



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

December 2008

Program – The Long Thaw: How People Are Changing the Next 100,000 Years of Earth’s Climate

Thursday, December 11th at 7:00 PM at the Wenonah Community Center

Presenter: Erik Mollenhauer of the Gloucester County Nature Club

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks (856) 468-6342

As one scientist noted: “Climate change is an angry beast...and we are poking it with sticks.” For the first time ever, people have become major players in shaping Earth’s climate. Assuming we burn it all, by the year 2100, traditional oil and gas will be gone, followed a few hundred years later by all available coal. But their affects will live on, making global warming one of mankind’s longest lasting legacies. About 25% of the Carbon Dioxide gas we put into the atmosphere today will still be there one thousand years from now.



Generations...beyond our grandchildren’s grandchildren...will inherit these atmospheric changes and an altered climate. This program overviews the science of climate change and a number of “tipping points” which could cause accelerated climate change. It looks at predictions for short-term and longer-term change under a “business as usual” scenario or if we adopt “change we can believe in”. While negotiating a solution to global warming will require a degree of global cooperation unprecedented in human history, there is still time to act. Yes, we can.

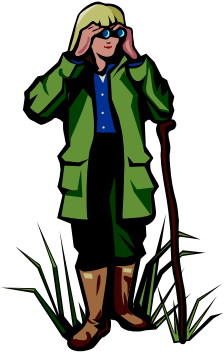
Directions to the meeting location: The Wenonah Community Center (former train station) is located at E. Mantua Avenue and N. East Avenue, Wenonah, NJ. From Woodbury, travel south on Woodbury-Glassboro Rd (Rt 553), and make a right at the light onto Mantua Avenue. The community center is approximately 1/2 of a mile ahead on the right (at the railroad crossing). There are small parking lots near the Community Center along East Ave and West Ave, plus additional parking is available along the surrounding streets.

Field Trip – Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Saturday December 20th, Dawn ‘til Dusk

(Please note date has changed from original 12/13 date, which was too early per Audubon rules)

Coordinator: Ron Kegel



Looking for a holiday tradition that doesn't include going to the mall? The Christmas Bird Count may be for you. The Audubon Christmas Bird Count was started in 1900 and the Gloucester County Nature Club coordinates the Gloucester County count. Groups will divide up a 15-mile count circle and take a census all the birds seen. Many groups will begin or end their day searching for owls, and use the daylight hours to identify raptors, warblers, sparrows, great blue herons, and many other birds. We invite you to join us in this wonderful tradition by joining one of the groups. The starting and ending time for each group is decided by the team organizer(s); generally it is at least dawn to dusk but that will vary by team. The National Audubon Society requires a \$5 fee of all participants that is used for administrative costs. If you'd like to join the Count, please call Ron Kegel at (856) 881-9262.

Field Trip – Babies in Backpacks / Toddlers in Tow

Tuesday December 30th, 9:30am at Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua Township

Trip Leader: Maria Keefe (627-7010)

Bring the kids out for a walk at Chestnut Branch Park in the cold fresh air. We will walk at a toddler's pace exploring as we go. Dress in layers according to the weather. Bring your own backpack and/or a stroller that is able to be pushed on unpaved paths. Anyone is welcome to come even if you aren't bringing a child.

Directions: From the intersection of Rt 45 (Broad Street) and Cooper Street in Woodbury, go south on Rt 45 for 4.2 miles. Turn left (from right hand lane) onto Rt 553Alt (Main Street) in Mantua. Go south on Rt 553Alt for 1.6 miles. The park entrance will be on the left. There is a large paved parking area. Meet at the wildflower garden.



Field Trip Report: Nature and History at Fort Mott State Park and Environs (November 8)

We began this trip by investigating the Finn's Point Veteran's Cemetery and admired the monument to the 2,500 Confederate prisoners who died at Fort Delaware. We then walked the interpretive trail, which is a showcase for such invasive plants as Oriental bittersweet, autumn olive, wisteria, Amur honeysuckle, and stiltgrass, but is still quite interesting, with several vernal ponds from which an occasional spring peeper could be heard calling. We saw a few birds, did some winter botany, and looked at beaver workings along the moat that defends the fort on the landward side.

An exploration of the late 19th-century fort was instructive, in part for its own sake and in part because of the native plants and animals that have colonized the masonry and made the fort their own. Noteworthy were extensive populations of the dark green thallus liverwort *Marchantia polymorpha* which covered the ground in the 'drip zone' below the walls of the fort. An unexpected treat was the chance to watch a few 'sighthound' (greyhounds, whippets, salukis, basenjis) races in a nearby field. The dogs followed an oval course in pursuit of an artificial lure; for more information about this activity and its sponsoring organization see <http://phastcoursing.tripod.com>. The trip was led by Karl Anderson. Three nature club members attended. The weather was cloudy with occasional periods of rain.

Conservation Corner: New Jersey Voters Approve Funds for Open Space, Despite Poor Economy (From NJ Keep It Green Campaign (<http://njkeepitgreen.org/>))

On November 4, voters in New Jersey approved 14 of 22 county and municipal measures generating \$191 million in conservation funding. New Jersey had more open space ballot measures than any other state.



In Hunterdon County, voters approved the largest measure and the only county measure on the ballot, with 76 percent voting in favor of continuing the current levy of three cents per \$100 of assessed property value to fund the Hunterdon County Open Space Trust Fund indefinitely rather than letting it expire next year. The move is expected to generate \$7.6 million annually for open space, farmland, and historic preservation efforts, as well as stewardship of county and municipal parklands.

