



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

March 2014

Program: Backpacking Though a Granite Landscape: The John Muir Trail
Thursday, March 13, 2014 at 7:00pm at the Wenonah Community Center,
Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

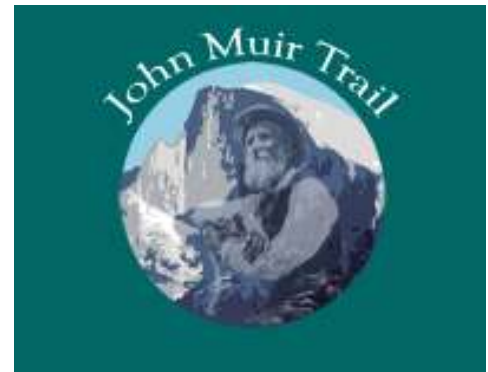
Presenter: Kris Mollenhauer

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Here in Southern New Jersey we live on the coastal plain, far from the mountains. But Kris Mollenhauer has always longed to have a house-size rock in her yard. For many years the Mollenhauer family hiked up Old Rag Mountain in Shenandoah National Park, Virginia. On those hikes they developed a reverence for massive outcroppings of Old Rag Granite that stick out of the ridge like a dinosaur spine. When two old friends invited Kris to join them on a backpacking trip to Yosemite National Park, she welcomed the chance to hike through another granite landscape.

The John Muir Trail passes through what many backpackers agree is the finest mountain scenery in the US. Some hikers may give first prize to other places, but none will deny the grandeur of the High Sierra. This is a land of 13,000 and 14,000 foot peaks, of soaring granite domes, of lakes by the thousands, of canyons 5000 feet deep and of dizzying waterfalls. Ansel Adams called Yosemite "The Range of Light". Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir camped together here.

Join Kris as she retraces her steps along 80 miles, starting at the Devil's Postpile National Monument and ending at Nevada Falls in Yosemite Valley.



Directions: The Wenonah Community Center (historic train station) is located at the RR crossing at the corner of E. Mantua Avenue and N. East Avenue, Wenonah, NJ. **From the east, north or south**, take Woodbury-Glassboro Rd (Rt. 553), and turn west at the light onto Mantua Avenue. The Community Center is approximately 1/2 of a mile ahead on the right (at the railroad crossing). **From the west**, take Wenonah Ave. in Mantua east for approximately a mile (becomes Mantua Ave. when you enter Wenonah) to the RR crossing. The Community center is on the left. 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 - Explore the Pine Barrens: Hike in the Pygmy Pines Plains

Saturday, March 8, 2014 at 10:00am

Trip Leaders: Paula Hayes (cell: 609-221-5195 or pnbhayes@gmail.com) and Maria Keefe (cell/text: 609-315-4759 or mariakeefe19@comcast.net)

Join the Gloucester County Nature Club and the Family Walk crew on Saturday, March 8 @ 10am as we take a hike through the Pygmy Pines Plains. We will visit a unique area in New Jersey where a variety

of pitch pine tree grows only a few feet tall. We will walk along the white sand paths among the dwarf trees looking out for miles seeing vistas you won't see any place else in south Jersey. Looking down on this mature forest we will be exploring and stopping to admire anything we find interesting, including a nearby pond. Everyone is welcome including families with children and anyone interested in this unique US National Reserve: the New Jersey Pinelands. Bring a lunch if you'd like to enjoy the day beyond noon, there are lots of other great hikes and historical sites in the area.



Directions: It will take you about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes to travel to Warren Grove from the Mantua area. From Rt.70 East take Rt 72 South to Rt 539. Turn South on 539. Go 6.2 miles, turn right onto Bombing Range Road, there is large sign that says Warren Grove Air to Ground Range at the corner. Go all the way down the dirt road to the fence. There is parking by the fence on the left. Note: Some maps include roads that appear to go through the area but those roads are actually gated.

