one hour and forty minutes. There are rest rooms at the lighthouse. There will be a 1.2 mile walk (0.6 mile each way) from Barnegat Lighthouse to the end of the jetty along Barnegat Inlet, but other than that there will be relatively little walking. Dress to suit the weather, bring binoculars (and a scope if you have one), have fuel in your car, and bring lunch and beverage. **This trip could be cancelled for bad weather or icy road conditions; if conditions look doubtful, contact the leaders at 856-845-7075 the evening before the trip.**



Field Trip Report- NW Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count

The Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count was very successful. We had 50 participants of which most of the folks were members of the Nature Club. Seen (if confirmed by the National Audubon Society) was a record 101 species. 100 species was never reached in prior years. There were some rare 'finds' such as the Ash-throated Flycatcher seen by Gary and Margie Lizzi and Great-crested Flycatcher seen by the Cassel party. Having a nice day weather-wise was instrumental in having an exceptional count too! There was open water everywhere and light wind. Some species were typical in numbers whereas others seemed to be more apparent like nuthatches (both types), Hooded Mergansers, Black Vultures, and Great Blue Herons. There were subtle increases to a few species over last year on birds like American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, and White-crowned Sparrow. Wow, have Wild Turkey numbers exploded however. That's a good thing. Of continued concern is the lack of gamebirds other than Turkey with one small covey of Bobwhite seen and no Ring-necked Pheasant. To all who braved the elements, drove many miles, calmed the fears of those folks you encountered along the way, and hopefully had a fun day, we thank you. Thank you to the Strohmeier's for hosting the wrap-up that evening. The 2008 count will be on Saturday, December 13. Please mark your calendar. Plan to bring another friend!



Ron Kegel, compiler

Conservation Corner – Go Green in 2008 by Deb Maka

New Jersey 15-Year Energy Master Plan

The holidays are over and 2008 is underway. One January tradition for many is to make a new year's resolution. Personally, I don't usually make a resolution, but attempt personal growth when I'm inspired. For example, after listening to Al Gore, I bought insulation to wrap around my water heater. Besides, how many of you have already broken your resolutions?

Inspiration can come in many forms. On my way home from work recently, I was listening to Oprah on the radio. She had a show focused on going green. You might not think to go to Oprah for your environmental education but her show presented a concise and practical approach to environmental education. I enjoyed the show and learned a few things too. If you are still looking for a resolution you can keep, try taking a suggestion from the Oprah show and a step toward the betterment of the environment. Here's a list of 10 simple things you can do:

1. Use a reusable bag for your groceries instead of paper or plastic.
 - More than 380 million plastic bags are thrown away in the United States per year and takes up to 1000 years to biodegrade.
 - Paper degrades but an estimated 14 million trees per year are cut to make 10 billion paper bags.
2. Use a reusable aluminum or plastic bottle instead of buying disposable bottles
 - If selecting a plastic bottle, a bottle with the number 2, 4, or 5 in the triangle is desired to prevent tasting plastic.
3. Sign up at <http://www.greendimes.com/> to reduce the amount of junk mail that comes to your house.
 - It provides ongoing name removal from direct marketing lists.
 - Eliminates only unwanted catalogs.
 - Partners with other organizations to plant trees.
4. Use one less paper napkin per day.
 - On average, people use 2200 napkins per year. If each person decreased the number of napkins by 1 each day, a billion pounds of paper waste could be saved each year.
5. Don't get a receipt at the ATM machine.
6. Replace your light bulbs with compact florescent light bulbs.
7. RECYCLE....
 - According to EPA estimates, each person in the United States creates about 4.5 pounds of trash each day.
 - Need information about what you can recycle and where, visit www.Earth911.org
8. Use a power strip to eliminate "vampire stand-by power" when you aren't using your electronics
9. Look for items with minimal packaging.
10. Use eco-friendly cleaning products.

There are many other things you can do to help protect the environment but the above list is a good start. Look at it this way; if you chose to do one thing on this list, you have conquered the beast of broken resolutions. Happy 2008.

