



# Friends of the Great Swamp



FrOGS  
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[www.frogs-ny.org](http://www.frogs-ny.org)

## Winter in the Swamp



Photo by Gordon Douglas

*Join FrOGS For  
Winter Hikes In The Swamp*

*See Calendar of Events on page 2*

# Calendar of Events

## January thru May 2006

Friends of the Great Swamp (FrOGS) and Putnam Land Trust (PCLT)

### JANUARY

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*(Snowshoes and cross country skis can be rented from Pawling Cycle and Sport, 855- 9866)*

Sun. Jan 15 12:00

#### Cross Country Ski at Cranberry Mountain

With Dod Chahroudi (PCLT trustee), co-sponsored by the AMC. Moderate three hour ski from the parking lot through meadows and woodlands. Call 878-6869.

Sun. Jan 29 1:00

#### In My Wigwam

How the Wappingers spent the winter with Indian woodlore and stories, for children ages 6-12 with Beth Herr (PCLT), and Judy Kelley Moberg (FrOGS), Lawlor Bldg. at Routes 311 and 164, Patterson.

### FEBRUARY

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Fri. Feb 3 7:00

#### Native Americans of Putnam County

A talk and slide show for interested adults and teens by noted Putnam archaeologist Eugene Bosche. Bring your local artifacts for identification. Lawlor Bldg. at Routes 311 and 164, Patterson.

Sun. Feb 4 12:00

#### Pine Island River Walk

Weather permitting hike or snowshoe on the frozen Croton River to explore the rocky evergreen knob of Pine Island and the "Hawk's Rest" cabin site. Moderate hike ages 8+ - must reserve, Judy Kelley Moberg (FrOGS) 878-7740 Meet at Patterson Recreation bldg., Front St., Patterson.

Sat Feb 25 1:00

#### Cross Country Ski the Great Swamp

With Ralph Szur. Meet at Patterson Environmental Park. 228-5635

### MARCH

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Sat Mar 18

#### Oblong Land Trust Program

"Maintaining a Healthy Backyard" (evening) by WOR radio personality Ralph Snodsmith, (The Garden Hotline) at the historic Aiken Free Library, Quaker Hill, Pawling. Call Sibyll Gilbert for info. 855-3266 (free)

Sun. Mar 19 2:00

#### Turtle Talk

The science behind tracking the rare Bog Turtle with Dr. Jim Utter (FrOGS) and the Wood Turtle with naturalist Beth Herr (PCLT). Adults and teens interested in Turtle Conservation. Lawlor Building, Route 311 and 164, Patterson.

### MARCH (continued)

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TBD

#### The Night of the Salamander

Explore a vernal pool and see spring migrations of local amphibians. When conditions are perfect (the first warm spring rain after the return the phoebe) we will call to let you know. Join the list: call 228-5635. Wear boots and bring a flashlight.

### APRIL

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Sat Apr 8

#### Putnam Land Trust Annual Dinner and Fund Raiser

Entertaining live auction, the Blue Heron Award and great food, \$ 45 a person at Starr Ridge Conference Center, Brewster, reserve Judy Terlizzi, 228-4520

Sat. Apr 22 7:30

#### Woodcock Walk

To see the amazing mating flight of the Woodcock. Jim Utter and Beth Herr - call 228-5635

### MAY

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Sat. May 6-7

#### Putnam County Land Trust, "Canoe the Great Swamp"

From Green Chimney's launch site-reserve 228-4520

Sat. May 13

#### International Migratory Bird Day Activities

To be Announced (FrOGS)

Sun. May 14 1:00

#### Mother's Day Wildflower Walk

Bring your camera!

Location to be determined

Beth Herr (PLT) 228-5635



May 20 or 21

#### Ecological Safari

Depending on interest - an all day canoe trip through the Great Swamp with Dr. Jim Utter. Lunch included-call Evelyn Chiarito, 877-6498

May 27-28 June 10-11

#### FrOGS Naturalist led Great Swamp Canoe Trips

Green Chimney's Launch call Evelyn Chiarito, 877- 6498

# Scouts Sharpen Up Their Woodland Skills



The Webelos in Patterson Troop 133 were challenged to be "good observers" and use all of their senses in a nature scavenger hunt through the Clough Preserve on Sunday, September 25th.

