

# Gloucester County Nature Club

## Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public  
January 2003

**\*\*\*This meeting only is on WEDNESDAY\*\*\***

**Program—Alternative/ Renewable Energy Sources—Weds., Jan. 7th at 7:00 PM at EIRC, Sewell**

Program Coordinator- Bob Cassel 478-2496

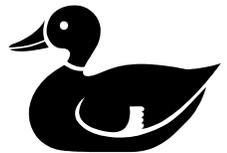
As many of you are aware the EIRC building where our meetings are held recently installed solar panels on their roof. These solar panels are now providing energy to power the building as well as allowing EIRC to sell excess energy to the grid (for general use). We will have two speakers at our January meeting to discuss with us the benefits of such a set up and how it can be applied in residential properties. This program will be conducted by Tim Fostik of EIRC, and Peter Burcat of Solara Energy. Mr. Fostik will begin by explaining renewable energy and the reasons why it is important to shift our focus to renewable/ alternative energies. Mr. Burcat will help us understand how solar and other renewable energies work. He will also focus on installation and costs of these systems. The use of these types of energy sources is a hot topic in many circles right now so we hope you will join us and learn from our visiting experts.



**Field Trip – Palmyra Cove Nature Center- Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM**

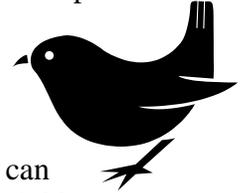
Field Trip Coordinator- Kris Mollenhauer 589-4387

Located in New Jersey along the Delaware River at the foot of the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge this park is quickly becoming a haven for the urbanite looking for the immediate escape from the city atmosphere. You will never be far from the River, or a busy road, but you can almost block out the bustling noises as you walk the trails which are surprisingly long and diverse. Recently, the park has added a new, state of the art, nature center which has some fantastic displays and interactive interpretive where you can learn about the wildlife of the park and the history of the site which is built on dredge spoils from the River. The staff at the center are eager to please and who can turn down a heated bathroom this time of year? There are plenty of signs of deer in the park, we might even see some deer while on the trails, and we can expect to see chickadees, tufted titmice, downy woodpeckers, yellow-rumped warblers, and lots of juncos and white-throated sparrows. If we are lucky we could see some other great birds like yellowbellied sapsuckers, pintail ducks, green winged teal, kinglets, nuthatches, goldfinch, or a bald eagle or a peregrine falcon. We will meet outside the Environmental Discovery Center at 11:00am. *Directions: From 295 take exit 36, travel North towards the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge; at the last light before the bridge at Souder Avenue, make a right; at Temple Boulevard which is the second street, make a left; just before the Toll Plaza, make a right into the Toll Building parking lot; travel through the parking lot and remain on the Local Access Road; at the end of the road, make a left into the Palmyra Cove Nature Park; the Environmental Discovery Center is located on the right side.*



### **Volunteers Needed- Backyard Feeder Trip \*\*\*DATE CHANGE-FEBRUARY 14<sup>th</sup>**

Do you have bird feeders in your yard that have regular visitors? If so maybe you'd like to be a part of our "Feeder Tour." The idea is to allow club member's to stop in during a designated time period to watch the birds that come to your feeders. We would like to revive this club tradition of visiting member's houses to watch birds at feeders. This field trip will be have two time slots on February 14<sup>th</sup> for visiting the "open houses." If you'd like to volunteer your house for part of the tour please call Paula Hayes at 468- 9272 or Kris Mollenhauer at 589-4387. It's not too late to volunteer your yard for the tour. Those who have volunteered will be contacted shortly with details. The trip/tour will be self guiding, the directions and descriptions for the "Open House" will be in the February newsletter. You can decide which house to visit and how long to stay. The event will last from 9:00-1:00.



### **Small Groups Can Change the World**

By Erik Mollenhauer

Recently West Deptford Twp officials announced they have decided NOT to construct a football-sized, fenced "dog park" in the Scenic Trail area of River Winds Park. A subsequent article in the Gloucester County Times gave credit to the Gloucester County Nature Club for deflecting the dog park to a more appropriate area that avoids damaging wildlife habitat in the Scenic Trail tract. Nature Club members should take pride in this win (you all played a part), and note what can happen when a small group takes action. To quote Margaret Mead: "Never forget that a small group of people can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has".

