



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

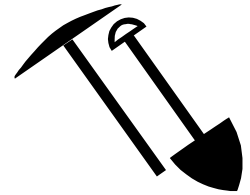
www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public
December 2003

Program - Ancient Encampment in Gloucester County - Thurs, Dec. 11th at 7:00 PM at EIRC, Sewell Program Coordinator- Bob Cassel 478-2496

There was an extensive encampment area in nearby East Greenwich Township around 3000 years ago! Come and see their cooking tools, stove, dishware and projectiles. All this came from their now obliterated home on Mt. Royal-Barnsboro Road.

Paul McEachern, an archaeologist from Grubb Associates of Cranbury, will bring specimens from the above dig to educate our members. Paul and his fellow archeologists, both men and women, completed their dig just a few months ago along the Mantua Creek in East Greenwich Township. Additional specimens found include furred animal bones, bird bones, and bones of sturgeon. Imagine if we could catch sturgeon toady as they migrate up our local streams to spawn. So come join us for this educational evening and bring your imagination as we enjoy a page from the history of bygone days.



Field Trip - Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count - Saturday, December 20th

Field Trip Coordinator- Kris Mollenhauer 589-4387

Looking for an alternative to the holiday madness of the mall? A wonderful tradition to add to your holiday season is participation in one of the over 1,900 Christmas Bird Counts held throughout the Western Hemisphere. The Gloucester County CBC will be held on Saturday, December 20th. Over 13 groups will divide up a 15 mile count circle and census all the birds seen. Many groups will begin or end their day searching for owls, and use the daylight hours to identify bald eagles, yellow-rumped warblers, great blue herons, as many as 9 different sparrows (or more), and many other birds. We invite you to join us in this wonderful tradition by joining a group for either a full or partial day. National Audubon requires a \$5 fee of all participants, used for administrative costs. If you'd like to join the count please call Bob Cassel at 478-2496 or Brian Hayes at 468-9272.



Trip Report- Saddler's (McArthur) Woods- Sunday, November 16th By Nolah Fulk

It's said that "Seeing is believing!", so I should stop right here, and tell you to hop in your car and drive to Saddler's Woods in Haddon Township. About thirty of us did just that on Sunday, November 16, and there was much to see as we traipsed through twenty six acres of old growth forest hidden away in Camden County, just a "stone's throw" from busy Cuthbert Road. Unlike last year, when the day dawned cold and wet, this year the weather was mild and pleasant.

Flanked by schools, a shopping center, houses, apartments, and even a nearby MacDonalds, Saddler's Woods has much history as well as astounding old trees. We were guided through the woods by Maggi Downham of the Newton Creek Watershed Association. Mark Dill, of the same association, joined us a bit late, having been to Rowan University battling to save a forested area there from destruction. With the arrival of Mark, our large group formed two smaller groups.

Once known as MacArthur Woods, the area is now called Saddler's Woods in honor of a former slave who was instrumental in preserving the area. Along the trail, we learned how



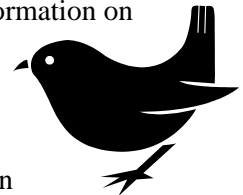
dependant trees are on each other, and how they need each other for protection from the elements. Maggi pointed out to us what happens when an area is cleared and developed. Trees closest to a cleared area had been dramatically affected by the sun and wind, and would eventually die and topple. Deep in the forest, we stood dwarfed by massive Tulip trees, Willow Oaks and Beech, all displaying the typical signs of their

antiquity.....exposed roots, stag-headed tree tops, and the spiral grain of their trunks. One wonders what life was like two or three hundred years ago in the shade of these ancient trees. Smaller, but just as interesting were Hackberry with its rough, scaly bark, and Ironwood with its smooth, gray trunk. Not all of the trees were indigenous to the area. At one time, the VanSciver mansion was on the property, and the family no doubt planted Devil's Walking Stick; a popular and unusual tree enjoyed during the Victorian area. The home was destroyed by fire many years ago, but English Ivy and Periwinkle, probably once planted near the house, now covers much of the forest floor.

Visitors are welcome to walk through the forest. An excellent website will give you directions and other information. Just log onto www.macarthurwoods.com.

Volunteers Needed- Backyard Feeder Trip in February

Do you have bird feeders in your yard that have regular visitors? If so maybe you'd like to be a part of our "Feeder Tour." The idea is to allow club member's to stop in during a designated time period to watch the birds that come to your feeders. We would like to revive a club tradition of visiting member's houses to watch birds at feeders. This field trip will be self guiding with two time slots on February 7th for open houses. If you'd like to volunteer your house for part of the tour please call Paula Hayes at 468- 9272 or Kris Mollenhauer at 589-4387. More information on this trip will appear in the January Newsletter.