Field Trip - Family Moonlit Hike (2nd Try) and Campfire at Scotland Run

Saturday, March 15, 2014 at 7:00pm

Trip Leaders: Paula Hayes (cell: 609-221-5195 or pnbhayes@gmail.com) and Maria Keefe (cell/text: 609-315-4759 or mariakeefe19@comcast.net)



We are hoping the weather will let us complete this rescheduled trip in March. Join us as we experience the magic of walking in the woods by the light of the moon. We explore the music of the night as our eyes give way to our other senses and we share the night with owls, raccoons, and flying squirrels. Come out and see tree silhouettes, moon shadows and the stillness of the woods in winter. The walk is short but will include uneven and sloping wooded trails so sturdy walking shoes are recommended. The walk will last about one hour which will give us time for some stories as well. We will end with a campfire complements of the Scotland Run staff. This event will be cancelled in the event of rain. To really enjoy the splendor of the night keep your flashlights off and in your pocket. This event is open to all ages. **To reserve your spot for this special event please register by calling Scotland Run at 856-881-0845 or emailing ltaylor@co.gloucester.nj.us.**

Directions: Take exit 45 off route 55 to Centerton- Clayton. Make a left onto Buck Road (Rt. 553). Make a right at the first traffic light onto Academy Road (Rt. 610). Take Academy Road for 2 miles crossing over route 47 and Fries Mill Road. Just beyond Fries Mill Road turn right into the Nature Center.

Address for GPS: 480 East Academy Street, Clayton

Field Trip - Hike the Black Run Preserve: Our Gateway to the Pinelands

Sunday, March 16, 2014 at 10:00am

Trip Leaders: John Volpa and Paula Hayes 609-221-5195 (cell)

We will be visiting Evesham's Gem, Black Run Preserve. This relatively new green space is almost 1,000 acres and is open for hiking, biking, bird watching and other passive recreation. Our guide for this trip will be John Volpa, a member of Black Run Preserve Friends Group. The hike will be approximately 2-3 miles of easy walking along pristine Pine Barrens wetlands, bogs, and some uplands.

Stands of Atlantic White Cedar in the wetlands and examples of the Heath Family of plants (huckleberry, blueberry, mountain laurel, sheep's laurel, etc) are abundant. March has few flowering plants but we should find evidence of early emerging frogs. Insectivorous plants such as bladderwort and sundews are found in many locations during warmer weather. The still pristine Black Run Preserve watershed (covering over one thousand acres) is an island of native Pine Barrens plants and animals surrounded by suburbia and only fifteen miles from Philadelphia. This trip will be a joint trip with the Black Run Preserve Friends Group. For this trip you have the option of meeting us at the Preserve in Evesham or meeting at Timberline Plaza to carpool.

Directions: Meet at Timberline Plaza on Rt. 553 in Mantua (near Rt. 55) at 9:00 am. to carpool to Evesham Township or follow the directions below to meet at the Preserve:

From 295 north, exit at route 73 and head south 5-6 miles to Braddock Mill Road. Braddock Mill Road is south of The Promenade. You will pass The Promenade and then a Target store, at the next light turn left onto Braddock Mill Rd (it's called Kresson Rd. to the right), there is TD Bank on the corner. Go about ½ mile and make the first right as you pass a pond also on your right. Then make a quick left. You will still be on Braddock Mill Rd. Continue to the stop sign at Kettle Run Road. Turn right and travel 50 feet beyond the stop sign, then turn left at the large white "open space" sign into a parking area.

A Park at Maple Ridge Nears Reality - by Rich Dilks, The Friends of Maple Ridge

Over six years ago, the effort to preserve Maple Ridge began. The Friends of Maple Ridge are now very gratified to report to the many supporters and contributors who have worked with us to save this beautiful and ecologically important place that we are very close to the creation of a park at Maple Ridge. The preservation of public lands is a careful and deliberate process, and that process with Maple Ridge has taken time. Over the past several months, progress has quietly but steadily been made and the new park at Maple Ridge is now in sight. The State of New Jersey is committed to acquiring Maple Ridge as a State Nature Preserve- the first of its kind in New Jersey- as part of our State Parks system. Gloucester County and Mantua Township are equally committed to doing their parts in the maintenance and management of the new Nature Preserve. We expect Maple Ridge to go under contract for purchase by the state in the very near future with settlement following in the spring.