Of course small groups don't win every battle, and the magnitude of losses now occurring at local, national and international levels is staggering, and depressing. But across the planet there are countless small groups doing much the same thing that happened here: individuals coming together to save what they can of their local area

while supporting broader efforts at state, national and international levels. In each of these actions, a few individuals carry the main effort while the organization's larger membership gives less active but no less vital support. Each win underscores the importance of having and maintaining local organizations like the Nature Club to support the actions of those few who become "the tip of the spear".

Do these small wins really matter in the end? I would argue "yes". Take a hard look at any natural area, large or small, local, county, state or national.... that has restored your spirit or expanded your understanding of the world. If you read that area's preservation

history along with its natural history, you'll find a few people's names remembered, while a legion of others are long-forgotten. But we owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who played even the smallest role in those actions. Equally, we owe a *debt of service* to take or support future actions, for those who will come after us.

I've come to realize that the things I care most about.... clean air, clean water, free-flowing rivers (like the Delaware), natural beaches (like Higbees), forests that run to the horizon (like the Pine Barrens at Apple Pie Hill), places to play in and learn from (like the Little Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania), places to restore your everyday spirit (like Wenonah Trails and Ceres Park in Mantua Twp ,Ceres was acquired after Club



action years ago), the Scenic Trail Park, security and safety for our families, diversity of life, landscape and culture: ALL of these things are too expensive for ANY one of us, even Bill Gates, to purchase by ourselves. It's only by sharing our passion, our money, our effort and our time, that we can have them.

I would also argue that for *individual* migratory birds and other species that use places like the Scenic Trail area, this was a matter of survival, plain and simple. In the Earth's history there have been five recorded episodes of Mass Extinction. Many scientists believe we are now living in the Sixth Mass Extinction. Unlike the others, this one seems caused by widespread human disturbance and a failure to understand (or perhaps even care) about the longterm consequences of our actions. The well-known ecologist, EO Wilson, believes the Earth's biological diversity is passing through a "bottleneck" of human disturbance over the next 100 years, during which time much of it will go extinct (or become the "walking dead", alive only in zoo parks).

A small plot of land like the West Deptford Scenic Trail gives a few more individual animals and plants the chance to play out their lives. Like the membership of the Nature Club where each individual contributes to the whole, each individual animal or plant plays a role in the grand scheme of species survival and biodiversity. And, as Henry Beston noted in 1925: *"The animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of senses we have lot or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendor and travail of the earth"*. It is tragic that our terrifying ability to change and destroy the land seems unmatched with an equal sense of responsibility and stewardship towards the land and its creatures.

What each of us does... in our backyards... in our communities and beyond... matters. By our actions we create models that other people learn from. By observing good models, we learn what is possible and can create more models in turn. Now, more than ever, we need ten thousand models of how to live responsibly with the land and the creatures "caught with ourselves in the net of life and time". My congratulations go to Loretta and Lisa Dunne, the "tip of the spear" for this latest model. My equal congratulations to the membership of the Gloucester County Nature Club for the latest success in a long, 54-year history of many fine individuals who share their passion, time, money and effort in common cause. I'm proud to be a member.

### **Raptor Festival**

The 2004 Cumberland County Winter Raptor Festival will be held on February 7<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 AM to 8:30PM. The event will include exhibits, speakers (Steve Eisenhauer, Pat & Clay Sutton, David Mizrahi, Karen Williams, Jane Morton Galetto, and Pete Dunne), boat trips, and viewing sites. Many club members attended this terrific event in past years and have enjoyed multiple sightings of eagles, red tailed hawks, northern harriers, and many other raptors. The event is centered in Mauricetown at the Fire Hall where you will pay a fee and receive maps and directions to multiple viewing sites throughout the county. The sites are all staffed by naturalists from the area. It is a fun event and well worth the drive. For more information and/or directions call 856-453-2177.



## **Christmas Count Highlights**

by Robert Cassel

Fifty two members and friends of the Gloucester County Nature Club sallied forth on December 20<sup>th</sup> as part of the National Audubon Christmas Bird Count, and found a total of 88 species. A total of 60,603 birds were sighted on what was a beautiful day, wind velocity was down but the crisp air called for long drawers.

A total of thirteen parties roamed the area from the Delaware River, east to Wenonah, south to the Raccoon Creek and north to National Park. For first time participants there were some thrills: Mike Ohomo saw his first bald eagle near Harrisonville and Renee Waters led a group of her junior high school students in Logan Township. Melissa Keefe, sister-in-law of member Maria, was happy to experience her first Christmas Count.