Conservation Corner – Energy Efficient Appliances by Loretta Dunne

Sooner or later, we all find ourselves in the market for a new major appliance. Or have a question as to whether an appliance repair should be done or a replacement would be more efficient. There are resources available to help you become more energy efficient and make sound consumer decisions.

The Federal Trade Commission requires EnergyGuide labels on most home appliances (except for stove ranges and ovens), but not home electronics, such as computers, televisions, and home audio equipment. EnergyGuide labels provide an estimate of the product's energy consumption or energy efficiency. They also show the highest and lowest energy consumption or efficiency estimates of similar appliance models.

ENERGY STAR labels appear on appliances and home electronics that meet strict energy efficiency criteria established by the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The ENERGY STAR labeling program includes most home electronics and appliances except for water heaters, stove ranges, and ovens.



The U.S. Department of Energy has Information Guides for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at their website, <http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer>. You will find links such as 'Your Home', "Your Vehicle" and 'Your Workplace'. Go to these pages for a wealth of information on energy efficiency. Also from the homepage is a link for 'Appliances and Home Electronics' which will bring you to information on the purchase of energy efficient appliances.

Another good resource is the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (<http://www.aceee.org/>). The ACEEE is a non-profit organization promoting energy efficiency. Select the Consumer Resources link on their page for valuable information. They also publish a very useful book, *Consumer Guide to Home Energy Savings* The 9th edition was published in 2007. "Included are tips on improving existing equipment, and guidance for when and why consumers should purchase new energy-efficient equipment, as well as a reminder to check local government and utilities for purchase or retrofit grants or incentives." You can purchase this book through the ACEEE website or Amazon. Another option would be to request that your public library purchase a copy.

Consumer Reports often includes energy efficiency ratings in their reviews. They also have a useful website, <http://www.greenerchoices.org/home.cfm>, dedicated to Greener Choices.

Take the time to consider energy efficiency before you buy – help the planet and your bank account!

Preservation Update from the South Jersey Land and Water Trust

Below is the text of a DEP press release about the Daniels property in Gloucester County, recently preserved by SJLWT, with ownership being taken by NJCF. This project was a long-time effort and our very special appreciation goes to Janet Eisenhauer for all she did on this and all she does (all the time) for land preservation and SJLWT. We are also very grateful to Bruce and Jane Daniels (GCNC members) for their strong commitment to preservation and their tremendous patience on this project.

The Nature Club has donated to SJLWT over the past several years and helped make this preservation possible. Thank you, thank you, and thank you!

Forest in South Harrison to be Preserved

SOUTH HARRISON TWP. A 100-acre forest here will be preserved under an acquisition involving several state and environmental organizations and a business settling a natural resource damage claim.

The forest, known as the Daniels property for its longtime owners, is located along Harrisonville-Ferrell Road. The site was acquired for \$800,000.

The tract consists predominantly of mixed hardwood forest and forested wetlands dominated by red maple, sweet gum and black gum. Numerous vernal pools provide a breeding habitat for a variety of amphibians. An unnamed tributary of Oldmans Creek runs through the southern edge of the property.

"This is one of the largest tracts of unbroken forest in southern Gloucester County," state Department of Environmental Commissioner Lisa Jackson said Tuesday. "Conservation of this property benefits the region tremendously by protecting ground water supplies, preserving wildlife habitat, and providing a regional hub in a statewide network of protected parcels of open space."

The DEP provided \$400,000 through its Green Acres program. Another \$400,000 will come from a natural resource damage settlement the DEP reached with Chemical Leaman Tank Lines, a chemical trailer-truck washing operation in Logan Township that is now undergoing cleanup as a federal Superfund site.

The non-profit South Jersey Land and Water Trust acquired the land with the state money and is turning it over to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. The foundation will manage the land as a regional hub in its Garden State Greenway project, a statewide network of interconnected parks, trails, natural areas, farmland and historic places.

Suzanne McCarthy, land and water trust president, suggested "this forest is truly one of the natural-resource treasures of the Oldmans Creek watershed."

Bruce and Jane Daniels will retain life rights to a house and eight-acre pasture and will continue to live on the property.

Other Nature Notes

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount to GCNC members!