With the creation of the State Nature Preserve, the Friends of Maple Ridge have done what we set out to do. We are now taking up a new mission- to become a permanent Friends organization for the new State Nature Preserve and to provide a means and opportunity for all of us to work together with park officials for the benefit and improvement of the new park. We will be formally announcing the details of the new Friends organization at the appropriate time a little later this year.

It has been said that every place that has been saved, every parcel of land that has been preserved, has a story behind it. The story behind Maple Ridge is a remarkable one and you have all helped write it. With your contributions, fundraisers, lawn signs, donation cans and a spirit of never quitting, never giving up, you made the new park possible. Now government working together on the state, county and local levels is making the new park a reality. We thank everyone who has supported and contributed to this effort and we look forward to a great new State Nature Preserve for all to enjoy for many years to come.

2014 Gloucester County Bird Quest: Saturday May 3, 2014

The Gloucester County Nature Club and co-sponsors invite people of all ages to participate in the **2014 (15th annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest**. This year **Bird Quest** will take place on **Sat. May 3, 2014 from 7am to 12 noon throughout Gloucester County**.

We are pleased to return to Scotland Run Park (Wilson Lake) in Clayton for our picnic and gathering. We hope to reach new families and continue to excite our legacy participants with a wonderful setting for our picnic. Scotland Run Park is located at 980 West Academy St., Clayton, NJ 08312 (directions below).

See the separate enrollment form.

During this time, teams visit parks and natural sites in Gloucester County to find as many different bird species as they can. The Quest is:

- A way to discover Gloucester County's parks and natural areas
- A way to discover the unique birds that live in and through our county
- An opportunity to learn how to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat
- An opportunity to have fun with family, friends, and colleagues
- A light-hearted competition

The Quest is an educational event: novices are encouraged to participate.

How it works: Teams have 5 hours on Saturday (7am to noon) to visit sites in Gloucester County. Birds are identified by sight or sound. The goal is to find as many different species of birds as possible. At noon, all participants gather at **Scotland Run Park in Clayton** to report results and for **(free) lunch, t-shirts, live bird show, owl interpretive center, and prizes**.

You can participate in one of the following ways:

- Form a team, plan your route (locations you will visit) for the day of the event and record all the bird species you see within Gloucester County. Hand in your results at Scotland Run by 12:30pm to be eligible for prizes.
 - Join one of the buses lead by a bird expert. These buses will visit a few locations in the County where bird experts will help you to identify the many bird species. The buses will meet back at Scotland Run Park at 12:30pm.
 - Join one of three guided walks, each lasting between an hour and an hour and a half, in various natural places in Gloucester County lead by a bird expert who will help you identify the bird species present. These walks will be paced and placed so you can participate in all of the walks or just one or two while you spend the rest of the time birding on your own. Hand in your results at Scotland Run Park at 12:30pm to be eligible for prizes.
- **7:00-8:30: Maple Ridge:** From the intersection of Rt 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd) and Mantua Ave in Wenonah (and Holy Nativity Lutheran Church), travel .75 mile south on Rt 553 to the intersection with Bark Bridge Rd. Turn right into the parking lot at that intersection – it should be open. We have permission from the landowner to be there -- please do not park at Hutchinson Cabinets.

- **9:00-10:30: Chestnut Branch Park:** From Route 45 take 553A (Alternate) towards Sewell one and one half miles. The Park will be on your left. From Route 55 take exit 53 towards Wenonah. At the fourth light make a left towards Barnsboro. At the second light make a right onto Route 553A. The park will be on your right in about one mile. Park in the lower right gravel parking lot (you can cross over the walking path to get to the gravel lot).
- **11:00-12:30: Scotland Run Park (also the picnic location):** From Route 55 take exit 45 and proceed North on Route 553/ Buck Road. After 1.2 miles turn Right on CR 610/ Clayton-Aura Road. Continue on CR 610 for 3.8 miles. After the traffic light at Fries Mill Road, turn Left into the parking lot for Scotland Run Park. You will meet in the bluebird field adjacent to the parking lot.

