



# Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

[www.gcnatureclub.org](http://www.gcnatureclub.org)

Nature Club meetings are open to the public.

June 2018

## GCNC Annual Picnic & Program

Thursday, June 14, 2018 at the Village Dock Campground,

Franklinville, NJ (directions below)

Picnic: 6:00 P.M .

Program: 7:00 P.M.

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342



The June 14 meeting of the Gloucester County Nature Club will be our annual spring picnic. The picnic this year will be held in the beautiful pinelands habitat of the Village Dock Campground in Franklin Township. We will gather at the Lake Pavilion for a scenic view of the lake where bald eagles are known to frequent. Attendees should bring a food item to share, and their own utensils, plates, and cups to cut down on the waste of disposables. As with all club functions, the picnic is open to the public so why not bring a friend?

## Program : The Plight of the Bob White and Our Efforts to Save It

**Presenters: The South Jersey Quail Project- Terry Hider, President and Joe Matter, Project Development Specialist.**

*"Ensuring habitat for all!"*

The South Jersey Quail Project is a small grass roots 501 c 3 non-profit organization. The Bobwhite Quail, a fire dependent species and barometer of the health of the landscape, is a relatively small native New Jersey bird whose numbers have been rapidly declining over the last 50 years to threatening levels due to a number of issues. Our presentation will highlight the challenges faced by the Bobwhite Quail and other upland game species, the strides we are making currently, and those we hope to make in the future, as well as, what private citizens can do to help. We will delight your senses by introducing you to a few Bobwhites that you can see, hear and visit with, up close and personal, an occurrence which not many get to experience. Please join us!

We will discuss the history and extirpation of the Bobwhite in NJ, its decline in the US as well as efforts to restore habitat for all upland game birds, pollinators and other wildlife.

**Directions: The Village Dock Campground, Franklinville, NJ**

**From northern and central Gloucester County.** Take Rt. 55 south to exit 43, then left at the off ramp onto Little Mill Rd. (signs will say Franklinville, Clayton). Take Little Mill Rd. for 0.6 miles to the light at Rt. 47 (Delsea Drive). Turn right on to Rt. 47 south and proceed about 3 miles. After you pass Leonard Cake Rd. (on your right) proceed about 600 feet. The entrance to the Village Dock Campground will be on your left.

For GPS, the street address for the Village Dock Campground is **1664 Delsea Drive, Franklinville NJ 08322.**



## **Field Trip – Horseshoe Crab Walk**

**Friday, June 15 at 7:30pm**

**Trip Leaders - Paula and Brian Hayes (Paula's cell for the day of the walk questions 609-221-5195)**

Join us for a walk along the beach in the Villas, a Bay Shore community near Cape May. On this night, beaches all around the Delaware Bay host spawning horseshoe crabs as they have for many millions of years. We will begin our walk as the tide begins to rise and the sun sinks low in the sky. The horseshoe crabs time their egg laying for the high tide on new and full moons in May and June, this allows them to lay their eggs high on the beach. It is believed the crabs seek these conditions to make the climb up the beach easier and to lay their eggs above the rising tide on subsequent nights. As the tide rises up the Bay Shore beaches we will begin to see the male crabs gather along the edge of the surf awaiting the larger females. The males "cruise" along the surf waiting to latch onto a female (using a special claw) for a ride up the beach. The female will crawl up the beach to lay her eggs while the males, in tow, fertilize the eggs. We will walk about 2 miles along the beach, bring appropriate footwear or plan to go barefoot. We will stop often to see what treasures the tide brings in. Though the wind usually keeps the mosquitoes away you may want to bring bug spray. You may also want to bring a camera or binoculars. This walk is open to all but will have special appeal to families. If you are bringing children it is likely they will get wet and sandy "walking," please plan for this eventuality and bring a towel and change of clothes for your child so they don't need to ride home wet.



**Directions:** Meet on the beach at Walnut Avenue. Park near the intersection of Walnut Avenue and Delaware Avenue in the Villas (Lower Township). If you need an address for your GPS use 301 Walnut Ave, Lower Township, NJ 08251, this is the last house on the beach.

**Note:** Anyone wanting to carpool should meet at 6:00pm at the Timberline Shopping Center in Mantus.

### **Events by other Organizations: June 2018**

June 16 (Saturday) **National Trails Day at Tall Pines State Preserve.** The Friends of Tall Pines celebrate Tall Pines' Second Anniversary and National Trails Day on Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>. Includes these events:

- Invasive Species Removal and Milkweed Planting: 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. We will begin removing invasive Bradford Pear and Oriental Bittersweet (please bring clippers, loppers, and hand saws). Also, we will plant a milkweed meadow to help create habitat for monarch butterflies (please bring your own garden trowel).
- Pine Cone Bird Feeder Craft: 12:00 Noon to 2:00 PM. Visitors of all ages are invited to join us in this craft that turns a simple pine cone into an all-natural and biodegradable bird feeder.
- Guided Walk: 2:00 PM: We'll take an approximately one-hour walk around the preserve's trails. The leaders will point out natural features as well as artifacts from the golf course's history. You will also find out how the Friends organization is working to improve the preserve. Most trails are paved, but as in any natural area there could be muddy spots depending on recent weather.
- Photo Share: ALL DAY We invite the public to celebrate Tall Pines' 2nd anniversary by taking photos in the Preserve today that capture something special to you about the Preserve or your experience here, and then sharing your best photo or two with us at #tallpinesturnstwo on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

For more information and directions, see [www.friendsoftallpinespreserve.org/](http://www.friendsoftallpinespreserve.org/).

