



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

March 2015

Program - Sacred Landscapes

**Thursday, March 12, 2015 at 7:00pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church,
Wenonah, NJ (directions below)**

Presenter: Erik Mollenhauer

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

In ancient tradition, land was not simply a beautiful vista. It was a mysterious place where amazing things happened. It was possessed of great age, intention and power. It was the dwelling place of other-than-human beings, of ancestors, sages and gods. Every society had sacred places. Every person knew and needed them. There was no geography without meaning. "Wisdom" ... as the White Mountain Apache said ... "sits in places".



What does a landscape become sacred? How might our current view of land lie at the heart of the modern environmental crisis?

Join us as we explore the world of sacred landscapes... both small and large... far and near... ancient and modern. Among the stops of our journey: the mysterious "blue fairies" of North Carolina, the primeval Belavezha forest of Poland, the ancient ruins of Delphi (Greece) and the primordial seascape of Mistaken Point, Newfoundland.

"I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown... for going out, I found, was really going in." - John Muir

"At the heart of the religion of hunting people is the notion that a spiritual landscape exists within the physical landscape. Occasionally one sees something fleeting in the land, a moment when line, color and movement intensifies and something sacred is revealed." - Barry Lopez

Directions: The Holy Nativity Lutheran Church is located just off Rt 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd.) immediately south of the traffic light at Mantua Ave. The church parking lot can be accessed by entrances on either Woodbury-Glassboro Road or Lenape Trail (first left off of Mantua Ave).

Field Trip - Family Moonlit Hike and Campfire at Scotland Run

Saturday, March 7, 2015 at 7:00pm

Trip Leaders: Paula Hayes (cell: 609-221-5195 or pnbhayes@gmail.com) and Maria Keefe (cell/text: 609-315-4759 or mariakeefe19@comcast.net)

We are hoping the weather will cooperate for a full moon walk. Join us as we experience the magic of walking in the woods by the light of the moon. We explore the music of the night as our eyes give way to our other senses and we share the night with owls, raccoons, and flying squirrels. Come out and see tree silhouettes, moon shadows and the stillness of the woods in winter. The walk is short but will include uneven and sloping wooded trails so sturdy walking shoes are recommended. The walk will last about one hour which will give us time for some stories as well. We will end with a campfire compliments of the Scotland Run staff. This event will be cancelled in the event of rain. To really enjoy the splendor of the night keep your flashlights off and in your pocket. This event is open to all ages. **To reserve your spot for this special event please register by calling Scotland Run at 856-881-0845 or emailing ltaylor@co.gloucester.nj.us.**

Directions: Take exit 45 off route 55 to Centerton- Clayton. Make a left onto Buck Road (Rt. 553). Make a right at the first traffic light onto Academy Road (Rt. 610). Take Academy Road for 2 miles crossing over route 47 and Fries Mill Road. Just beyond Fries Mill Road turn right into the Nature Center.

Address for GPS: 980 East Academy Street, Clayton NJ



Gloucester County Bird Quest

Saturday May 2, 2015

The Gloucester County Nature Club and co-sponsors invite people of all ages to participate in the **2015 (16th annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest**. The **2015 Bird Quest** will take place on **Sat., May 2, 2015 from 7 AM to 12:30 throughout Gloucester County**.

We have been educating the community about Gloucester County birds through Bird Quest for 16 years. This year we have developed educational materials including a Quest t-shirt with original artwork featuring birds and their songs. Participants will learn about common birds of Gloucester County and the unique songs each of these birds use to communicate.

We will meet at Scotland Run Park (Wilson Lake) in Clayton for the picnic and prizes after the event. Scotland Run Park is located at 980 West Academy St., Clayton, NJ.

See the separate enrollment form.

During this time, teams visit parks and natural sites in Gloucester County to find as many different bird species as they can. The Quest is:

- A way to discover Gloucester County's parks and natural areas
- A way to discover the unique birds that live in and through our county
- An opportunity to learn how to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat
- An opportunity to have fun with family, friends, and colleagues
- A light-hearted competition

The Quest is an educational event: novices are encouraged to participate.

How it works: Teams have 5 hours on Saturday (7am to 12:30) to visit sites in Gloucester County. Birds are identified by sight or sound. The goal is to find as many different species of birds as possible. At 12:30, all participants gather at **Scotland Run Park in Clayton** to report results and for **(free) lunch, t-shirts, live animals, educational activities, and prizes. The \$12 fee per participant helps to defray the cost of lunch, T-shirts, prizes etc.**

We have three ways you can participate:

- Organize your own Quest team with colleagues, friends, and/or family and visit parks and natural areas as a team to find your bird species.
- Join a bus - with support from Wheelabrator, LP of Gloucester County, the club will again operate expert guided buses for individuals unable to form their own teams and are willing to join a larger group.
- Walk with our expert guides at locations around Gloucester County for those folks who are looking for a smaller group size but are not able to form a team.

If you have participated in the past why not invite a friend or colleagues to join you for this year's Bird Quest! Participants are encouraged to attend any of a series of free field trainings in the evenings, mornings and weekends before the Quest. Training sessions are listed near the end of this newsletter.

More information and registration forms will be posted to the Gloucester County Nature Club's website at www.gcnatureclub.org. For more information, join a team or reserve a seat on the bus, contact Brian Hayes at bhayes@eirc.org or 856.582.7000 x110.

Keep hunters' guns silent on Sundays

From NJ Conservation Foundation - RELEASE: Jan. 23, 2015

By Michele S. Byers, Executive Director

"Keep close to Nature's heart ... and break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean." – John Muir

Peace and tranquility are increasingly scarce, with our busy lives filled with the blaring noise and lights of multiple electronics. Fortunately, we still have nature ... a perfect antidote to stress and overload. Studies show that spending even a few minutes in a natural outdoor setting restores calmness and well-being.