Last year's Gloucester County Bird Quest attracted participants from across the county organized in teams representing schools, scout troops, environmental commissions, families and friends. Each year the Club holds pre-Quest field and classroom trainings, attracting 15-30 persons each, in which local experts help new birders learn to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat. The winning team in 2013 located 77 species but everyone was a winner because of how much they learned about birds and the natural areas of Gloucester County through this fun, educational event

This year we will be celebrating 15 years of Bird Quest in addition to special activities. We have developed educational materials including a Quest t-shirt with original artwork featuring owls of Gloucester County. Participants will learn about owls of Gloucester County and the unique features of these amazing birds. These materials will have lasting educational value for teachers, students, and the general public. Live birds, including owls, will be at the park. **The \$12 fee per participant helps to defray the cost of lunch, T-shirts, prizes etc.**

More information and registration forms will be posted to the Gloucester County Nature Club's website at www.gcnatureclub.org. For more information, join a team or reserve a seat on the bus, contact Brian Hayes at bhayes@eirc.org or 856.582.7000 x110.

Participants are encouraged to attend any of a series of free field trainings in the evenings, mornings and weekends before the Quest. Training sessions are listed at the end of this newsletter.

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: March 2014

- March 16, 2014 (Sunday), 2:00 pm – **Walk in the Wild: Lichens.** 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 3/1 at 8:00 am. Bring binoculars and discover the many species of birds that call Scotland Run Park home.
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 3/12 at 10:00 am
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 3/19 at 2:30 pm
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 3/22 at 10:00 am

Natural Events for the month of March

- Woodchucks emerge from hibernation.
- Male skunks wander widely, searching for mates.
- Red maples flower in late March, with male and female flowers on separate trees.
- Roadside "weeds" such as speedwell, wintercress, hairy bittercress, purple dead-nettle, and storksbill bloom before most native wildflowers.
- Eastern screech owls, New Jersey's most common owl, lay eggs beginning in March and continue through May.
- Woodcocks begin courtship flights.
- Male goldfinches begin to molt into their brilliant yellow breeding plumage.
- Eastern Phoebes return this month.

Looking Ahead:

Listed below are the programs and field trips we have lined up for the rest of the season. Current schedule is subject to change. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

2013-2014 GCNC Programs

April 10, 2014: **Birding Adventure in Costa Rica** - Marilyn Henry

May 8, 2014: **Spiders** - Eugene Fuzy

June 13, 2014: **Annual Picnic** - Location TBD

2013-2014 GCNC Field Trips

April: **Bird Quest Trainings** including a junior birder training

May 3, 2014: **Bird Quest**

June: TBD

Club Notes:

- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Karen Kravchuck at president@gcnatureclub.org 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 newsletter@gcnatureclub.org or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.
- The March Executive Committee meeting will be held on March 9th at the home of Kris and Erik Mollenhauer. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.
- **Join Our Meetup Group!** The Gloucester County Nature Club is now using the online tool, Meetup.com to advertise our field trips. We strongly encourage you to give it a try. By signing up you will be able to see up to minute information related to field trips (weather, changes or cancellations if needed), communicate with the leaders and others going on trips of interest. Simply sign up with an email address to join the group and you will be informed of upcoming trips and Nature Club events. It's a great way to be reminded of the trips you didn't want to forget and meet new members! Check out the link and sign up!! <http://www.meetup.com/Gloucester-County-Nature-Club/>

Bird Quest 2014 Training Sessions

April 19 (Saturday) 7:00 - 8:30 A.M. Forest/Edge Habitat. Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua.