## 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.

## Conservation Corner by Suzan Delozier

### THE ETHANOL MANDATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Ten years ago, a federal program called the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), also known as the ethanol mandate, was created with the goal of increasing the amount of biofuels in gasoline. It was hoped that the mandate would reduce greenhouse emissions and other pollutants, decrease America's dependence on foreign energy sources, and bring an economic boom to rural areas. There have been, however, unintended consequences.

The conversion of millions of acres of land to a monoculture of corn has had its greatest impact on the Midwest and upper plains. Between 2008 and 2012, seven million acres of grasslands were converted into corn production sometimes at rates greater than the destruction of the Amazon forests. Less than 10% of our grasslands (and 5% of tallgrass prairies) remain. Prairie chickens, sage grouse, songbirds, grasses, wildflowers and much more call these grasslands home. Sixty percent of our waterfowl spend at least some time in the Midwest and upper plains. The monarch butterfly population has declined 80% since the ethanol mandate due to increased habitat destruction and pesticides. Crop field expansion reduces biodiversity and isolates populations of animals from each other. A safeguard in the RFS protects the grasslands but that safeguard is rarely implemented.

As more grasslands and wetlands are converted to farmland, more fertilizers and pesticides are washed into our water. Algae thrive on nutrients present in farm runoff. These algae can produce poisons that irritate the skin, cause intestinal problems if ingested and, with sufficient exposure, kill a person, a pet or wildlife. And, as algae dies and decomposes, it uses up the oxygen in the water creating a dead zone. Such a zone the size of NJ exists in the Gulf of Mexico from the runoff of the Mississippi River basin.

The majority of corn in this country is not grown on small farms. In order to compete, small farmers must add more land and intensify production. Intensive farming means more fertilizer and pesticide, more water usage and runoff. Because biofuel companies are agribusiness companies, any benefit farmers originally gained from the overproduction of corn has been eliminated by the increasing cost of seed, fertilizers and equipment – items controlled by agribusiness.

A bill (S2519/HR5212) has been introduced in Congress called The Greener Fuels Act. The bill reduces the ethanol mandate by ramping down the amount of ethanol required in gasoline, establishes a new fund for the restoration of wildlife habitat, and supports development of alternative biofuels which do not need massive plots of lands. See [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov) for the text of the bill. The National Wildlife Federation provides a pre-written letter supporting changes to the ethanol mandate at <https://online.nwf.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=2392>. Also see February 2018 newsletter for a discussion of New Jersey's grasslands.

Sources: The National Wildlife Federation <https://ethanol.nwf.org/> and New Jersey Audubon Society <https://njenvironmentnews.com/2018/03/16/nj-audubon-lets-fix-the-federal-ethanol-mandate/>

## MEASURING LIGHT POLLUTION OF OUR NIGHT SKY

The mission of the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) is “to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies through environmentally responsible outdoor lighting.” IDA has started a citizen science program called Globe at Night (<https://www.globeatnight.org/>) to help scientists measure and study light pollution. Each month for approximately 10 days participants can report the brightness of a designated constellation by following the instructions on the website. The website also provides help in how to find the constellation as well as a discussion of light pollution and its adverse effects on human, animal and plant life.

Another way to participate in Globe at Night is by downloading the Loss of Night app to your smart phone and submitting data about the visibility of certain stars. Please see <http://www.darksky.org/light-pollution/measuring-light-pollution/> for more information on Loss of Night and for other citizen science projects sponsored by IDA.

## A NIGHT SKY FULL OF PLANETS

All of the planets are visible during June. **Venus** sets about 2 hours after the sun and attains a very bright magnitude of -4.1. **Mercury** becomes visible low in the evening sky by mid-month and by month’s end it will set 1½ hours after the sun. **Jupiter** is visible in the southeast at nightfall and remains visible all night shining with a respectable magnitude of -2.3. **Saturn** is low in the sky and can be observed all night just above the constellation Sagittarius. On June 28, the moon passes within 1° of Saturn. **Mars**, nearing its closest approach to earth since 2003, is in the constellation Capricorn and brightens to -2.2. Mars will rise about 10:30 PM by the end of the month. **Uranus** and **Neptune** are both high enough to be seen – see [www.is.gd/urnep](http://www.is.gd/urnep) for more information on these two planets. Source: Sky and Telescope Magazine, June issue

## **Club Notes:**

- Congratulations to Scott Barnes, Rich Dilks, Karen Kravchuck, and Kris Mollenhauer, who were re-elected as Trustees at our May meeting.
- If you’d like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Karen Kravchuck at [blackbirdsinging@hotmail.com](mailto:blackbirdsinging@hotmail.com) or call 609-617-6693 (cell).
- 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](mailto:sharkeyes@comcast.net) or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.