



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

June 2008

****Note the time and location change for this meeting****

June Program - Picnic at Scotland Run Park (Clayton) - June 12th, 6:00 PM



The June 12th meeting of the Gloucester County Nature Club will be our annual picnic. The picnic will be held at the Scotland Run Park in Clayton. Attendees should bring a food item to share, and their own utensils, plates, and cups to cut down on the waste of disposables. Bring your binoculars as well because after dinner we will take a walk through the varied habitats of the park looking for birds, wildflowers, and other items of interest. As with all club functions, the picnic is open to the public so why not bring a friend? We hope you will join us for the picnic.

Directions: From Delsea Drive (Rt. 47) in Clayton turn east on Academy Street (Rt. 619). Continue for about 2.2 miles and cross Fries Mills Road. The main park entrance will be just ahead on the left. There is a large paved parking area. Meet under the pavilion.

Field Trip - Hein Stewardship Forest, Washington Township NJ

Saturday, June 14th - 10:00 AM to noon

Trip leader: Walter Hein

Tour a 35-acre managed forest in the heart of Washington Township. This site was described in the April 25 issue of the *Gloucester County Times*.

Directions: Meet at the gated entrance to the forest, on Bells Lake Road, about 0.8 miles south of the intersection of Bells Lake Road and Ganttown Road (Route 639). The entrance is on the right (west) side of the road.

Field Trip - Unexpected Refuge, Franklin Township NJ

Saturday, June 21st, 10:00 A.M. to early afternoon

Trip Leaders: Sarah Summerville and Karl Anderson

This refuge has oak-pine forest, ponds, and forested wetlands. We will be looking for birds, wildflowers, and dragonflies, and we will try to compile a list of our sightings. Bring lunch, ample beverage, insect repellent, and insect repellent. Weather condition permitting, we will be taking a leisurely two-mile hike, some of it on very narrow boardwalks (e.g., single 8" wide planks) through wetlands. For additional information, contact Karl Anderson at (856) 845-7075 or karlanderson6@aol.com.



Directions: Parking at Unexpected Refuge is extremely limited, and the entrance road is not easy to find or to follow to the refuge office. Meet at **9:00 AM** at the Timberline shopping plaza in Mantua for car-pooling. We will reconvene at the parking lot for Franklin Township's Piney Hollow Preservation Area at 9:45, and caravan as a group into the nearby Unexpected Refuge. See your *Natural Places of Gloucester County, New Jersey* book for directions to Piney Hollow; but if you've misplaced your copy, well, get to the intersection of Route 40, Piney Hollow Road, Brewster Road, and Route 557 at the Gloucester-Atlantic County line, and go northeast on Piney Hollow Road for about 2.6 miles. The Piney Hollow gravel parking area is on the right; watch for a small "nature park entrance" sign before the turnoff.

Field Trip Report - Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve, New Hope, PA - Sunday, May 18, 2008

Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve, located about two miles south of New Hope, Pa., consists of 134 acres of woodlands and meadows and is dedicated to the preservation, conservation and display of Pennsylvania's native flora. The eleven GCNC members who participated in the trip gathered at 10 A. M. at the Preserve Visitors' Center, many choosing to shop and browse at the native plant sale. The native plant sale is the Preserve's principal fund raising event and is held the middle two weekends in May. A guided tour led by a volunteer docent had been arranged for the morning. The tour took us through a section of the Preserve including the Penns Woods Arboretum, the Marsh Marigold Trail, the Azalea Trail and the Cabin Walk. Our knowledgeable guide spoke about forest ecology, plant succession and pointed out trees such as American Hornbeam, Sugar Maple, Shagbark Hickory and Tulip Tree; shrubs such as Spicebush and native Rhododendrons and herbaceous woodland plants such as Maidenhair Fern, Quaker Ladies, Golden Alexander and Mayapple. One interesting fact he explained about the Mayapple is that it spreads two ways; vegetatively by underground roots and also by a partnership with the Eastern Box Turtle, which feeds on the fruit and then disperses Mayapple seeds. The tour also pointed out two interesting man made structures at the preserve, the arched stone bridge over Pidcock Creek and a log cabin built in the 1930's from American Chestnut trees felled at the time of the blight. Among the many species we observed in bloom at the Preserve were Virginia Spiderwort, Canadian Anemone, Eastern Columbine, Yellow lady's Slipper, Yellow Trillium, Fire Pink, Shooting star, Golden Star, Dutchman's Pipe and Flame Azalea.