Wild Birds Unlimited has a discount agreement with the GCNC executive board and is pleased to offer GCNC members an everyday 10% discount on all purchases excluding optics and food or sale items. Sharon Oakes, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, appreciates the many volunteer contributions made by GCNC members and hopes members can benefit from this discount. Members are requested to identify themselves as GCNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please call Sharon at 218-2973.



Events by other Organizations

- February 1 (Friday) - **Eco-Arts Festival**. 7:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. Sponsored by the Roots and Shoots Club, and held at Bunker Hill Middle School (372 Pitman Downer Rd, Washington Twp NJ). Event raises funds for the Marine Mammal Stranding Center in Brigantine, Save the Animals Foundation, SJLWT, and an African organization that plants trees in Africa. There will be artwork, photographs, readings, poetry, songs, etc.
- February 16 (Saturday) - **Field trip: Birding Burlington County Hot Spots**. 8:00 A.M. to early afternoon. Leader: Lloyd Shaw. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. \$Fee. For info: <http://njudubon.org/centers/rancocas/>.
- February 23 (Saturday) - **Maple Sugaring**. 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. \$Fee. For info: <http://njudubon.org/centers/rancocas/>.
- February 24 (Sunday) - **Field trip: Birding Coastal Atlantic County**. 11:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Leader: Sandra Keller. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. \$Fee. For info: <http://njudubon.org/centers/rancocas/>.
- March 1 (Saturday) - **19th Annual Pinelands Short Course**. 8:00 to 3:30 P.M. at Burlington County College, Pemberton, NJ. Choose five from a menu of 30 one-hour workshops/classes relating to the fauna, history, flora, reptiles, mammals, and folklore of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. Registration fee is \$35.00; final registration deadline is Friday, February 22. For information regarding content, phone 609-894-7300; for questions about registration, phone 609-894-9311.

The following events take place at the Scotland Run Nature Center in Clayton. For details and to register, call the center at 856-881-0845. All events are free.

- Bird Walk: Saturday 2/2 at 8 A.M.
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 2/20 at 2:30 P.M.
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 2/13 at 10 A.M.
- Scout Saturdays: Saturday 2/9 at 10 A.M.
- 4H Kids Nature Club Meeting: Saturday 2/2 at 10:30 A.M.

Natural Events for the month of February

- Skunk cabbage flowers are emerging from the ground, in wetlands throughout the County. As they grow they generate heat, which melts the frozen ground around them.
- Alder catkins are swelling and will open on the first warm days.
- Melting snow may reveal the trackways of meadow voles, dug along the interface between the frozen ground and snow cover.
- Broom crowberry in bloom in the Pinelands.
- Mourning cloak butterflies emerge from hibernation on warm days.
- Killdeer and great blue herons return from the south as waterways thaw and snow cover melts.
- Chipmunks reappear around bird feeders.
- Best time for viewing tundra swans at Whitesbog and other Pinelands ponds.

Looking Ahead:

2007-2008 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the upcoming field trips for the remainder of this year:

- March 15, 2008 (Saturday) - Ringing Rocks State Park, PA - Brian and Paula Hayes
- April 12, 2008 (Saturday) - Salem County Birding - Lloyd Shaw
- May 18, 2008 (Sunday) - Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve - Richard Dilks
- June 21, 2008 (Saturday) - Unexpected Refuge - Karl Anderson and Sarah Summerville

Upcoming GCNC Programs (All occur on Thursdays)

Here is the program list for the rest of this year:

- March 13, 2008 - The Sport of Geocaching
 - Presenter: Joe Valentino
- April 10, 2008 - The Birds of Panama
 - Presenter: Jeff Holt
- May 8, 2008 - Horseshoe Crabs
 - Presenter: Sue Ann Slotterback from the Cape May Nature Center
- June 12, 2008 - Annual Picnic

Club Notes:

- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Karen Kravchuck at blackbirdsinging@hotmail.com or call 468-6536.
- The March Executive Committee meeting will be held at a site TBD on March 9. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.
- The Nature Club is always looking for ideas for future programs and field trips. Please contact the program or trip coordinator if you have ideas or would like to help.
- Information for the next newsletter should be sent to Barry Bengel at sharkeyes@comcast.net or 6 Greenwood Drive, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.