



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public.

December 2018

Program - Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps

Thursday, December 13, 2018 at 7:00pm at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenter: Erik Mollenhauer

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342



The modern environmental movement owes its origins to a multiplicity of legacies, not least of which is the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). As a saying goes: "Before there was Earth Day, there was the CCC."

The best-known, most popular of President Roosevelt's New Deal programs, the CCC was started in 1933 and operated for ten years, ending in 1942. More than 3 million young men from across America... mostly 18 to 24 years old... enrolled in the CCC. They were housed in 5,000 CCC camps that were found in every state (Pennsylvania had over 100 camps, second only to California). CCC projects and practices sought to conserve natural resources... but some of them were "misguided", at best.

According to an ecological concept known as "Disturbance Theory", the normal condition is that communities are constantly recovering from past disturbance. If so, it has now been 76 years since the work of the CCC "disturbed" the nation. All but a few CCC men have "walked on". And yet, their work transformed the American physical, political and cultural landscape in ways that linger. Join us as we explore the legacy of the CCC in New Jersey and beyond... and how it continues to impact us all..

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 – Northwestern Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 15, 2018

Compiler: Ron Kegel

The NW Gloucester Bird Count will take place Saturday, December 15 rain or shine. We will be touring the western portion of the county attempting to see and hear all the birds we can. It is a wonderful opportunity to get outside and see nature at its finest. A great way to learn new birds, socialize with different people, and help a citizens science endeavor.



The 15 mile count radius consists of 13 different areas, each with an area leader and good compliment of assistants. Recently we have had on average around 60 participants and bird species totals range between 75-95, depending upon the year. We owe a lot to those pioneers of the count. They had the vision and the wherewithal to conduct this citizen science endeavor.

Join us for the day if you can. It is a great opportunity to get out and see new territory, meet new people, and bone up on those birding skills. Experience is not necessary and quite frankly we enjoy having folks along that are learning. It makes the day more enjoyable for the old guard who have a tendency to sometimes take sightings for granted (me). Our leaders are a wonderful source of knowledge and experience. Most know their area like the back of their hand and tend to expect to see some species in the same area they were seen during other years!

Prerequisites are: dress warm, goodies to eat during the day, binoculars (if you have a pair), field guide (but not absolutely necessary, others will have no doubt), and an appetite to try something new and/or different! Time spent with your group can be arranged with your leader. Some folks do an entire day, others may opt to do a few hours, again arrange with your leader. Meeting place to canvass the area is usually established by the leader as well. If you are new to the count, have interest, yet not sure where or who you would like to join, the compiler can assist with this.

This year we will be doing the feeder watching again too. If you are located within the count circle and are unable to join a group but want to watch your feeders and tally you observations, I can send forms to you so you might document and aid the count. This is a helpful way of assisting the count. Sometimes some birds are seen by feeder watchers that escape those birders out beating the bushes! Please think about it.

If you have any questions please contact me; my info is below. I will be bringing "the map" to the December Nature Club meeting should anyone want to see the count area. Other details will likely be shared at the meeting too. The count has always been made up of mostly Gloucester County Nature Club members and friends. We would like to continue and build upon this legacy.

Come one, come all! We would love to have you and would cherish the help.

Compiler, Ron Kegel

I can be reached at:

609-617-0635 cell

856-881-9262 land line

ronaldk52@comcast.net

Contact me if you have any questions!

Events by other Organizations: December 2018

- December 1 (Saturday) – **Batsto River Walk** 10:00am – 12:00pm Join us on our guided hike of Batsto Village and Wharton State Forest. Batsto Village is a historic site located in the South Central Pinelands and is nationally recognized for its historical significance and beauty. The roots of the Village can be traced back to 1766. We will walk the trail along Batsto Lake, to the top of the lake and back. SJLWT's Program Manager, Michael Hogan will discuss Batsto's fascinating history, as well as identify the flora and fauna on a leisurely hike of this beautiful State Forest. Bring your binoculars and camera for this spectacular walk!
Location: Batsto Village & Wharton State Forest, 31 Batsto Road, Hammonton, NJ 08037. Meet at the Village Visitor's Center. For more information and maps contact Michael Hogan at 609-476-2086/hoganphoto@verizon.net. Please RSVP. For more info see <http://sjlandwater.org>.
- December 15 (Saturday) – **Oldmans Creek Preserve Workday - Trailblazing** 10:00am – 1:00pm at the Oldmans Creek Preserve - 21 Main St, Swedesboro, NJ 08085. Have you ever wanted to be a trailblazer? Well now is your chance to become a literal trail-blazer during our December workday. Join us at Oldmans Creek Preserve where we'll clear two new trails in the area. For more info see <http://sjlandwater.org>.

Natural Events for the month of December

- Geminid meteor shower – Night of December 13 thru Morning of Dec 14.
- 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.

Conservation Corner by Suzan Delozier

On November 7th Journey South reported that the monarchs are arriving in Mexico in good numbers. See www.journeynorth.org for up-to-date information on monarchs and many other migrating species.

