

Gloucester County Nature Club

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

July-August 2001

Summer Nature Club Activities

Once again the Nature Club will host a variety of nature walks and events this summer. Listed below is a brief description of the events which are free and open to anyone, yes even nonmembers, so bring a friend and attend as many as possible. Please be prompt since the events will start on time, lasting for an hour or so. Remember to pack – Suntan lotion, bug spray, rain gear, a hat, binoculars, guidebooks, and lots of water if it is hot.

June 19 - Tuesday 6:30 – 7:30 PM Tree Frog Excursion.
Trip Leaders: Steve Paturzo and Marge Dolente

Join Steve Paturzo from the State DEP at the Winslow Wildlife Management area in Camden County looking for the elusive tree frogs. Meet at the headquarters. *Directions: From Williamstown, take Rte 536 (New Brooklyn Rd) east from the Black Horse Pike. After about 2.5 miles, cross over AC Expressway and turn right at t-intersection onto Rt 705 (Sicklerville Rd). In .2 mile go past New Brooklyn Lake on left. In another .2 mile, bear right and go east on Rt 720 (New Brooklyn-Blue Anchor Rd) for about 1 mile. Turn right into Wins. Wild. Mgt area.*

June 26 - Tuesday 6:00 – 7:00 AM Bob Cassel, Home Tour
Trip Leader: Bob Cassell

Take a tour of this wildlife haven. Bob will personally show the group around his property and point out interesting plants and animals. *Directions: Meet at Bob's house at 407 Heritage Road, Sewell. For Directions call Bob at 478-2496.*

July 10 - Tuesday 6:30 – 7:30 PM Triple Oaks Nursery.
Trip Leaders: Lorraine Kiefer and Bill Connison

Lorraine Kiefer who owns Triple Oaks Nursery and is also a garden-writer, horticulturist, and teacher will show us the many wonders of the headwaters of the Maurice River. *Directions: Meet in the parking lot of Triple Oaks Nursery located on rt. 47 (Delsea Dr.) Franklinville.*

July 14 – Saturday. 8:00-11:00 AM Clean-up Day. White Oak Branch Wildlife Management Area, Monroe/Franklin Twp.
Trip Leader: Maria Keefe

Help clean up one of the County's best-kept secrets, the White Oak Branch Wildlife Management Area and earn \$300 for the club. We need at least 15 people to make this successful. Call Maria Keefe to sign-up. (856) 627-7010. *Directions: From Franklinville and Rt 47, turn east onto Coles Mill Rd (Rt 538). You will go about 6-7 miles, passing Janvier School on the right, crossing Rt 555 and Rt 659... before turning right onto Whitehall Rd, which deadends in about .4 mile. Meet here. Bring gloves and old clothes, boots if you have them. Trash bags will be provided by the Clean Communities program. Binoculars & field guides recommended.*

July 17 - Tuesday 6:30 – 7:30 PM Take a tour of Wenonah Woods

Trip Leader: Bob Bevilaqua and Frank Eggert

Walk the trails with the people who build and maintain the trails. The Wenonah Environmental Commission will share some of Wenonah's trails and history with the group. Trail maps will be available for \$2. *Directions: Meet in the Wenonah Lake parking lot on Maple (Ogden) and Jefferson.*

July 24 - Tuesday 6:30 – 7:30 PM Scotland Run Park

Trip Leader: Ron Kegel

Join Ron Kegel as you explore the back, lesser-known end of this popular park. This is a great spot for dragonflies, butterflies, and possibly carnivorous plants. *Directions: From Delsea Dr. (47) in Clayton take 610 Clayton-Williamstown Rd. East towards Williamstown. Meet at the ball field on the left just past the park HQ (right on route 610 (Clayton-Williamstown Rd).*

July 31 - Tuesday 6:00 – 7:00 AM West Deptford Scenic Park

Trip Leader: Dr. Ebert

Beat the summer heat by taking a stroll with Dr. Ebert on an early morning walk through this new Park. Varied habitat makes this spot good for birding with nesting species of Willow Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, Indigo Bunting, and Redtail Hawk. *Directions: From Woodbury take Delaware St (640) West towards the River. Trailhead starts about 300 yards North of the intersection of Grove St. and Delaware St. on Delaware St. Go through the new Riverwinds Development; the parking lot is on the right.*