Lauri Taylor, Judy Kelley-Moberg and Rob Brown had been working on a hike for the scouts that would be challenging, fun and educational. Troop leaders Andrews and Scavone did an excellent job preparing the scouts with information about the Preserve. The scouts also hoped to complete some of the requirements in the Naturalist, Forester and Outdoorsman badges which would lead to earning the "Leave No Trace Behind" Award. Besides the clean up implied by the award motto, the scouts must take hikes and learn about natural habitats, as well as the local flora and fauna. With this in mind we created our scavenger hunt.

The scouts, their leaders and families met us in the Brewster High School parking lot where we talked about habitats, the values of wetlands and the rules of the scavenger hunt.

Each team was led by an adult with a sheet of different trees, wetland plants and animal tracks to identify. The scouts were also asked to describe animal and insect behavior in their natural habitats and even draw them to back up their observations. All human rubbish collected along the way gained their team extra points. Lauri, Rob and I had created season specific field guides for each team that showed the shapes and characteristics of the various plants and animal tracks to be identified along the Clough Preserve trail. The scouts thought the guides were neat and wanted to keep them.

The boys and their parents were enthusiastic as well as the younger brothers and sisters who came along for the hike. The big hits of the hike were finding the tracks of their animals pressed into clay discs hidden in the leaves along the trail and seeing the fish scales and slides left by the river otters. My two favorite experiences of the day were listening to a frustrated dad who kept telling his team they still had to, "Find a silky dogwood, whatever that is?" Also, after choosing the winning team (most points in the given time), I asked if anyone had found a red eft (salamander) along the trail? A proud Dad replied, "My daughter did", and then under his breath he added, "And she's only a girl!"



The scouts took the whole exercise very seriously and showed that they could be thoughtful as well as keen observers. The Clough Preserve is an excellent outdoor classroom with many different habitats from hardwood uplands to evergreen groves a stream corridor, extensive wetlands and of course the sparkling waters of Ice Pond. Strolling back to the parking lot at the end of our hike one parent said how amazed she was that this small area could contain so many interesting plants and animals. I think she'll come again and bring her family too. If you see it and you love it you will fight to preserve it. Let's hope these scouts and their families continue to enjoy nature and become the future guardians of the wild places in Putnam County and we know they will be sure TO LEAVE NO TRACE BEHIND!

Many thanks to the scouts, the leaders and the parents of Patterson Troop 133, we had a great time.

# Great Swamp Celebration & Art Exhibit

It's hard to believe that last fall's Great Swamp Celebration & Art Show was the eighth. Many think it was the best yet, but that does not in any way belittle the earlier seven.



I will always remember eight year-old, Mac Kirk, nephew of FrOGS member Stancy Duhamel, running as if for his life as he dragged a lure at the end of a string with a hungry hawk flying in hot pursuit.

The hawk belonged to falconer and wildlife educator Jim Eyring, who was giving a live flying demonstration of his spectacular collection of raptors.

While young Mac Kirk was in no real danger, Eyring was quick to point out that raptors do not make good pets - they only fly back to him because they are habituated to an easy meal.

For the hundred or more in the audience this event was fascinating, humorous, awesome and a little bit scary. If Mac was frightened he did not show it. Nevertheless, he ran like a rabbit.

Jim Eyring's smallest raptor, a kestrel, flew like a bullet over the on-looking crowd, and

then suddenly alighted on the head of exhibiting artist Rachel Buhler. Like young Mack, she was "cool under fire".

As we watched the hawks pirouette and dive, we were also looking at a stunning backdrop - a panoramic view over the Great Swamp and the Harlem Valley in full autumn foliage.

