



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

November 2014

Annual Joint Meeting with the South Jersey Land & Water Trust Program - A Journey Down The Mullica River

**Thursday, November 13, 2014 at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church,
Wenonah, NJ (directions below)**

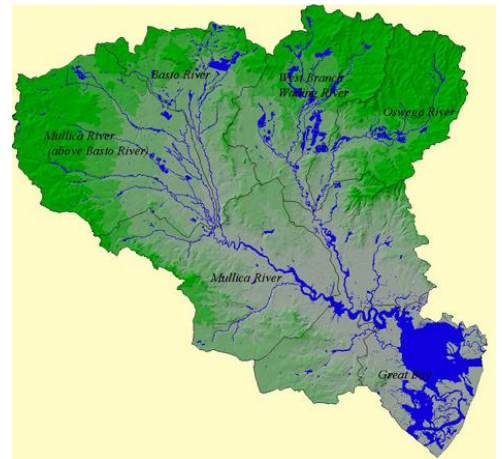
Presenter: Michael Hogan, SJL&WT Habitat Assessment Coordinator

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

We are pleased to welcome the South Jersey Land & Water Trust to our annual joint meeting

This evening we will take a photographic trip down the 50 mile Mullica River, from its headwaters near Berlin, through Wharton State Forest, to Great Bay. Learn about the Mullica's history, ecology, access and locations to canoe, hike, bird and photograph.

The Mullica River and its tributaries are considered the primary drainage system for the Pinelands. The total area of the watershed (Mullica River and tributaries) is approximately 561 square miles. About 80 percent of the watershed consists of state parks and forest. According to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation the Mullica River estuary is considered one of the most pristine and least-impacted marine wetlands habitats in the northeastern United States. The segment from Atsion to Pleasant Mills is now designated as a "Wild River," part of the Wild and Scenic River System of New Jersey. The unique charm of the Mullica River comes from its extensive savanna marshes and numerous high, sandy banks. At its upper reaches the banks are crowded with deciduous trees and bushes. The river then flows through the very heart of the Pinelands and as it makes its way toward Great Bay and the Atlantic, the terrain opens to wide savanna marshes broken by a few cedars and scattered pines. The Mullica River watershed is a place of pristine beauty and great natural diversity. According to the USFWS, there are 21 state or federally listed threatened or endangered species of plants and animals along its banks. Rich in human history and natural history, the Mullica River is truly a treasure.



Our presenter tonight, Michael Hogan, noted nature photographer, environmental activist and the SJL&WT's Habitat Assessment Coordinator, in addition to taking us on a journey down the Mullica, will also give us an update on the many and varied projects the Land Trust has undertaken. We are indeed fortunate to have an organization, such as the SJL&WT, working to keep our environment healthy and making sure that natural areas and open space will be an important part of our region's future.

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 – Hike Estell Manor Park

Saturday, November 22, 2014 at 11:00 am

Trip Leader: Paula Hayes 609-221-5195 (Cell # for day of the trip) or pnbhayes@gmail.com

Join us for a hike at this gem in the Atlantic County Park System. The park has a well-defined trail system, including the 1.5 mile boardwalk we will walk, a great nature center, access to the tidally active Great Egg Harbor River, and two great playgrounds. We will do a hike lasting 1 ½ - 2 hours as we explore the habitats and natural areas of this park. The trails tend to be sandy and though the park has no major elevations you should expect to be walking on uneven surfaces. We will explore the Pinelands habitat and stop to see some how this area played an important role in history. These parks lands were once a glassworks and a munitions productions facility during WWI. As you hike throughout the park you can see the ruins of these activities (significant parts of some of these buildings are still standing) and begin to imagine what it was like when over a 1,000 soldiers and 400 families once lived in the area. To view an historic photo gallery for the area visit http://www.aclink.org/blc/plant_images/index.asp.

We will meet at the park's Warren E Fox Nature Center by the entrance to the park and begin our hike from there. The nature center includes bathroom facilities, terrific exhibits on the animals and plants of the park, including some live animals. Feel free to bring a lunch so you can stay and enjoy one of the parks great picnic areas or take advantage of the park's free bike lending program.

Directions: From Route 322 South in Mays Landing take Route 50 south. The park is about 4 miles down route 50 on the left, there is an entrance sign clearly marking the entrance.

Address for GPS: 109 State Highway 50, Mays Landing, NJ 08330

Family Fun Walk at Historic Batsto Village.

Sunday, November 23, 2014 at 12:00 noon

Trip Leader: Maria Keefe (cell/text: 609-315-4759 or mariakeefe19@comcast.net)

Join us for a walk through Historic Batsto Village on Sunday, November 23 @ 12 noon. We will take a nice walk and look at the Historic Batsto Village and depending on what the group wants to do we can walk along the trail afterwards. All ages are welcome. These walks are for anyone that enjoys seeing the wonder of the natural world through a child's eye. You don't need children to join these walks with active, excitable, and enthusiastic children... Bring a baby in a backpack, a toddler in tow, grade schoolers, parents, or grandparents along for a walk. We will walk at child's pace stopping to look at anything interesting we find. The walk will last an hour or so. Dress in layers according to the weather. Bring your sense of adventure and join us on a nice fall day.

Directions: Batsto Village is located on Route 542, eight miles east of Hammonton. We will meet in the parking lot. For more information and Mapquest directions visit

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/wharton.html>.