August 7 – Tuesday 6:30 – 7:30 PM Greenwich Lake Park

Trip Leaders: Brian and Paula Hayes

A good location to find herons, egrets, turtles, and yellow warblers. Brian and Paula Hayes will be your guides to this watery world. What brings the wildlife? The bugs so come prepared. *Directions: From Kings Hwy take Tomlin Station Rd (607) North. Meet in the parking lot off of Tomlin Station Rd (607) just north of 295/130 overpass.*

August 14 – Tuesday 6:30 – 7:30 P.M. Wheelabrator Wildlife Refuge.

Trip Leaders: Kris and Erik Mollenhauer

Travel the trails along the Delaware River with Kris and Erik Mollenhauer. *Directions: Private industrial site, but the wildlife refuge area is open to public access, dawn to dusk. Access is from Rte 130, opposite Hazel Ave in Westville, just south of Big Timber Creek. Just before the guard station make a right into the parking lot.*

August 21 – Tuesday 6:30 – 7:30 P.M. Fresh Water Mussels

Trip Leader: Brian Hayes

Plan on getting your feet wet for this event. We will be exploring local waterways for fresh water mussels and clams with the State DEP. Call Brian Hayes to sign up for the trip (856) 468 – 9272.

Summer Children's Program

The Nature Club will be presenting a children's program called the Songbird Blues at the Pitman McCowan Library on July 19th at 2pm. It will be part of their summer reading program for elementary students. The Songbird Blues is an interactive flannel board story about how habitat loss affects birds, snakes, butterflies, mammals and turtles. It teaches what we can do to protect the wildlife around us. If you are interested in having this program come to your community library or to another children's group please contact Kris Mollenhauer (589-4387) or Paula Hayes (968-9272).

Monarch Butterfly Opportunity for Members

At its last meeting on June 10, the GCNC Executive Committee agreed to endorse a 3-day EIRC **workshop that is being offered on August 22-23-24 entitled "Monarch Butterflies in the Classroom"**. Designed especially for elementary and middle school teachers in Gloucester County, workshop participants will learn about the life cycle, ecology and conservation of monarch butterflies, how to raise them in the classroom and tag them, how to teach effective lessons in support of various content areas, and how to develop a successful butterfly garden at their school.

In addition to endorsing the project, **the Executive Committee agreed to pay the cost of one Nature Club member to participate in the 3-day workshop** (the cost of the 3-day workshop is \$120.00) As workshop participants raise monarchs in their classrooms this coming autumn, the GCNC representative will work with them to help facilitate a successful outcome.

If you are interested in applying to be the Club's representative at the August workshop, you should send a letter of interest to: GCNC Special Projects, c/o Erik Mollenhauer, 606 Delsea Dr., Sewell NJ 08080. **Letters must be received by Thursday, June 28.** A decision will be made shortly thereafter. Letters should include name, address, phone number followed by a statement as to why you wish to apply for this opportunity and what experience/strengths you have that are important to note. You must be a Club member to apply for the opportunity; free time during the school day in September/October would be an asset, as well as prior teaching experience at the elementary and/or middle school level.

Environmental Info/Nature Notes - June, 2001

Gloria Caccia, Environmental Coordinator, 582-0980

The First Day of Summer – June 21, 2001, Thurs. 7-10 pm worldwide, all time zones –

As an alternative to George W. Bush's energy policies and lack of emphasis on efficiency, conservation and alternative fuels, there will be a voluntary rolling blackout on the first day of summer, June 21 at 7 pm – 10 pm in any time zone (this will roll it across the planet).

It's a simple protest and a symbolic act. Turn out your lights from 7 pm – 10 pm on June 21. Unplug whatever you can unplug in your house. Light a candle to the Sungoddess, kiss and tell or not, take a stroll in the dark, invent ghost stories, anything that's not electronic-have fun in the dark.