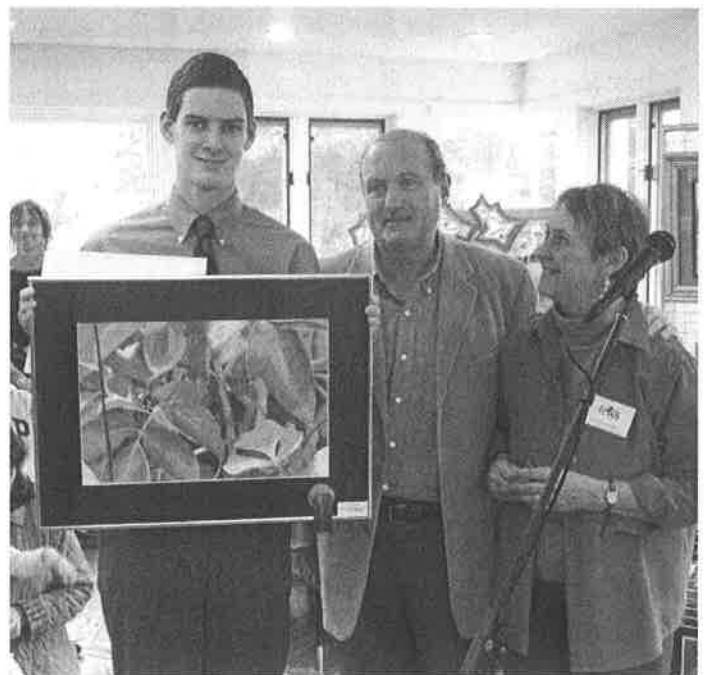
Back inside Lankler Hall, Christ Church, we were treated to a different type of beauty - artwork inspired by the Great Swamp.

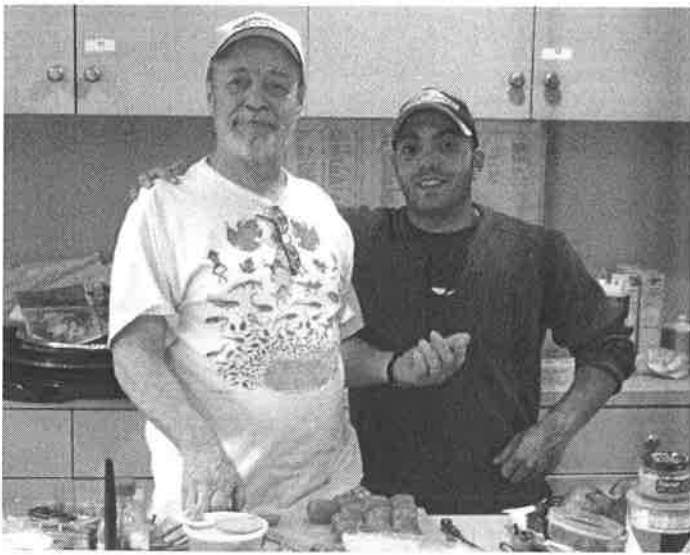
There was a nice balance between new and returning artists that only a long established art show can achieve.

There is another very successful balance: that between the spontaneous artwork of local youngsters, including student entries to the State Duck Stamp competition, and the artwork of mature artists.

The exhibit included a new young artists' award given in memory of Peter Dunlop, whom many visitors to earlier Exhibits will remember wearing a striped apron and a smile as he served up refreshments, including his famous "dips".

This year's inaugural winner was Ian Callan of Pawling high school, who did a splendid rendition of leaves. State senator Vinnie Leibell made the presentation.





Peter's successor in the pantry is Bill Harrington of Patterson and his son, Derek, with assistance from Jodi Von Gal. They did a wonderful culinary job worthy of the tradition Peter established.

No Great Swamp Exhibit would be complete without the woodcarvings of Hal Weisel. His masterwork for this year was a marvelous complex of wolves.

Because there were so many impressive art works exhibited, it would be unfair to mention a few when so many are worthy of praise. Perhaps what was most interesting was the amazing variety of the art displayed.



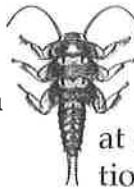
*Continued on page 6*

## Fall Leaf Pack Results

Three leaf packs were placed in Trinity Brook and Mill Brook in Patterson on September 1st and pulled out on Oct. 7th. Both streams drain into Muddy Brook a tributary of the East Branch of the Croton.