Remember to Vote on November 4th. Club members are acquainted with the years-long struggle to preserve the former Maple Ridge golf course in Deptford and Mantua Townships as a nature park. The complex financial details behind this effort may be less familiar. One detail should not be overlooked, however: the idea of a park likely would have died without money from the state Green Acres program. That money, in turn, would not have been available had voters not approved preservation bond funding in 2009.

This November, voters have the opportunity to decide on a more permanent source of funding for Green Acres and other state land preservation programs. Public Question 2 proposes to amend the state

constitution to allocate a portion of annual Corporate Business Tax revenue for preservation activities. As a constitutional mandate, these funds could not be diverted by politicians – present or future – for other purposes.

Opportunities for land preservation come in all shapes and sizes, and can't always be seen clearly in advance. The next local opportunity could be a “Fossil Park” at Inversand in Mantua Township, or some other gem yet to be identified. Please consider how that gem will get the same funding boost that Maple Ridge got, and vote on Public Question 2 on November 4th.

Northwestern Gloucester Christmas Bird Count

Saturday December 20, 2014 – Save the Date!

Please join us for the Audubon Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 20. Once again we will be beating the bushes for birds on our annual trek to see, hear, and find as many birds as we can. It is a great seasonal diversion from the busy holiday season. The count was initiated on December 29, 1951 when Will Middleton rounded up enough folks to canvass the 15 mile radius and report back to the National Audubon Society their findings. This is indeed a wonderful citizen science project providing valuable detail to Audubon. Audubon is able to detect trends, disappearances, and ebb and flow of the lives of our feathered friends as they too try to eke out existence in this ever changing world.



You need not be an expert, quite honestly, new comers help make it a better time with some of us old timers. We tend to take things for granted at times. I encourage everyone to invite a 'new' person, young and old. We need to add some younger folks because many of us are getting a little long in the tooth and we need some of these younger folks to take an interest and eventually take over for us (me). Please try to bring along someone new if you can.

This year we will be accepting 'feeder counts' if perhaps your location is within the count circle. Feeder counts are very helpful and often can provide birds we might not see out in the bush! Counters do not always have access to backyards where some of these birds frequent. A count list can be provided along with details and directions. We are trying to build on the number of feeder counts submitted. So if you are unable to go afield the day of, think about watching the feeding station(s) for as long as you wish!

As mentioned, the count circle is a 15 mile radius broken up into 13 areas. Each area is delineated by either roads or bodies of water or edge of circle. Each area has a leader who coordinates everything within that zone (ex: time afield, persons participating, start time, etc.). We spend time perusing our designated areas which can be dawn (or before for owls) to dusk or whatever time you are willing to provide. Also there is a "Wrap-up" in the evening to compare notes, turn in results, and have some great social time, renewing acquaintances and meeting new. There is no fee for this endeavor as Audubon has gone electronic with results and there no longer is a paper publication sent, thus eliminating many administration costs.

Again, we hope you will find time to join us. You may join a team if you would like or the compiler can place you with a leader if you wish, or if you wish to join up with folks in a specific area, we likely can coordinate this as well. Contact the compiler at ronaldk52@comcast.net. More details will follow in the next newsletter. Please keep this date in mind!

Ron Kegel, compiler

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: November 2014

- November 16 (Sunday), 2:00 PM – **Walk in the Wild: Preparations for Winter.** Sponsored by the Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust. Free. Experience a casual stroll on the trails of the land trust with a knowledgeable leader to observe the plants, animals, natural features and processes, and just plain magic that make this place very special. Meet in the parking area at the end of Rankin Avenue in Blackwood Terrace. Please check at www.oldpinefarm.org/ for changes to the schedule and directions. Or just use your favorite mapping program or your GPS by typing in "400 Rankin Ave, Deptford, NJ." Further details available by calling Carl Ford at 856-579-4441. We will do this on the third Sunday of each month, with a different focus each month.

The following events 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 11/1 at 8:00am. A beautiful time of year for a leisurely morning walk. Bring your binoculars and discover the many species of birds that call Scotland Run Park home.
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 11/12 at 10:00am
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 11/15 at 10:00am
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 11/19 at 2:30pm

Natural Events for the month of November

- Persimmons ripen - they are delicious when fully soft-ripe, astringent when unripe.
- Witch hazel in bloom.
- Woodchucks and chipmunks go into hibernation.
- Bats seek their hibernating sites in caves and abandoned mines.
- American tree sparrow, sometimes called the "winter chippy", is a regular winter bird feeder visitor.

Looking Ahead:

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

December 11 2014: **Galapagos** - Larry & Sue Smith

January 8, 2015: **Fossils of New Jersey's Coastal Plain** - Ned Gilmore, Academy of Natural Sciences

February 12, 2015: **Pot Luck Dinner & Nature Story Sharing** - Interactive member activity

March 12, 2015: **Sacred Landscapes** - Erik Mollenhauer

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

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

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

2014-2015 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the new 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.

December 20 - **Christmas Bird Count** (Ron Kegel)

January/February - **Conowingo Dam for Eagles** (tentative)

March - **Moonlight Hike & Campfire Saturday**

April - **Bird Quest Trainings**

May 2 - **Bird Quest**

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 blackbirdsinging@hotmail.com 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 sharkeyes@comcast.net or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.
- The November Executive Committee meeting will be held on November 9th at the home of Karen Kravchuck. Please contact Karen for more information.