Read the 1999 book "Natural Capitalism" by Hawken and Lovins to learn that conservation/high energy technology already ARE on-the-shelf. If implemented, these revolutionary ideas would pay themselves off within five years, after which we'd be pumping far less greenhouse gas into the atmosphere and saving bucks to boot.

Forward this e-mail as widely as possible, to your government representatives and environmental contacts. Let them know we want global education, participation and funding in conservation, efficiency and alternative fuel efforts—and an end to over-exploitation and misuse of the earth's resources.

Grass Cutting Beats Driving in Making Air Pollution

The air pollution from cutting grass for an hour with a gasoline powered lawn mower is about the same as that from a 100-mile automobile ride, according to a new study from Sweden. The report, which the authors say is the first to compare lawn mower pollution with auto mileage, recommends using catalytic converters on mowers.

One old gas powered lawn mower running for an hour emits as much pollution as driving 650 miles in a 1992 model automobile. (photo courtesy U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

One problematic pollutant from mowers is polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, said Roger Westerholmd, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the department of analytical chemistry at Stockholm University. Westerholm claims that such emissions, similar for both riding and push mowers, can be cut by more than 80 percent using a catalytic converter like those used in automobiles.

Each weekend, about 54 million Americans mow their lawns, using 800 million gallons of gas per year and producing tons of air pollutants. Since this equipment is used mostly during the hot summer months, when ground level ozone is the highest, it causes problems for asthmatics and aggravates other respiratory conditions.

Westerholm found that the worst case of lawn mower PAH emissions totaled more than 4,000 micrograms per hour using unleaded fuel without a catalytic converter. Average emissions dropped to almost 800 micrograms over the same time period with the addition of a catalytic converter, he said. Some PAHs including a few in lawn mower emissions, are classified as probably carcinogens by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Electric lawnmowers like one produce no air pollution themselves, though their electricity source could be a polluting power plant. (photo courtesy Clean Air Gardening Company) “Obviously, if catalysts will become mandatory on lawn mower engines, and possibly other small engines as well, a significant reduction of exhaust components will be achieved,” said Westerholm.

In 1998, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the so called “Phase I” rules, which mandated a 32 percent reduction in emissions for small “non-road” engines. This affects all engines less than 25 horsepower produced after 1997, including mowers, leaf blowers and chain saws. According to an EPA study prior to the Clean Air Act of 1990, small engines from lawn and garden equipment make up almost nine percent of some types of air pollution. While current mowers meet the reduced emissions standards, catalytic converters would lower emissions levels further, Westerholm said. In the Swedish testing, the researchers used regular unleaded fuel in a typical four stroke, four horsepower lawn mower engine and found, after one hour, that the PAH emissions are similar to a modern gasoline powered car driving about 150 kilometers (93 miles). A typical push type lawn mower is run for an average of 25 hours per year, according to the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute.

Catalytic converters are already available on some European mowers, Westerholm reported. The pollution control devices have been required on U.S. made cars since the late 1970s.

In March 2000, the EPA ordered major cuts in emissions from lawnmowers, chainsaws, leaf blowers and other small engine powered equipment. By 2007, when the new standards will be fully in place, the ground level ozone

pollution caused by these engines will be cut by 70 percent or 350,000 tons each year. The new emission reduction standards will affect small hand held engines at or below 19 kilowatts, or 25 horsepower, such as those used in lawn and garden equipment. The 20,000,000 small engines sold in the U.S. each year contribute about one tenth of the total U.S. mobile source hydrocarbon emissions, and are the largest single contributor to these non-road emissions.

Editor's Note: It is estimated that more than 25 million acres of land in the US are planted in residential lawn, making it one of the largest crops produced in the US. These lawns consume 30-60% of potable municipal water and more than 70 million pounds of chemical pesticides and 70 million tons of fertilizers each year. Today's American lawn-dominated landscapes offer little value to wildlife and have real environmental costs. Each of us could help the environment this summer by allowing some part of our lawn to revert to a wildflower meadow. Set a goal of reducing your lawn size by 50%. "If even a fraction of American's 38 million gardeners turned a quarter of their landscape into a wild garden there would be a measurable impact... a tremendously positive gain for America's and the world's ecology." - Ken Druse, author The Natural Habitat Garden

Community Events

The Nature Club is partnering with local environmental commissions to do joint exhibits/displays at community events. Please contact our new Community Events Coordinator, Maria Keefe at kityblu@juno.com or 856-627-7010 if you are able to help or if you know of another event where the Club should exhibit.

