



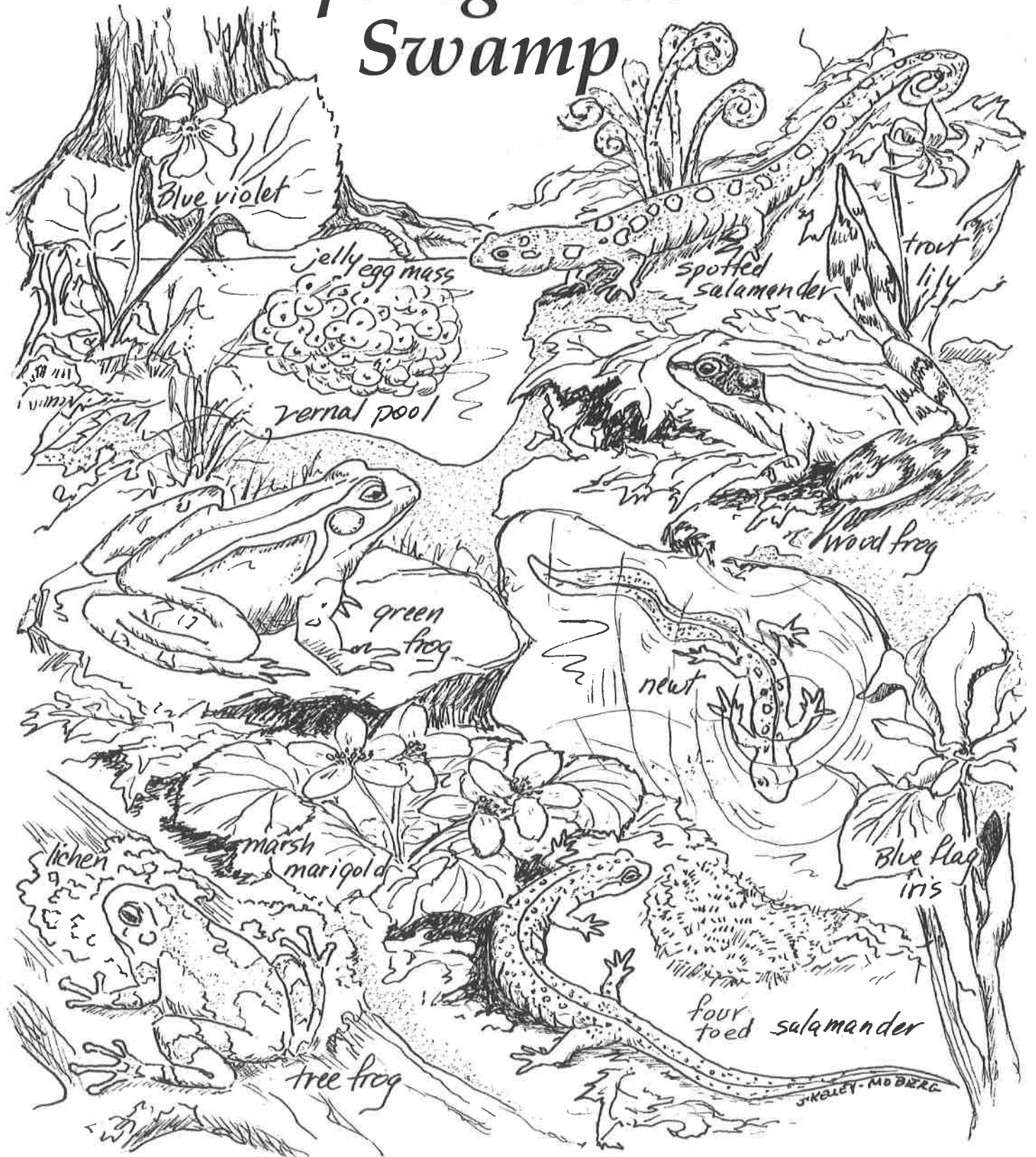
# Friends of the Great Swamp



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## Spring in the Swamp

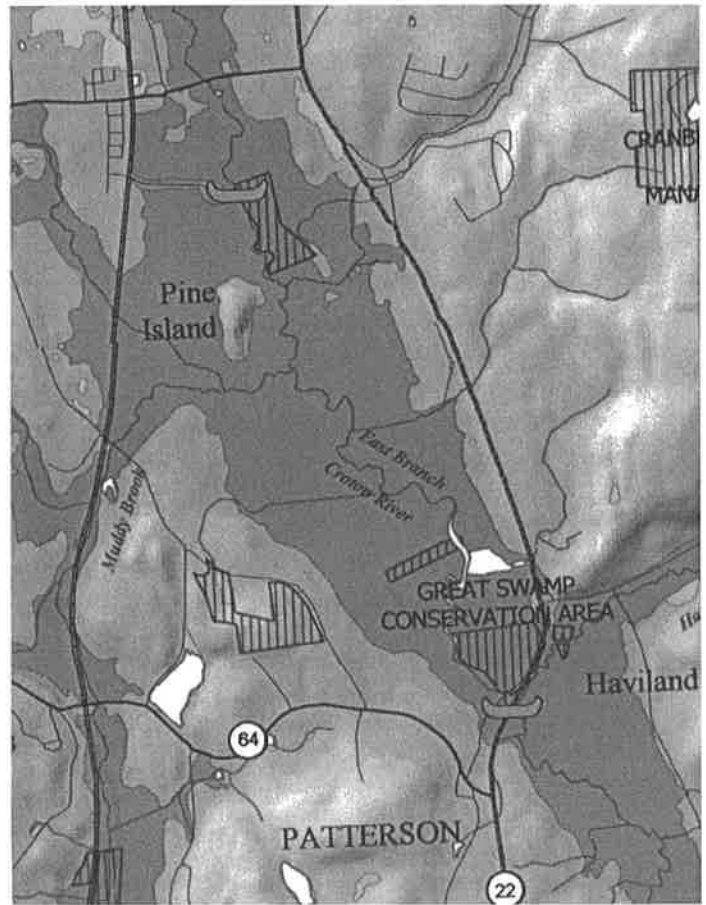


# Putnam County Pledges 230 Acres of Wetlands in the Great Swamp as a Partner in the N.A.W.C.A. Grant "Saving the Heart of New York's Great Swamp"

In 2002 FrOGS was awarded a federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant, titled "Saving the Heart of New York's Great Swamp". This program was established to protect the habitat of wetland dependent migratory birds, but effectively protects all the wetland values that we now embrace. Our application involved bringing together a large array of partners who recognized the Great Swamp's values in preserving water quality, providing both active and passive recreation opportunities, protecting rare species, and in providing important diverse wildlife habitats. The partners included New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Putnam County, The Town of Patterson, NY City D.E.P., The Nature Conservancy, Purchase College, Putnam County Land Trust, The Oblong Land Trust, The Open Space Institute, Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition, Bedford Audubon Society, Hudson Highlands Audubon, Trout Unlimited, and FrOGS. All our partners have given funds, services, and/or time to help meet the grant goals of protecting a total of 1,100 acres in the south flow of the Great Swamp through easement or acquisition. Nine hundred twenty five acres of the total was to be wetlands with the rest composed of adjacent buffer habitat in the area around the "heart" of the swamp (Pine Island), in the Town of Patterson.

The grant period ends this spring but we are still short of the acreage we pledged to protect in the grant. Two principle characteristics of Federal grants are: (a) properties can only be acquired from willing sellers and (b) we can only pay "appraised value" for the land. Over the past few years the upward spiraling land prices have left many land owners unwilling to sell at appraised value, making it difficult to fulfill the commitments made to NAWCA. We are still looking at parcels to acquire, but time is short.