In Ocean County, Ocean Township voters approved increasing the open space tax from 1.2 to three cents per \$100 of assessed value, and voters in Barnegat Light Borough approved a new one-cent open space tax. Both measures will provide funds to help acquire lands important to protecting water quality in the Barnegat Bay watershed. In Mercer County, Hopewell Township voters approved a one-cent increase to the open space tax that will generate an additional \$459,000 annually for preservation efforts.

A complete list of results from local and state balloting on conservation and parks is available online today from LandVote 2008 - www.landvote.org.

"These results demonstrate sustained support among New Jersey residents for new investments in parks and open space, even in a very tough economic climate," said Tom Gilbert, mid-Atlantic conservation finance director with The Trust for Public Land. "Looking ahead to 2009, we look forward to working with Governor Corzine, the New Jersey legislature, and our conservation partners on the critical need to renew and strengthen the Garden State Preservation Trust next year."

Last November, New Jersey voters approved \$200 million in bonding to replenish state open space, farmland, and historic preservation programs for one more year. Those funds will soon run out resulting in the first gap in state funding to preserve open space in decades.

"We call on Governor Corzine and state legislative leaders to follow the great example given by the voters in this election and make good on their pledge to replenish the Garden State Preservation Trust," said Thomas Gilmore, Chair of the New Jersey Keep it Green Campaign, a coalition of over 100 organizations working to promote open space preservation in New Jersey. "Renewing and strengthening this state-wide Fund is integral to preservation efforts and allows the State to continue to actively partner with local governments to preserve our parks, forests, farms, and historic places."

Since 1988, voters throughout the country have approved newly 1,700 conservation measures, generating more than \$54 billion in new public funds for conservation.

Other Nature Notes

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount to GCNC members!

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount (for non bird food items) to GCNC members! *Due to the current volatile market for bird food, the 10% discount for these items has had to be discontinued.* However, members will still receive credit for their purchases towards the Frequent Seed Shopper Program. WBU offers the GCNC discount on all other items in the store. Members are requested to identify themselves as GNNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please contact Sharon at (856) 218-2973 or sillybird348@comcast.net



Events by other Organizations: December 2008

- December 6 (Saturday)- Birding Old Pine Farm and Timber Creek Park, for winter resident birds. Leader: Lloyd Shaw. Sponsored by the Audubon Wildlife Society. For info: www.audubonwildlifesociety.org/
- December 6 (Saturday) – Winterfest. 10:30 AM – 3:30 PM. Sponsored by the Palmyra Cove Nature Park. For info: <http://palmyracove.org/>
- December 14 (Sunday) – Pinelands Christmas Bird Count. Coordinator: Robert Confer. Sponsored by the Burlington County Natural Sciences Club. For info: <http://oldsquaw.tripod.com/>
- December 17 (Wednesday) – Saw-whet Owl Search at Palmyra Cove. 9:00-11:00 AM. \$ Fee. For info: <http://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.

- Bird Walks: Saturdays 12/6 and 1/10 at 8:00 AM
- Trim-a-Tree for Wildlife: Saturday 12/6 and 1/10 at 10:30 AM
- Afternoon Nature Strolls: Wednesdays 12/10 and 1/21 at 2:30 PM
- Family Nature Adventures: Saturdays 12/13 and 1/24 at 10:30 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesdays 12/17 and 1/14 at 10:00 AM
- Wreath Making: Wednesday 12/17 at 7:00 PM
- 4H Kids Nature Club Meeting: Saturday 1/10 at 10:30 AM
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 1/17 at 10:00 AM

Natural Events for the month of December

- Geminid meteor shower - December 13.
- Shortest day of the year is December 22.
- Bald eagles arrive from the north and winter in New Jersey.
- Raptor migration ends mid-month.
- Great horned owls are pairing up this month – listen for their calls
- Watch for late waterfowl migrants – shovelers, mergansers and goldeneyes.
- Take part in a local Christmas Count.

Looking Ahead:

2008-2009 GCNC Programs

January 7, 2009 – **Owls of New Jersey** - Don Frieday of New Jersey Audubon

February 12, 2009 – **Pot Luck Dinner / The Jersey Devil and Pinelands Folklore** - Jim Albertson

March 12, 2009 - **Birds of the Spring Migration** – Brian Hayes

April 9, 2009 – **The Grand Canyon: White Water Rafting, Canyon History and Geology** - Brett & Erik Mollenhauer

May 14, 2009 – **Native Plants for Insect and Bird Survival and Diversity** - Doug Tallamy, Professor of Entomology, U. of Del

June 11, 2009 – **Annual Picnic at Red Bank Battlefield and The Art of Karen Paust**

2008-2009 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the rest of the season. Others may be added as opportunity permits and leaders become available. There will also be a series of Summer Field Trips.

January 18, 2009 (Sunday) - **Eagles at Conowingo Dam** - Jonathan Stillwell

February 28, 2009 (Saturday) - **Winter Birding at Jakes Landing** - Brian Hayes

March 10, 2009 (Tuesday) - **Full Moon Hike at Alcyon Park** - Kris Mollenhauer

April 19, 2009 (Sunday) - **Wildflowers on the Wenonah Trail** - Richard Dilks

May 16, 2009 (Saturday) - **Birding at Allaire State Park** - Jonathan Weir

June 6 (Saturday) - **Birding at Brightview Farm** - Bob Duke

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.
- The December Executive Committee meeting will be held on December 7th at the home of Kris and Erik Mollenhauer. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.