DECEMBER SKIES

December offers us the Geminid meteor shower, one of the best performing meteor showers of the year often producing more meteors than the more famous Perseids meteor shower. This year the Geminids will give their best show on the night of the 13th into the morning of the 14th. According to Sky and Telescope's December magazine, the Geminids are one of only two meteor showers tied to an asteroid and not a comet. Normally with a comet related shower, the meteors we observe are caused by ice-related vapors ejected by a comet, but the Geminids are caused by rock dust ejected from the asteroid Phaethon. Astronomers believe that because Phaethon comes closer to the sun than any other asteroid the high temperature causes the asteroid to crack and eject material. So go outside and look east toward the constellation Gemini. Check out heavens-above.com/skychart2.aspx for an interactive sky map.

Venus is the brilliant morning star this month. Mars, which has been shining with a reddish hue in the south for many weeks, will set about 11:30 pm in December but will still be respectably bright just after nightfall. In the early morning of the 21st, our largest and smallest planet, Jupiter and Mercury, will be within a degree of each other low in the southeastern sky.

SOME GOOD NEWS FOR THE OCEANS AND SOME PUFFIN FACTS

In the September issue of the newsletter, we talked about plastic in our earth, sea and air. It was stated in that issue that an estimated 155 metric tons of plastic entered the oceans in 2010 and that the amount will double by 2025. All that plastic will break down into micro-plastic (the sun's ultraviolet rays cause the breakdown) and enter the food chain of life on earth. The Save Our Sees Act, which was passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by Trump on October 11, 2018, begins to address the problems caused by plastic in our seas. The act ensures funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program and also calls for the state department to work internationally in solving this global problem.

Source: [//oceanconservancy.org/blog/2018/10/11/save-seas-act-signed-law/](https://oceanconservancy.org/blog/2018/10/11/save-seas-act-signed-law/)

The Ocean Conservancy also gives some interesting facts about puffins. Puffins are amazing birds. They flap their wings up to 400 times a minute and can reach 55mph. They can dive 200 feet underwater while flapping their wings as if flying in air and they use their big orange feet to steer. Normally puffins spend their time in open waters, but gather on coastlines with other puffins to breed. And puffin babies are called pufflings! For more info on puffins click [here](#).



OIL EXCAVATION AND OUR COASTS

Most of us know about the BP Deepwater Horizon blowout in 2010 that killed 11 crewmen on an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico and released nearly 5 million gallons of oil into the Gulf creating the worst oil spill in US history. However, there is another spill that has been going on for 14 years in the Gulf of Mexico 12 miles off the Louisiana coast that is threatening to replace the Deepwater Horizon as the worst oil spill ever. This ongoing disaster was caused when an oil rig sank in a mudslide triggered by Hurricane Ivan and the energy company which owns it is unable to cap the wells. The government estimates the spill could continue through most of this century.

The Center for Biological Diversity reports in its November newsletter that, even with disasters like those mentioned above, the Interior Department has given approval for an oil company to drill six miles off the Alaskan coast in the Beaufort Sea. Part of the project is to build a nine acre gravel island near the Prudhoe Bay not far from the National Arctic Wildlife Refuge. If this happens it will be the first gas and oil facility in federal waters in Alaska. Secretary of Interior Zinke believes this will give the US energy dominance. But he neglects to mention the damage caused by leaks (and explosions) and the negative impact fossil fuel mined from these wells will have on climate. The Trump Administration plans to expand oil and gas exploration in all US oceans including the coastline of New Jersey. Conservation groups and several states are fighting in court to stop the expansion. Click [here](#) and [here](#) for articles in the Washington Post providing more information on this issue.

The Ocean Conservancy has a petition telling Secretary Zinke not to open new areas of our ocean to offshore drilling and not to weaken regulations that govern offshore drilling. Click [here](#) to read and sign the petition.

Looking Ahead:

Listed below are the remaining programs we have lined up for the 2018-2019 season. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

2019 Programs

Jan.10, 2019: **Flora of the California Deserts** - Rich Dilks

Feb. 14, 2019 **Annual Pot Luck Dinner, followed by a fun activity.**

March 14, 2019: **National Hiking Trail of England and Wales** - Kris & Erik Mollenhauer

April 11, 2019: **How to Plan a Birding Trip to Colorado**.- Jeff Mollenhauer

May 9, 2019. **Annual Plant Sale** followed by program **Butterflies of New Jersey** - Steve Glynn.

June 13, 2019: **GCNC Annual Picnic** at Alcyon Park, Pitman, NJ followed by **A guided walk through Alcyon Woods**.

2019 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the remaining field trips we have lined up for the 2018 – 2019 season. Changes and additions are not impossible. If you would be able and willing to lead an additional field trip, please contact Paula Hayes at pnbhayes@gmail.com.

January 6, 2019 - **Smithville Afternoon Hike with optional Lightshow on Lake to follow**

February 2019 – **Black Run Preserve, Marlton NJ**

March 16, 2019 - **Drum Circle**

April 2019 - **Bird Quest Trainings**

May 4, 2019 - **Bird Quest**

June 2019 - **Hike at Mantua Fossil Park**

Club Notes:

- The Nature Club welcomes the following new member:
 - Joseph Versace of Glassboro
- 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 15th of the preceding month.
- The December Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday December 9th at the home of Jayne Rhynard. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.

Please help out the Gloucester County Nature Club while Holiday shopping online!



Holiday shopping at Amazon can also benefit the Gloucester County Nature Club at **NO extra cost** to you!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. The purchase price is the amount paid for the item minus any rebates and excluding shipping & handling, gift-wrapping fees, taxes, or service charges. You may even use your existing Amazon.com account for your purchases.

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