Lunch was taken in the meeting room at the preserve Visitors' Center. The room contains a large picture window which offers an excellent close up view of several birdfeeders suspended on ropes. Among the birds we viewed for lunchtime entertainment were Black-capped Chickadee, Ruby-throated Hummingbird (female), and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Our afternoon plans to continue to explore the Preserve were cut short by a steady rain that began just as lunch ended. Instead we decided on an excursion to the tower atop of Bowman's Hill a short drive away. Near the tower Karl Anderson pointed out a stand of the shrub, Bladdernut. The stone observation tower stands 125 feet high on the Bowman's Hill summit. It was built in 1930 and commemorates the site used as an observation post by Washington's army during the crossing of the Delaware in December 1776. The tower summit is reached by an elevator ride, followed by a short climb up a circular stone stairway. Even in the rain and mist the view of the Delaware River and the surrounding hills and verdant countryside was lovely. Then as the rain soaked the land and swelled the creeks and canals, we headed home having had a pleasant day and having seen much of interest.

- Submitted by Rich Dilks

As usual, our Annual Plant Sale was a success!

The threat of impending rain storms seems to have become a tradition at the Club's Annual Plant Sale. The storms held off — though just barely — and once again, even though the threat of rain may have kept some away, the sale was a great success.

As always with our Plant Sale, the plants that we have to offer come from two fronts. When the idea of the Plant Sale started all those years ago it was plants that our members brought from their own gardens that were sold — and that tradition continues. Our members must have some beautiful gardens because you always have great plants to share. Thanks to all for their well-marked contributions.

This year, again, George, Bridget and Brian from Dean's Evergreens in Monroeville were a big part of our Plant Sale with their very generous donation of nursery plants. Much thanks to them for their continuing support. It's great to have them as a partner in this event!

If you are looking for more of the plants like the ones that Dean's Evergreens donated, try Groff's in Pitman, Prickett's in Sewell or Stecher's in Swedesboro. Dean's is a supplier to all of these places.

Thanks to Ron Kegel who works at Dean's Evergreens for spending his lunchtimes choosing just the right plants for us. There is always the perfect combination of native plants that bring the birds and butterflies to our gardens and those show stopper exotics that always catch the eye.

Thanks to Kris and Erik and their truck, to Millie, Ed and Elaine for their cashier duties and to Karl and Val for their seemingly endless knowledge of the plant world.

Hope everyone found just the plants that you were looking for and that they are all safely tucked in your gardens. And don't forget — as you spend time in your garden this year, keep in mind what you might need or what you might share at next year's Plant Sale!

Gloucester County Nature Club Big Day Report: May 10, 2008

The Gloucester County 2008 Big Day team of Lloyd Shaw, Gary Lizzi, and Gale Cannon enjoyed ideal weather conditions on May 10 for fifteen hours of birding in a variety of habitats in Gloucester County.

We started out at 5:00 AM in Glassboro Woods, the county's jewel of a forest, where avian highlights included Kentucky, prothonotary, hooded, and worm-eating warblers along with Louisiana waterthrush and Acadian flycatcher. We then visited sites along the Delaware River from the Red Bank Battlefield to the Pedricktown Marshes, and were rewarded with sightings of bald eagle, peregrine falcon, a lesser black-backed gull, a nesting great horned owl, and a Cooper's hawk, also on a nest.

The cool, overcast weather conditions of the day kept the warblers and other migrants active until early afternoon, making it possible to see as well as hear yellow-breasted chat and gray-cheeked thrush, and also chestnut-sided, bay breasted, black-throated blue, and black-throated green warblers. We found a total of 23 warbler species during the day.

A late afternoon visit to the county's rural areas around Harrisonville produced nice looks at meadowlark, bobolink, American kestrel, savannah sparrow, eastern bluebird, and a northern harrier.

At day's end we decided to take a celebratory stroll around the proposed Maple Ridge Preserve, where we found bird number 132 - a white-breasted nuthatch.