- Saturday, August 18 : "Woofstock", rocking good pet fair at Lions Lake Plaza, 11 am – 4 pm
- Saturday, September 29th: Swedesboro Day. Time TBA.

A Brief History of the Clement Oak

Editor's Note: On June 2nd, 35 Nature Club members and other people participated in a highly successful "Great Trees" field trip led by Mimi Glass. The Clement Oak in Deptford was one highlight of a fascinating trip.

Nearly 500 years ago great things were happening in the world. Michelangelo was painting the Sistine Chapel. Copernicus was coming to the conclusion that maybe the earth was *not* the center of the universe. And on the bank of a creek in the "new world" that Columbus had recently stumbled upon, a white oak sapling took root and began to grow.

As the tree grew, so did its rich history. Local tradition says "that under the branches of this old oak, roving bands of Lenni Lenape...took refuge from the storms that beset them on their fishing expeditions" and "that tribal councils were held there and pacts...made with the white invaders took place there."

In 1678, the oak was mentioned in the original survey of the land, then called West Jersey. By then, the tree was of such significant size, it was used for the "beginning point of the survey lines." In the mid 18th century, Samuel Clement Sr. purchased nearly 600 acres to farm, including the land on which the old oak grew, on what is now the Big Timber Creek. For six successive generations, the Clement family owned the land and the tree became known as the Clement Oak.

When Henry Leeds, Clement's great-great-great-grandson, acquired the farm in 1929, the old oak was in dire need of help. There was a cavity in the trunk large enough to hold three men. Desperate measures were needed. The decayed wood was removed, the inside of the trunk secured with steel bolts and sealed to prevent further decay. Then almost 14 tons of cement were used to fill in the cavity. In 1929, Henry Leeds paid \$2,500 for this repair. In

today's money, that would be more than \$26,000 - a generous amount to give the oak a chance to live for many more years.

Somewhere along the line, the Clement Oak seems to have gotten lost in the shuffle. In 1964, RCA, the new owner of the property on which the oak grew, rediscovered the tree - overgrown with brush and again in need of help. The brush was cleared, cables were installed to support limbs and a lightning rod attached. RCA (now Thomson Consumer Electronics) has been diligent in its role of protector. A tree surgeon inspects the tree regularly and the quiet area encircling the tree is maintained beautifully. Visitors are welcomed (under a watchful eye) to see the old oak.

For nearly 500 years, the Clement Oak has grown - through luck and its own devices at the start and then with the help of generous and diligent caregivers - into one of the largest trees in northeastern America. It has been a landmark for centuries, sharing its history with us. See it and become a part of the history of the Clement Oak.

(The Clement Oak is located on the property of Thomson Consumer Electronics on Clements Bridge Road in Deptford. The tree can be seen Monday through Friday during business hours. Arrangements can be made by contacting the company.)

- Karen Kravchuck

Nature Club Offers RKB Certification (Reasonably Knowledgeable Birder) Training Course

At its last meeting, the Nature Club Executive Committee agreed to offer an intensive, year-long training course leading to certification as a "Reasonably Knowledgeable Birder" or RKB. The training course would be a four-season series of local field/indoor experiences about Gloucester County/NJ birds: their identification by sight, sound, behavior and habitat needs, as well as their ecology and conservation. One cluster of trainings will occur this summer in association with the summer nesting season. A second cluster of trainings will occur this coming autumn in association with fall migration. A third cluster of trainings will occur in winter 2001 in association with winter resident birds. The final training cluster will occur in spring 2002 in association with spring migration and the Bird Quest. The individual trainings will be scheduled for early mornings and evenings. Participants must be Nature Club members and will need to have a pair of binoculars and a field guide; additional materials will be supplied by the Nature Club. Participants will be expected to attend a majority of the trainings, and must complete 50 volunteer hours related to bird conservation/education (following the trainings) to receive final certification as an RKB; serving as an RKB in the 2002 Gloucester County Bird Quest counts towards the 50 hours.