Along the Delaware, Ed Komczyk's team had two long-eared owls. Downstream a little farther Bob Duke's group had a greater scaup. While in West Deptford the Courtney-Gutsmith party had the only reported field sparrow. In the adjacent area the Hayes team found a double crested cormorant and fourteen tundra swans. In Logan Township the Carter-McCarthy team reported the only common yellow throats. This team also had students along who added extra keen eyes. Loretta Dunne and Jonathon Stillwell found one of only three great egrets reported in the Woodbury Lakes area. The group also had the only two catbirds still hanging around. The Kegel and Mollenhauer groups both reported turkeys. Dick Ebert's team found the only hooded mergansers. Additional unusual count species were four ruddy ducks, found by the Carter-McCarthy group, a saw whet owl and eleven savannah sparrows by the Hayes group. Kirk and Donna Strohmeier had a good day but no unusual count species this year. The highest number of species reported by a group this year was fifty-six!



The results for this year's Christmas Bird Count can be found at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html>, or follow the links from the club's website. You can also find past results or records for other count circles at this website.



## **Website Changes**

If you are a regular user of our website we are happy to announce we will be rolling out a new version of the web site on January 7<sup>th</sup>, our next meeting night. We are changing the look and feel of the site but still keeping most of the old features. We will be soliciting feed back on the site and how we can make it better so feel free to comment and look for new pages and information from your suggestions. If you have not visited our site, this would be an excellent time to visit and see what you are missing: [www.gcnatureclub.org](http://www.gcnatureclub.org)

## **February Meeting**

In keeping with our social format for February meetings we will feature a book and dessert theme. We are asking each club member to come to the meeting with a dessert and a piece of literature (book, poem, newspaper article, etc) related to nature to share with the group. More details about this special meeting will be in the next newsletter.



## GLOUCESTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION CONFERENCE

**Date:** Saturday, February 28, 2004  
**Time:** 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM (registration: 8:30 – 9:00 AM)  
**Location:** Washington Township Municipal Building  
**Hosted by:** The Gloucester County Nature Club and the  
 Washington Township Environmental Commission  
**Purpose:** To encourage a dialogue between local  
 environmental commissions about common issues and concerns.

**Program:**

8:30 – 9:00 AM	Registration
9:00 – 9:15 AM	Welcome and Introductions
9:15 – 10:30 AM	Environmental Commission statements (5 minutes each)
10:30 – 10:45 AM	Break
10:45 – 11:30 AM	Key Note Speaker – Joe Orlins from Rowan University Topic: Stormwater regulations and regional storm water management planning
11:30 – NOON	“Rapid fire group discussions”
12:00 – 12:15 PM	Closing comments
12:15 – 1:00 PM	Networking reception

**Who may attend:** Members of local environmental commissions, the Gloucester County Nature Club, and members of the public

**PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED** There is no fee, but pre-registration is required. Pre-registration is requested by February 21, 2004. To pre-register, complete the following form and mail it to: Deborah Maka, GCNC Vice-president, 619 Quincy Court, Glassboro, NJ 08028 or e-mail to [deborahann@backpacker.com](mailto:deborahann@backpacker.com) OR fax to Anne Rossell at (856) 582-4206. Please register each participant individually. Contact Deborah Maka at (856) 863-0330 with any questions.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Commission or organization you are representing:

\_\_\_\_\_

List 3 topics you are interested in discussing:

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Looking Ahead:**

### **Programs-**

- February 12<sup>th</sup>- Book Talk (more details to follow) and Dessert Night
- February 28<sup>th</sup> Gloucester County Environmental Commission Conference
- March 11<sup>th</sup>- Pelagic Birding in the Mid-Atlantic Region

### **Field Trips-**

- February 7<sup>th</sup>-Raptor Festival- Cumberland County
- February 14<sup>th</sup>- Visit club member's houses to enjoy birds at the feeders
- May 1<sup>st</sup> – The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Gloucester County Bird Quest

### **Club Notes:**

- Executive Meeting- None for December- **Monday**, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the Mollenhauer's House, call 589-4387 for directions
- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Brian or Paula at [pnbhayes@aol.com](mailto:pnbhayes@aol.com) or call 468-9272.
- 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 Paula Hayes at [pnbhayes@aol.com](mailto:pnbhayes@aol.com) or 413 North Stockton Avenue; Wenonah, NJ 08090 by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Gloucester County Nature Club  
c/o EIRC  
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Sewell NJ 08080