



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

February 2024

Return of the Annual GCNC Pot Luck Dinner
6:00 P.M Pot Luck Dinner

February Meeting Club Activity
Group Book Discussion

Thursday, February 8, 2024,
at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ

(directions below)

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342



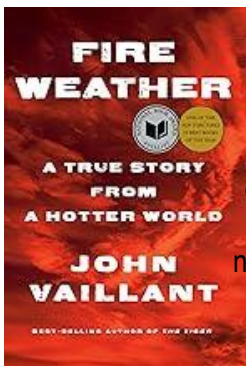
POTLUCK DINNER

Please note the dinner begins at 6:00 P.M. and the book discussion at approximately 7: 00 P.M.

This February 8th we gather again for our traditional annual winter Pot Luck Dinner. It is always a highlight of the year and a great opportunity to come together with fellow club members and share a wonderful meal on a cold winter's night in the warmth of good company. As always, please bring either an entrée or dessert and a plate and utensils for yourself.

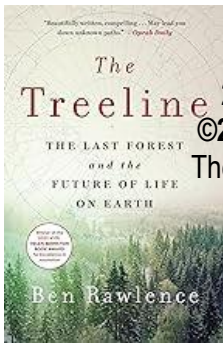
Book Discussion

This year we invite our participants to choose and read one (or more, if you wish) of the 4 volumes listed below. Each has a vital tale to tell about the perils faced by the natural world and what we humans can do to protect and preserve our fragile living planet. We plan to touch on points from all 4 books. For those who will not have the opportunity to read the books, come out and hear the surprising facts and insights that readers will share, and, then feel free to join in the discussion with your own thoughts and experiences.



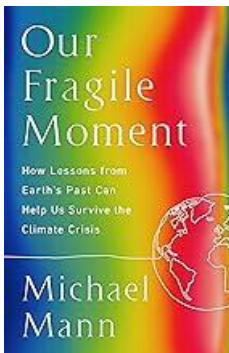
1. **"Fire Weather: A True Story From a Hotter World" by John Vaillant. ©2023.**

The author shows how, in an age of accelerating climate change, the destructive power of extreme wildfire is being unleashed in new, unimaginable ways. The many weeks of wildfire smoke which blanketed much of the U.S. this past summer... and the devastating Maui fire... are not aberrations. They are the new norm. This book will change your ideas about fire and the future of fire on this planet.

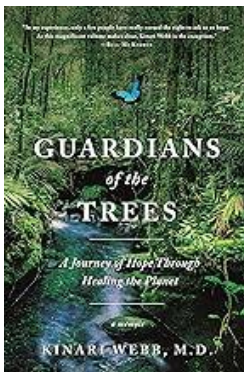


2. **"The Treeline: The Last Forest and the Future of Life on Earth" by Ben Rawlence.** ©2022

The boreal forest of Alaska, Canada, Europe and Siberia is the largest living system on Earth, a circumpolar "lung" that is essential to the planet's health. The author takes readers on a journey of wonder and awe as he tells the story of the boreal forest and what it means for the future of the planet if this forest is lost.



3. **"Our Fragile Moment: How Lessons From Earth's Past Can Help Us Survive the Climate Crisis" by Michael Mann.** ©2023. There is a relatively narrow window of climate variability within which civilization remains viable. In this paradigm-shifting book, the author arms readers with the knowledge to appreciate the seriousness of the climate crisis, while emboldening them to act before it truly does become too late.



"Guardians of the Trees: A Journey of Hope Through Healing the Planet" by Kinari Webb, M.D. ©2021 One woman's inspirational journey to save a disappearing rainforest in Borneo, and how she discovers a way to save both lives and trees. Indonesian Borneo is home to Gunung Palung National Park, which hosts diverse species found nowhere else and is beloved by the people who live on the island. But like many people who live near tropical forests, they have at times had to resort to illegal logging to pay for healthcare. To combat this, physician Kinari Webb founded the nonprofit Health in Harmony, which aims to keep the forest healthy by keeping people healthy.

Field Trip - The (Un)Dead of Winter*

Ceres Park (964 Main Street, Sewell, NJ 08080)

Sunday, February 4, 2024
9:00 AM

Ceres Park
964 Main Street
Sewell, NJ 08080

Trip Leader: Kris Mollenhauer

Event rescheduled from January (snow) to Sunday, February 4th.

