



# Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

[www.gcnatureclub.org](http://www.gcnatureclub.org)

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

October 2023

## **Program: Ecology and History of the New Jersey Pinelands**

**Presenter: Allison Hartman, Education Director, Pinelands Adventures, Pinelands Preservation Alliance.**

**Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 7:00pm at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)**

**Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342**

Join Pinelands Preservation Alliance's Director of Education, Allison Hartman, for an overview of the Pine Barrens that delves into the magnificent tapestry of life and ecology that makes up this remarkable ecosystem. We will discuss the geology, biology, and history to discover why this is a place worth exploring and saving.



Oswago River, NJ Pinelands

Founded in 1989, Pinelands Preservation Alliance is the leading voice for protecting the natural and historic resources of the New Jersey Pinelands. These resources include 800,000 acres of forest in one of the world's most densely developed regions, the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer that remains one of North America's largest and healthiest aquifers, rare plants and animals under siege in other parts of their natural habitat, and a fascinating history embodied in the Pinelands' ghost towns, historic villages, farms and people.



Pine Barrens Gentian

Allison Hartman is a South Jersey native and has been leading kayak and paddleboard tours through the salt marshes for more than ten years. Allison is a graduate of Stockton University's Marine Science program and a senior fellow in the Environmental Leadership Program Fellowship. With a background in marine biology and environmental education, Allison is always excited for a chance to "nerd out" and share her passion for anything in the natural world, but especially aquatic plants and animals.

**Directions:** The Holy Nativity Lutheran Church is located just off Rt. 553 (Woodbury Glassboro Rd.) immediately south of the traffic light at Mantua Ave. The church parking lot can be accessed by entrances on either Woodbury-Glassboro Road or Lenape Trail (first left off of Mantua Ave).

### **Field Trip Report: Urban Botany, September 17, 2023**

On this pleasant Sunday morning, fifteen club members and associates accompanied Karl Anderson on a botanical survey of the CVS parking lot in Woodbury and the adjacent shore of Broad Street Lake. 62 plant species (25 of them native) were found growing wild along the lot perimeter and in the planting beds and pavement cracks, thus demonstrating that an observant nature enthusiast can always find something to study. Of particular note was a single specimen of Seaside Petunia, a plant of the American Southwest, that has been recorded fewer than six times in New Jersey in the last hundred years. In the tangled verdure along the lake, observed species diversity was actually less, with 59 species (39 native) including non-native and possibly invasive Small Carpetgrass, and Virginia Buttonweed, a native plant that grew only in Cape May County till two decades ago but is now rapidly spreading northward in the state. Also seen was a large population of Ricefield Flatsedge, a grass-like plant that has been called the "worst weed in the world" by one authority. Contact Karl at [karlanderson6@aol.com](mailto:karlanderson6@aol.com) for a list of species.

### **Special Event: The Mad Hatter's Tree Party Sunday, October 29, 1:00 – 3:00pm**



The Mad Hatter's Tree Party is a fun way for people to learn about the trees of our community and the critical role that trees play in a healthy environment. The Tree Party is a chance for families and people of all ages to share a whimsical adventure in a community forest.

This event consists of a self-paced, 45-minute walk in Wenonah Woods. This is more than an ordinary hike, though. You will stop at several locations to learn about specific trees along the trail and their role in the overall forest. All stations have been updated for this year and a children's story telling station will be available near the tea house. Musicians will add an instrumental accompaniment to your journey. At the end, you can share light refreshments in the Tea House with the Mad Hatter himself. This event is great for family, and takes place rain or shine.

Walk begins at Eldridge Trail, at the intersection of E. Pine St and S. Princeton Ave. in Wenonah. Families can arrive at their convenience as walks leave regularly. No pre-registration is necessary.

## Events by other organizations

**Nature's Best Hope** – Presented by Entomologist & NY Times Bestselling Author Doug Tallamy, Ph.D

October 4, 2023, 7:00 – 8:30 pm.

Eynon Ballroom

Chamberlain Student Center

201 Mullica Hill Road

Glassboro, NJ

Recent headlines about global insect declines and three billion fewer birds in North America are a bleak reality check about how ineffective the country's current landscape designs have been at sustaining the plants and animals that sustain us. Such losses are not an option if we wish to continue our current standard of living on Planet Earth. The good news is that none of this is inevitable. Choosing the right plants for our landscapes will not only address the biodiversity crisis but help our climate crisis as well. Tallamy will discuss simple steps that each of us can—and must—take to reverse declining biodiversity, why we must change our adversarial relationship with nature to a collaborative one, and why we, ourselves, are nature's best hope. Successful examples of recent biodiverse plantings on Rowan's campus will also be highlighted during this event.