But New Jersey's natural areas would become less inviting as quiet havens from stress if a proposed bill allowing Sunday gun hunting goes through.

For decades, New Jersey and about 10 other eastern states have prohibited gun hunting on Sundays, preserving that one day of the week for quiet enjoyment of the outdoors without safety concerns.

Peaceful Sundays will end if this bill, S-699, now before the New Jersey Senate, becomes law. The proposal would make every day of the week, all year round, available for gun hunting. The bill was sponsored by Senator Joseph Kyrillos, who said the measure is designed to help firearms hunters whose schedules don't allow them to hunt on other days.

However well intentioned, the bill would harm vastly more New Jerseyans than it helps. Last year, the state had fewer than 78,000 hunting license holders, while its population was almost 9 million. Hunters make up less than one percent of the population, and the bill doesn't consider the other 99-plus percent –

including families with children, hikers, birders, mountain bikers, nature photographers, dog walkers, equestrians, runners, trail builders and outdoor educators – whose schedules are equally demanding.

Sunday is the only day when many people – not just hunters – get outside and enjoy nature. In fact, many families specifically limit their woodland rambles to Sundays during deer hunting season, and outdoor organizations often organize hikes and trail rides for Sundays to avoid potential conflicts with gun hunters and assure peaceful enjoyment of our wild places.

The state already has various firearms hunting seasons spread across six days of the week for the entire year, which include hunting for the following animals: deer, bear, turkey, pheasant, bobwhite quail, snipe, woodcock, grouse, rail, crow, coyote, fox, possum, raccoon, squirrel, rabbit, woodchuck and various ducks and geese.

While hunters can play a crucial role in wildlife management by culling over-abundant deer, there is no demonstrated need for gun hunting 365 days a year. For those who want to hunt on Sundays, state law was changed in 2009 to allow bow hunting in state wildlife management areas and on private lands. And a currently proposed law would expand Sunday bow hunting to military lands within the state.

The overwhelming majority of New Jersey's preserved state lands were paid for by our taxpayers. Tranquil enjoyment of our state lands should be guaranteed to the public at least one day each week.

If this bill, S-699, becomes law, Sundays will never be the same! Because so few East Coast states have Sunday gun hunting, New Jersey would become a weekend destination for out-of-state hunters, further reducing opportunities for safe and peaceful enjoyment of nature by our residents.

Please take action to defeat S-699 and any related bill that may be proposed in the state Assembly. Contact your legislators and ask them to keep the woods quiet and safe on Sundays. To find your legislator, go to www.njleg.state.nj.us/members/legsearch.asp. You can also sign an online petition on Change.org at www.change.org/p/new-jersey-state-senate-stop-senate-bill-699-sunday-hunting-in-nj-parks?recruiter=217139801&utm_campaign=signature_receipt&utm_medium=email&utm_source=share_petition.

And to learn more about preserving New Jersey's land and natural resources, visit the New Jersey Conservation Foundation website at www.njconservation.org or contact Michele at info@njconservation.org.

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: March 2015

Rain Barrel Presentation and Workshop – Saturday 3/28 at 10:00am. It will take place at Scotland Run Park Nature Center (980 East Academy St. Clayton, N.J. 08312). Learn about water conservation and build a rain barrel to make a difference in your neighborhood. Preregistration and \$20 per barrel fee required to participate in workshop. You will be able to build and take a rain barrel home. Presentation by Watershed Ambassador Lucas Carll is FREE. Please **RSVP by 3/9/2015** with number of participants. CALL (856-825-3700 ext 1270 or Scotland Run (856)-881-0845) or Email (watershed17@ccia-net.com or ltaylor@co.gloucester.nj.us). Space and barrels are limited. Checks made out to the **Camden County Board of Agriculture** must be mailed to Watershed Ambassador WMA17, 2 North High Street, Millville, NJ 08332-3830 to guarantee barrels.



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

- Bird Walk: Saturday 3/7 at 8:00am. Enjoy a leisurely stroll and observe the birds returning for spring. Bring binoculars.
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 3/14 at 10:00am.
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 3/11 at 10:00am
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 3/18 at 2:30pm.



Hairy Bittercress

Natural Events for the month of March

- Woodchucks emerge from hibernation.
- Male skunks wander widely, searching for mates.
- Red maples flower in late March, with male and female flowers on separate trees.
- Roadside "weeds" such as speedwell, wintercress, hairy bittercress, purple dead-nettle, and storksbill bloom before most native wildflowers.
- Eastern screech owls, New Jersey's most common owl, lay eggs beginning in March and continue through May.
- Woodcocks begin courtship flights.
- Male goldfinches begin to molt into their brilliant yellow breeding plumage.
- Eastern Phoebes return this month.

Looking Ahead:

Listed below are the programs we have lined up for the rest of the season. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

April 9, 2015: **Bird Identification Workshop** - Susan Puder

May 14, 2015: **An African Adventure** - Larry A. Lyons

June 11, 2015: **Annual Picnic** (Location TBD)

2015 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the rest of the season. Changes and additions are not impossible. If you would be able and willing to lead an additional field trip, please contact Paula Hayes at pnbhayes@gmail.com.

April - Various **Bird Quest** training sessions

May - **Bird Quest** May 2nd

June - **Horseshoe Crab Walk**

Club Notes:

- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Karen Kravchuck at president@gcnatureclub.org or call 856-468-6536.
- 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 newsletter@gcnatureclub.org or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.
- The March Executive Committee meeting will be held on March 8th at the home of Kris and Erik Mollenhauer. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.