The three dominant leaves placed in the packs at Trinity Brook were sycamore, sugar maple and willow. We noticed several small largemouth bass cruising around a small pool area in this stream. The wide variety of macroinvertebrates found in the leaf packs included; mayflies, stoneflies, caddisflies, hellgrammites, crane flies, crayfish and aquatic worms. The biotic index (water quality) of this stream was excellent.



At our second site, Mill Brook, the dominant leaves placed in the packs were black walnut, elm, and willow. This area was at one time a millpond, which caused the formation of a thick clay-like base beneath the present brook. The smaller variety of macroinvertebrates found in these leaf packs indicated the water quality was good, a category below excellent.

We look forward to repeating the placement of the leaf packs in these brooks in May and retrieving them in June to compare the data as well as check the accuracy of our fall results. Volunteers should be prepared to get wet and be patient careful observers.



## Great Swamp Celebration & Art Exhibit (continued)

Young artists from about seven to twelve are the sincerest of artists. Their imagination and inventiveness stand out. Every creature they paint has a unique character.

The youngsters have no conventions to fall back on so they paint the swamp and its creatures with an unsurpassed freshness of vision.

Children from schools all along the 20 mile Great Swamp participate in this annual event.

As the lengthening days herald the coming of spring, artists young and less young will soon be starting their creative work for this autumn's Great Swamp Art Exhibit.



Cherie Ingraham of "Chuckie Goodnight" helps youngsters form clay frogs.

## Audubon Christmas Bird Count, 2006

Several members of FrOGS participated in the Pawling or Hidden Valley count on Sunday, January 1st as well as the Eastern Putnam Count the following Monday. The total area covered by both counts runs from the Hudson River, up into lower Dutchess and over the Ct. line into Sherman.

Both days were pretty gray but the temperatures were fairly mild. Some of the more interesting birds seen; included record numbers of robins, goldfinch and grackles, almost a dozen eagles (Croton Falls Reservoir and the Hudson) and most owls including a long-eared owl on the Pawling count. The fruit crop was abundant and attracted wintering hermit thrush, bluebirds, Carolina wrens, catbirds and even a brown thrasher. Both black and turkey vultures were seen, as well as a harrier, several red-shouldered hawks, ravens, a great blue heron, turkeys and snow geese in flight. Towhees, yellow-rumped warblers, red-breasted nuthatches, red-polls, siskins, cowbirds, fox sparrows and rusty blackbirds round out the list of birds not always

seen in the count period. The complete list is too large to include but we again noted the absence of the ruffed grouse and kestrel (sparrow hawk) due to loss of habitat.

Jim Utter, Billy Wallace, Sibyll Gilbert, Judy Kelley Moberg and Lauri Taylor will be willing to answer the most often asked question about the Christmas Bird Count, "How do you count birds without counting the same ones twice?"



# Spring Canoe Trip 2006



**Dates: May 27 & 28  
and June 10 & 11**

**Departure Times:  
8:15am, 10:15am,  
1:00pm & 3:00pm**

**For information and reservations contact:**

**Evelyn Chiarito at 845.877.6498**

**or email [echiarito@aol.com](mailto:echiarito@aol.com)**

**Please reference "FrOGS canoe trip"**

***Reservations are a must and space is limited  
so make your reservations early!***

Join FrOGS at Green Chimney's Beach off Doanesburg Road (formerly Putnam Lake Road) where we will canoe on the East Branch of the Croton River as it flows through the Great Swamp, one of the largest wetlands in New York State. All level paddlers are welcome. We will provide: Canoes, paddles, life jackets (bring your own if you wish), FrOGS guide and licensed Lifeguard. We will canoe rain or shine.



*Friends of the Great Swamp* is an organization dedicated to *Preserving the Great Swamp* through educational programs, scientific projects and special events and making all aware of this wonderful resource in our midst.

The generosity of our members and supporters extends FrOGS reach and effectiveness. Contributions support the efforts of the Education Committee, the Spring Celebration and this newsletter.

Please consider a tax deductible gift to FrOGS.

Send your gift to: **Friends of the Great Swamp**  
**P.O. Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Day \_\_\_\_\_ Night \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

#### **WE NEED HELP**

If you can lend a hand with any of the following, please check off the box and we will call you.

- Spring Celebration  Publicity  Mailings  
 Education Committee  Art Show  Other