For more information and to register, scan the QR code or visit: [go.rowan.edu/besthope](https://go.rowan.edu/besthope),

## Butterfly and Birding Walk

Place: Tall Pines State Preserve

Date: Sunday, October 8, 2023

Time: 1:00 pm

Join the Friends of Tall Pines for a leisurely guided walk through the new Tall Pines Pollinator Garden then come with us and explore the trails of the Preserve on an autumn afternoon. Experience the beauty of Tall Pines in fall as the trees reveal the first hints of autumn color and the Friends point out fall wildflowers, birds, butterflies and other natural flora and fauna that call Tall Pines home. We will visit fields of yellow goldenrods and white asters and look for migrating monarch and buckeye butterflies. And we will be on the lookout for Tall Pines birds too. Perhaps we will spot one of our resident bluebirds or passing fall migrants heading south. So bring your binoculars and a camera too.



After the walk we invite all to gather in the parking lot for light refreshments.

**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.

- **Fall Migration Bird Walks** at Scotland Run Park will be held from 8:00 to 9:30 am on the first and third Wednesdays of September and October (October 4 & 18). The walks are free, no registration is required, and the walks begin in the Nature Center's parking lot. Come help search for the many birds that pass through Scotland Run Park during fall migration. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars.
- **Fall Paddles:** Paddles take place the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from September to November 9:30 am to 11:30 am. Come and explore beautiful Wilson Lake and the many wonders it has to offer. Both canoes and kayaks are available. In order to participate in the event you must be able to operate a canoe or a kayak. Due to the limited amount of boats registration is required. This program is free to the public. Register at the Parks and Rec page on the county website.

## Natural Events for the month of October

- Pine barrens gentian in bloom in the Pinelands.
- Goldenrods, asters, bonesets, and blazing star in bloom.
- Cranberry harvest in the Pinelands.
- Autumn colors peak in late October.
- The greatest variety of raptor migration comes in mid-October, with golden eagles, red-shouldered hawks and more.
- Fox sparrows, one of the largest sparrows, are often seen under seed feeders during their autumn migration
- Wood ducks are migrating south
- Green-winged teal, one of the smallest dabbling ducks, are passing through the area as they migrate to the shore.

## Forest Bathing by Jayne Rhynard

Whether you call it a fitness trend or a mindfulness practice (or a bit of both), Forest bathing has nothing to do with soap or water. The name refers to the way participants fully immerse themselves in — and reconnect with — nature. Forest bathing is the practice of enjoying a relaxing reset by taking time to wander and “bathe” in nature soaking up the sights, sounds, and feel of our natural environment.

Forest bathing developed mainstream appeal around the 1980s in Japan as a necessary outlet after the burnout that followed the tech boom of that decade. The rapid economic development of the 80’s was followed by a bubble burst sparking record levels of depression in Japan. People turned to nature to find peace and to avoid — and counter — the effects of life’s challenges and “wash out” the noise from constant stressors, notifications, deadlines etc. It became so popular that the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries named this practice Shinrin-yoku: taking in the forest atmosphere, or forest bathing."

Not just for the wilderness-lover, the practice can be as simple as walking in any natural environment and consciously connecting with what’s around you. You only need one thing as a forest bather: a clear, open mind and full engagement with the environment. While there are trained guides offering a meditative two- to three-hour ecotherapy there are no set times or right or wrong ways to enjoy your moments in nature.

The most important thing is to spend time in nature while absorbing the sights and sounds being mindful about the experience. Limit distractions leaving your phone, camera, etc., behind, on mute or off as you soak in your surroundings, giving yourself the gift of staying focused and connected to your environment.

The ideal location is one that brings you closest to nature. Trees play a major part in this nature therapy. The trees themselves may directly cause some of these health benefits by their release of stress-reducing compounds known as phytoncides into the air. A quiet, clear portion of the woods is great for centering yourself in the present. Forest bathing can be done even in urban areas -- find some trees in a park and take some time to breathe under the trees. Observe your surroundings. Appreciate the roots of a tree, the green of a plant’s leaves, and the sounds of birds chirping. Notice the smells of nature, the wind against your face, and sun rays that escape through branches. Remain as long as you can for a full, immersive experience or as little as 20 minutes.

Permitting yourself to be present in and surrendering to nature unlocks the many benefits of this practice. Science supports that time spent immersed in nature is good for us which isn’t a new concept. Many cultures have long

recognized the importance of the natural world to human health. We are part of nature and need to feel that connection."

Beyond providing a much-needed pause from modern life, science indicates forest bathing is good for your physical and mental well-being. Scientific studies show it not only can boost mood but can help reduce and prevent the effects of depression and anxiety and also reduce sleep disturbances. Relaxing in nature causes increased activity in the parasympathetic nervous system which activates when your body is at rest. Usually, our body would turn this system on after periods of stress or danger. As people worldwide struggle with pollution, climate change, and long work hours, spending time alone in nature provides an accessible break away from daily demands. So, let's all take a bath!

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:sharkeyes@comcast.net) or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.