It was a fabulous day, and we thank you all for your donations, which so far add up to over \$2000.00, with over \$1300.00 earmarked for the Maple Ridge Preservation Fund.

Kid's Corner - Backyard Habitat * by Deb Maka

This activity will take a square yard of habitat and let you discover the world that lives right under your feet.

What You Need:

- Yard sticks, string, hula hoop or something to make an outline on the ground
- Optional: magnifying glass and flashlight

Directions:

1. Use yard sticks, string, or anything to make an outline on the ground
2. After you've created your outline, try to find as many different things living inside the lines. Look for different kinds of plants, bugs, and animal signs (holes, homes, diggings, droppings)
3. Try doing this in a sunny spot and a shady spot
4. Also try grassy areas, rocky areas, and areas near a stream or puddle

How many different things did you discover? Was there a difference in what you found by changing locations?.

*adapted from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department website
(www.tpwd.state.tx.us/kids/explore/rubbings.phtml)

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.



WANTED: Information about Gloucester County Big Trees

The Nature Club is embarking on a new project - a publication about the trees of Gloucester County. For each species, there will be identifying information, a description of the range nationwide and in New Jersey, habitat information, a compilation of hopefully-interesting facts, and notes on where to find the species in Gloucester County. There will be photos of leaves, fruit, bark, and overall aspect. Between 35 and 40 species will be covered.

We would like to tell readers of this publication where to find some good examples of each species. So if any readers of this newsletter can provide locations for exceptionally large, well-grown specimens of any native trees (plus non-native white pine, princess tree, Norway maple, Norway spruce, black locust, and common catalpa) that are growing on public land or that are easily visible from a public road, please get this information to Karl Anderson, 46 North Childs Street, Woodbury NJ 08096; karlanderson6@aol.com. A complete list of tree species slated for this project will be on the GCNC website. Many thanks!

Events by other Organizations

- June 3 (Tuesday) - **Blooms and Birds at Amico Island.** 9:00-11:00 AM. Leader: Jen Bulava. Sponsored by the Burlington County Division of Parks. For info: www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/ and click on "parks".
- June 12 (Thursday) - **“Asia Birds: From West to East (and Back Again)”** with Dr. Robert “Birding Bob” DeCandido. 7:00 PM; Sponsored by Palmyra Cove Nature Center. Cost: \$8 per person, free for members. Registration required - Please call (856) 829-1900 x 264 to reserve your seat! For info: www.palmyracove.org.
- June 17 (Tuesday) - **Nature Walk at Smithville Ravine.** 9:00-11:00 AM. Leader: Jen Bulava. Sponsored by the Burlington County Division of Parks. For info: www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/ and click on "parks".
- June 21 (Saturday) - **Pineland Botany Tour.** Leader: John Courtney. Sponsored by the Audubon Wildlife Society of N.J. For info: www.audubonwildlifesociety.org/.
- June 21 (Saturday) - **Palmyra Cove Summerfest 2008.** 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM. For info: www.palmyracove.org.

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

- Gloucester County Water Fest: Sunday June 1, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 6/4 at 10:00 AM
- Bird Walks: Tuesdays 6/10, 7/8, and 8/12 6:00 PM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 6/18 at 2:30 PM
- Evening Canoeing & Kayaking: Thursday 6/19 at 6:00 PM
- Family Nature Adventure: Saturday 6/21 at 10:00 AM
- Nature Explorers: Wednesdays 8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27 at 10:00 AM
- Nature Watch: Thursdays 8/7, 8/14, and 8/21 at 10:00 AM

Natural Events for the month of June

- During courtship, a cedar waxwing pair may repeatedly pass a flower petal or insect back and forth.
- White-tailed deer are giving birth. The young fawns lie down and "freeze" when threatened.
- Longest day of the year is June 21.
- Pond turtles are digging nests and laying eggs, which will hatch in 80 to 90 days.
- Mountain laurel in bloom.
- Herons can be found roosting with young in marshes at the shore.
- Wood duck and mallard ducklings hatch and venture forth.
- Canada geese begin molting.

Looking Ahead:

2007-2008 GCNC Field Trips

A series of Summer field trips will be announced soon.

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 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 GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.