A limited number of people will be selected for this opportunity. If you are interested in applying, send a letter of interest as soon as possible, but no later than July 18 to: Erik Mollenhauer, GCNC Special Projects, 606 Delsea Drive, Sewell, NJ 08080 Or email it to: erikm@eirc.org In your letter, indicate why you wish to participate. Inexperienced birders are welcome to apply.

Environmental Commission Liasons

Do you have interest in protecting the environment in your own backyard? Do you have a couple of hours a month? If so, the Nature Club needs your help.

The Nature Club would like to have a member attend each of the different county environmental commission meetings. The commitment is minimal. The commissions have a meeting once month that last an average of two hours. The expectation is simple...attend at least 70% of the meetings, answer questions the commission members may have about nature club activities, and keep Deb Maka informed about what happened at the meetings via phone or e-mail. Below you will find a list of the different commissions and meeting times. Please contact Deb Maka @ 856-863-0330 or deborahann@backpacker.com if you are interested.

DEPTFORD TWP.

Meeting time: 4th Tues. @ 7:30 pm

EAST GREENWICH TWP.

Meeting time: 3rd Tues. @ 7:30 pm

FRANKLIN TWP.

Meeting time: 1st Mon @ 7:30 pm

HARRISON TWP.

Meeting time: 1st Wed. @ 7:00 pm

LOGAN TWP.

Meeting time: 1st Wed. @ 7:00 pm

MANTUA TWP.

Meeting time: 2nd Mon @ 7:30 pm

MONROE TWP.

Meeting time: 3rd Mon @ 7:00 pm

PAULSBORO

Meeting time: 1st Thurs @ 7:00 pm

PITMAN

Meeting time: 1st Thurs @ 8:00 pm

SOUTH HARRISON TWP.

Meeting time: 4th Thurs @ 8:00 pm

WASHINGTON TWP.

Meeting time: 2nd & 4th Wed @ 7:30 pm

WENONAH

Meeting time: 2nd Wed @ 7:30 pm

WEST DEPTFORD TWP.

Meeting time: no set schedule

WESTVILLE

Meeting time: 1st Wed @ 7:30 pm

WOOLWICH TWP.

Meeting time: 3rd Tues @ 7:00 pm

Looking Ahead:

Sept. 13 (2nd Thursday): Program by Pete Dunne, noted naturalist and author from Cape May Bird Observatory

Announcing the Gloucester County Environmental Commission Conference – October 13, 2001

In January, the Gloucester County Nature Club sponsored the Gloucester County Environmental Commission Conference. In the recent past, there was no established avenue for the members of different environmental commissions to discuss common issues. The Nature Club's goal was that this conference would fill that void. The conference was considered a success and was attended by over 80 individuals made up of both environmental commission members and members of the community. Secondary to its success, the Nature Club will be sponsoring the next conference on Saturday, October 13, 2001 from 8:30 AM to 1 PM. The location will be announced at a later date. The purpose of the conference is to encourage a dialogue between local environmental commissions about common issues and concerns. There will be one key-note speaker and plenty of time to hear the activities of different environmental commissions. Sign-in and refreshments are from 8:00-8:30 AM. Nature Club members and members of the public are welcome to attend. Pre-registration is required. Registration forms will be available in the near future. Please contact Deb Maka at 856-863-0330 or deborahann@backpacker.com for additional information

Executive Committee Meeting: The next Board of Trustees/Executive Committee Meeting will be held on Sunday, July 19 at 6:00 PM at the Lake Gilman home of Erik & Kris Mollenhauer. Call if you need directions.

Club News: The Nature Club is always looking for ideas for future programs and field trips. Please contact the program and/or field trip coordinators with your ideas. For information about the Gloucester County Nature Club, call:
Brian Hayes, President 468-9272 Mimi Glass, Membership Chair, 589-6435

Information for next month's newsletter should be sent, by the 15th of each month, to:
Erik Mollenhauer, 606 Delsea Dr. Sewell NJ 08080, 582-7000 X128