### **The GCNC has a new book! – Observations by a Field Naturalist of Southern New Jersey**

This book by well-known South Jersey naturalist Karl Anderson is a compilation of 100 newspaper columns he wrote between 2009 and 2022. With few exceptions, they deal with plants and animals that we see, or could see, in southern New Jersey every year if we were in the right place at the right time.

Do you want to know how to tell a huckleberry from a blueberry? What is making those holes in your lawn? How about the sex life of a land snail? And why did the skunk cross the road? These topics, and 96 others, can be found in this book.

Karl worked for New Jersey Audubon Society for many years, managing and developing the Audubon nature center at Rancocas State Park where he led field trips for bird, botany and general nature study. He has led or co-led over sixty tours across North America and beyond. After retiring from New Jersey Audubon, he worked part-time as a botanist for the State of New Jersey while continuing to do botanical inventories and lead local field trips. His favorite New Jersey haunts are the Pine Barrens, the Delaware Water Gap NRA, and any overgrown vacant lot.

162 pages. 5.5"w X 8.5" h. Weight: 9 ounces. Spiral bound for durability. Published March, 2023.

Copies of **Observations by a Field Naturalist of Southern New Jersey** are now available for purchase at local retailers including:

- **Antiques on Evergreen** - 429 S Evergreen Ave, Woodbury, NJ 08096
- **Dambly's Garden Center** - 51 West Factory Rd, Berlin, NJ 08009
- **Daminger's Natural Pet Foods** - 641 Main St, Sewell (Mantua Township), NJ 08080
- **Triple Oaks Nursery & Herb Garden** - 2359 Delsea Drive, Franklinville, NJ 08322
- **Wild Birds Unlimited Cherry Hill** - 1619 N Kings Hwy, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
- **Words Matter** - 52 S. Broadway, Pitman, NJ 08071
- **The Yellow Garage Antiques** - 66 South Main St., Mullica Hill, NJ 080621

The book is also available through the club's online store. To access the online store, click here.

**YOUTUBE CHANNEL:** We are continuing to post recordings of recent club programs for the convenience of members and the public. To find the club's channel, use [this link](#) or search for the club's full name within YouTube. 17 videos are now available, including these recent additions:



- [Moths and Nocturnal Insects of Gloucester County \(May 2023\)](#)
- [Through the Dragon's Mouth – Secrets of the Night Sky \(September 2023\)](#)

Be sure to subscribe to the club's channel and "like" the videos so they will get recommended to more people! We will continue recording programs whenever permitted by speakers and their sponsoring organizations.

## Reminder - Membership Dues

October brings with it membership renewals. This year we will be keeping the price the same as last year. Please remember that your dues are the only costs associated with being a club member, we do not charge for any of our programs or field trips. Many organizations charge their members for each walk or activity they attend. We believe that the club is still an excellent value and hope the added cost will not deter any of our members. It is much cheaper for us to send the newsletter electronically to our members and as a result those members who choose to receive the newsletter electronically will receive a discount on their membership. The dues are \$20 for electronic mailings and \$25 for regular mail delivery. Please fill out the membership form at the end of this newsletter and send your renewal form and a check payable to "Gloucester County Nature Club" to: GCNC Membership, P.O. Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080.

You may also sign up and pay your membership dues electronically via PayPal. Just go to <http://gcnatureclub.org/membership.php> and fill out the online form.

**WAIVER**

Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members or representatives shall not be liable for any injuries, loss or damage to person and/or property, direct or consequential, arising out of any trips and/or activities of the Gloucester County Nature Club. The assumption of risk, which is inherent in this type of outdoor activity, is implied on the part of each person who attends any Gloucester County Nature Club trip, and every person participating in any of said trips and/or activities assumes all risk and liability in connection therewith.

Everyone participating in any activity of the Gloucester County Nature Club will be required to read the release of liability, protecting the Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members and representatives from liability.

Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members and representatives are not in any way responsible for the personal safety of the attendees. When walking along a road, keep to the left, facing oncoming traffic and walk in a single file. When walking along trails, do not follow too closely or move too fast for your safety and for the safety of others (avoid collisions and/or whipped branches). FOLLOW THE LEADER: If you forge ahead, you may find yourself alone. Responsible adults must accompany children under the age of 16. If you expect to drop out of the group early, please inform the leader. Report to one or more of the hikers if you intend to discontinue on the route.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2023-2024**

- New Member  Renewal
- Paper Membership (\$25) - regular mail
- Electronic Membership (\$20) - newsletter via email; \*\*\*please provide email address below

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*\*Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note any special knowledge you would be willing to share: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to serve on a committee? If so, which committee(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Are there other ways you could participate? If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

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Would you like to give a gift membership? If so, indicate Paper \_\_\_\_ or Electronic \_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

A note will be sent informing them of your gift membership in the GCNC, thank you.

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I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE WAIVER

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail completed form with payment to GCNC, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 or bring to a meeting.