No, we are not looking for Zombies. One of the Big Year Eco Challenge learnings was how many things you might not notice are still alive or dormant outdoors peeking out from snow, leaves or right in plain sight in the dead of winter. Meet our leader, Kris Mollenhauer, at the Main Street entrance to Ceres Park in Mantua at 9:00 to look around in this rich natural area she knows well and uncover the undead. Sturdy shoes/hiking boots are recommended and depending on the weather, trails may be wet. Bring binoculars as we have a chance to see the 18" Pileated Woodpeckers that frequent here or even the Red-headed Woodpecker spied on the Christmas Bird Count and your cell phone – for photos and recording the surprising fungi, lichen and other overlooked organisms on iNaturalist.

This event is free and open to the public.

Directions: From Rt 322 take Lambs Rd (635) to Pitman-Barnsboro Rd (553Alt). Turn left onto Rt 553A. Watch for Ceres Park sign on your left after crossing over Rt 55. Approximate street address: 964 Main Street, Sewell, NJ 08080.

Events by Other Organizations

Cumberland County Winter Eagle Festival

February 3, 2024 @ 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Cumberland County, New Jersey, has the largest number of nesting Bald Eagles in the state. The Eagle Festival is a partner effort between the County of Cumberland and numerous environmental organizations including the Cape May Bird Observatory, Audubon Society, Natural Lands, Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, American Littoral Society, Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and it's Tributaries, and many others.

The festival celebrates raptors of south Jersey, including Bald Eagles, falcons, harriers, hawks, and owls featuring raptor-viewing sites, guided walks, and other activities.

\$10 Adults; \$5 children (12 and under)

Five Staffed Viewing Sites along the Delaware Bay (with scopes and birding experts)

Bayshore Center at Bivalve

- Morning & evening owl watches
- Walks, food, activities
- Guided trail walks
- East Point Lighthouse

At the Mauricetown Firehall

- Speakers and presentations
- Nonprofit and commercial exhibitors
- Local fare refreshments & lunch available
- Live raptors exhibited by Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge
- Hands-on art activities by Clay College

Contact Info

County of Cumberland

856-453-2175

<http://www.exploreumberlandnj.com>

Mauricetown Firehall

9544 Noble Street

Mauricetown, NJ 08329

Mooning by Jayne Rhynard

Not that kind. This article is about *Moon bathing*, the sequel to Forest bathing. Moon bathing is the practice of exposing oneself to and absorbing the light of the moon. It can be done for as short as five minutes or it can be a gentle, sensory and mindful walk in the moonlight, letting your body and mind relax while embracing the darkness and opening up your awareness to the night sky.

The practice is believed to be healing, offering benefits for hypertension, relaxing your nervous system, and improving your circadian rhythms. According to Yogapedia, it can trigger the release of melatonin, the hormone that promotes relaxation and initiates sleep. While moon bathing might sound like another modern wellness fad, not surprisingly people who are seeking connection and spiritual practice have contributed to its growth in popularity as well as people who honor nature's natural wisdom. The activity is actually rooted in the traditions of ancient cultures in India, China, Egypt and Arabia. According to ancient Indian Ayurveda practice, the moon has a soothing and calming effect balancing the *pitta dosha*, or the body's heat energy.

Believers in astrology/signs of the zodiac hold that the moon holds a powerful position in the birth chart - ruling the subconscious, how we emotionally connect or respond. Its cycle has multiple activations of energy throughout the month and depending on the zodiac sign it is in, influences or alters a person's experience by the nature of its cosmic energy at that time. A new moon is associated with new beginnings, inward reflection, and detox, so brace yourself for a fresh start; on the other hand, the full moon is associated with gratitude, celebration, and energy cultivation.

Just as ancient people looked to the stars and constellations in the night sky for answers, today are still drawn to the night sky for many of the same reasons.

Natural Events for the month of February

- Skunk cabbage flowers are emerging from the ground, in wetlands throughout the County. As they grow they generate heat, which melts the frozen ground around them.
- Alder catkins are swelling and will open on the first warm days.
- Melting snow may reveal the trackways of meadow voles, dug along the interface between the frozen ground and snow cover.
- Broom crowberry in bloom in the Pinelands.
- Mourning cloak butterflies emerge from hibernation on warm days.
- Killdeer and great blue herons return from the south as waterways thaw and snow cover melts.
- Chipmunks reappear around bird feeders.
- Best time for viewing tundra swans at Whitesbog and other Pinelands ponds.

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 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 or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 20th of the preceding month.

The club would like to welcome the following new members who have joined in the last month:

1. Scott Vanetten of Mullica Hill
2. Shannon Hornibrook of Blackwood
3. Diane Stenzel of Mullica Hill
4. William Critchfield of Atco