Conservation

Update on River Winds Nature Trail

Several local newspapers have featured articles about the proposed dog park in River Winds. The articles have featured the nature trail and its uniqueness in our county. The township's dog park proposal is to fence a large scrubby meadow area that is currently part of the Nature Trail and mow it regularly to be used as a dog park. This will change the area and eliminate many of the bird species that are currently found on the property. This is not the proper site for the dog park; it doesn't belong on a piece of property that was purchased as a Wetlands Mitigation Bank. The Department of Environmental Protection has not approved this use for the area and should not give its approval.

The Township Committee may make a final decision about whether to pursue this project at their meeting on December 11th. If you are a West Deptford resident or a member of one of the surrounding communities that wants to see this small natural area remain natural I urge you to attend this meeting and make your voice heard. If this part of the park joins the rest of River Winds' regular mowing schedule visitors will no longer see orioles, warblers, flycatcher, and towhees there.

Understanding Boreal Forests- A Nursery for our Backyard Birds

Ask someone in New Jersey to picture a rainforest, coral reef, or African savannah, and most will have a fairly accurate picture even though those environments are far from here. Boreal forests will likely draw a blank stare from most people in New Jersey. These forests however have a direct impact on the birds you have in your backyard right now.

Boreal forests ring the top of the world through Canada, Russia, and Scandinavia. In a boreal forest the land is covered by fir, larch, birch, and aspen. Further to the south you will find maple and oak and further north the trees give way to tundra. The area produces literally billions of birds that will visit American feeders this winter. The white throated sparrow out in your

backyard right now was probably born in the boreal forest. The winter wren that hops along the banks of the Mantua Creek near my house was born there too. Saw whet owls, purple finches, pine siskins, crossbills, snow buntings, fox sparrows, hermit thrushes, and many others breed in the boreal forests of Canada and then migrate south to spend the winter in the northeast.

Scientists from the University of Alberta are 11 years into a study on the effects of logging on the boreal forest. Since their study began some migratory bird populations in the forest have declined by more than 50 percent. The birds are not only absent in the areas cut but also from the adjacent forest. The number of species and the amount of each species is directly related to the size of the boreal forest spared the woodsman's axe. The scientists' main concern has now become the fragmentation of the forest. The birds that specialize and breed in this area require large intact boreal forests. Over 20 percent of all boreal forests have already been cut and less than 10 percent of the remaining forest is in tracts larger than a few square miles. These remaining large patches need to be preserved.

The United States is the largest consumer of wood products in the world from the boreal forest so we have to take responsibility for where our wood products are from. Americans need to speak out and combine their voices with Canadians to protect these magical areas.

Member Update by Mimi Glass

As mentioned at our last meeting Gloria Caccia was visiting her brother in Hawaii when she had some health problems. The good news is that she is doing better and should be returning soon. Hurry home Gloria.

Also, the Club fondly remembers Janet Gyer who passed away this year.

Announcing the 2004 Gloucester County Environmental Commission Conference

Date: Saturday, February 28, 2004
Time: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm(Registration: 8:30 am – 9:00 am)
Location: Washington Township Municipal Building
Co-sponsors: The Gloucester County Nature Club and the Washington Township Environmental Commission

Join us for a morning of learning and information sharing. Each of the environmental commissions will have the opportunity to speak and inform the group of their activities. A keynote speaker will present a timely topic to be announced. Also, those in attendance will participate in our "Rapid Fire Group Discussions" during which topics selected by the participants will be discussed. You are also invited to stay after the educational portion of the program for refreshments and the chance to network with others in attendance.

There is no fee but pre-registration is required. Pre-registration is requested by February 18, 2004. To pre-register, complete the following form and mail it to: Deborah Maka, GCNC Vice-president, 619 Quincy Court, Glassboro, NJ 08028 or e-mail deborahann@backpacker.com OR fax to Anne Rossell at 856-582-4206. Please register each participant individually. Contact Deborah Maka at (856) 863-0330 with any questions.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ E-mail: _____

Commission or organization you are a member of: _____

List three topics that you are interested in discussing: _____

Looking Ahead:

Programs-

- January 8th - Alternative Energy Sources
- February 12th - Book Talk (more details to follow) and Dessert Night
- February 28th Gloucester County Environmental Commission Conference
- March 11th - Pelagic Birding in the Mid-Atlantic Region

Field Trips-

- January 11th- Palmyra Cove Nature Center
- February 7th- Visit club member's houses to enjoy birds at the feeders
- May 1st – The 5th Annual Gloucester County Bird Quest

Club Notes:

- Executive Meeting- None for December- **Monday**, January 5th at 7:00 PM at the Mollenhauer's House, call 589-4387 for directions
- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Brian or Paula at pnbhayes@aol.com or call 468-9272.
- 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 Paula Hayes at pnbhayes@aol.com or 413 North Stockton Avenue; Wenonah, NJ 08090 by the 15th of each month.

Gloucester County Nature Club
c/o EIRC
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Sewell NJ 08080