Find the hidden habitat in any location. This multiple use park has some great birding spots around and among the ball fields. Find species that like the edge like indigo buntings, mockingbirds, and yellow-rump warblers.

***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.*

Leaders: Bob Duke and Jay Hoffecker

April 21 (Monday) 6:00 – 7:30 P.M. Birding Basics. Alcyon Lake, Pitman.

Learn the basics of good birding and the tools of the trade. Discover the world of birding from bird guides to binoculars, clothing to footwear, etiquette to bird song and of course bird identification as well. Any level of interest is welcome. Questions are encouraged. A walk around the park will let you use your newfound—or refreshed—skills.

***Directions:** From Rt. 55 Exit 53A (or Exit 53 if coming from the south) take Rt. 553 (Glassboro Road) south for about 1.5 miles to Holly Avenue. Turn right (west) on Holly Avenue. Continue for 1.2 miles to the park entrance, which is on the left. There is a small sign. Drive past sports fields; meet at the pavilion.*

Leaders: Rich Dilks and Karen Kravchuck

April 25 (Friday) 7:00 – 8:30 A.M. Woodland Birds and Birdcalls. Ceres Park, Mantua Twp.

Learn your woodland birds like wood thrush, scarlet tanagers, ovenbirds, water thrush, black and white warblers, and pine warblers. Birds will be identified by sound, sight or both. ***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.*

Leaders: Jayne Rhynard and Barry Bengel

April 26 (Saturday) 7:00 - 8:30 A.M. Forest Edge and Riparian Habitat. Triple Oaks, Franklinville

Access to Scotland Run riparian habitat and forest edge at Triple Oaks.

Directions: *Triple Oaks Nursery is on the right (west) side of Rt. 47 (Delsea Drive) half a mile south of the center of Franklinville.*

Leaders: Dwight and Doris Weir

April 27 (Sunday) 7:00 - 8:30 A.M. Forest Edge and Swamp Habitat. Railroad Avenue, Elk Township

Directions: *From Rt. 322 in Richwood turn at light onto Aura Rd. (Rt. 667.) Continue 3.5 mi. and turn Right onto Whig Lane Rd.(Rt. 619.) At fork stay Left. Pass Aura Elementary School and turn left into the Elk Township Recreational Complex.Park in the paved lot.*

Leaders: Ron and Linda Kegel

April 28 (Monday) 7:00 – 8:00 P.M. Birding by Ear — An Introduction to Birdcalls in a Classroom Setting. Wenonah Community Center, Wenonah

In an indoor setting, learn mnemonics and “tricks of the trade” to identify birds by their songs and calls. These is a great session for novices and those that would like to brush-up on their “Birding by Ear” skills.

Directions: *Wenonah Community Center (Historic Train Station,) is located at the RR crossing at the corner of E. Mantua Avenue and N. East Avenue, Wenonah*

Leaders: Brian Hayes and Erik Mollenhauer

April 29 (Tuesday) 7:00 -8 :00 A.M. Birds of Local Waterways. Old Pine Farm, Deptford

Open views of the water provide good opportunity for sighting water birds like ducks, herons, red wing blackbirds and mergansers. Wooded section could produce woodpeckers, nuthatches, warblers, chickadees, and tufted titmouse. **Directions:** *Access from Good Intent road (Rt.534), turn North onto Rankin Ave. Follow to end and park. Walk down woods road to the Big Timber Creek.*

Leaders: Ed & Millie Cleary; Gary and Margie Lizzi

April 30 (Wednesday) 6:00 - 7:30 P.M. Delaware River Riparian Habitat. Wheelabrator Refuge, Westville

At the intersection of the Delaware River and Big Timber Creek, the wide-open space behind the Wheelabrator plant is great habitat for swamp, meadow and river birds. Trails and old roads make access easy and Wheelabrator is more than accommodating. Bob White can be heard here. **Directions:** *Access from Rt. 130, opposite Hazel Ave in Westville, just south of Big Timber Creek. Meet at the pavilion in parking lot on*

Kris Mollenhauer and Marilyn Henry