Putnam County has championed protection of the Great Swamp for over two decades once officials became aware of its value as an important environmental area and its need for special protection. In 1985 Putnam County passed a resolution recognizing the Great Swamp as a criti-



cal environmental area and in 1989 resolved to retain title to lands in the Great Swamp received for tax sale, ensuring they were preserved from development. To date this policy has resulted in protecting over 200 acres of wetland and buffer. Mike Ciaiola, a past chairman of the Putnam County Land Trust, was instrumental in facilitating the County action by highlighting the Great Swamp's value to the community and the potential threats to these important wetlands.

In February FrOGS Board members Judy Kelley-Moberg and Lauri Taylor, who is also director of Putnam County Soil and Water District, met with Putnam County Executive Bob Bondi. Mr. Bondi reaffirmed the County's commitment to preserve the Great Swamp and the County's desire to play a role as a partner in the NAWCA grant. Once he was aware of our concerns and the need to act quickly before the grant period expired, he began the process of drafting a resolution that would transfer the title

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# Conserving Little Whaley Lake & Pawling Mountain Oblong Land Conservancy's New Mission

Perched between Whaley Lake and the crest of Pawling Mountain, at an elevation of 917 feet, lies Pawling's hidden jewel, the 45 acre Little Whaley Lake and about 1100 acres of an extraordinary forest complex, including ravines, waterfalls, vernal pools and steep slopes.

More than 4000' of frontage on Whaley Lake is included in the parcel the Oblong Land Trust is trying to preserve as well as 3000' of frontage on the old "Maybrook Line" a proposed rail trail. The property was formerly a boy-scout camp and is now a target for development. It has great recreational potential for swimming, boating, hunting, fishing and hiking.

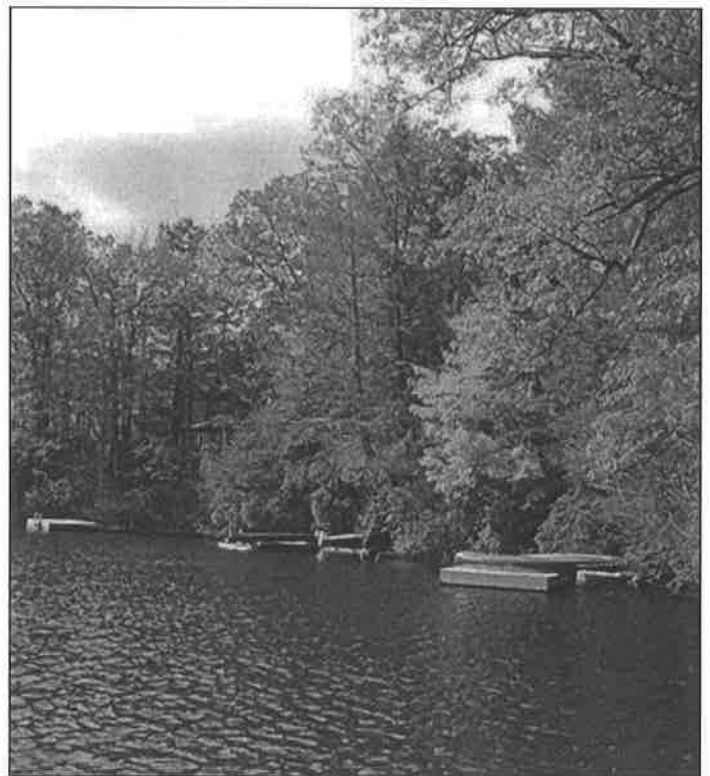
Pawling Mountain is a carbonate crest, which means that the lime in the soils buffers the impacts of acid rain, and supports rare plants and animals. Rain running off the crest of the mountain becomes the headwaters of the north flow of The Great Swamp. Some of the waters from Pawling Mountain flow south to join the south flow of the Great Swamp and the western slopes drain to Whaley Lake Stream, thence to rendezvous with the Hudson. The headwaters in a drainage system are very sensitive and need special protection against pollution and disturbance.

The preserved forestlands of the Appalachian Trail Corridor and Nuclear Lake surround Little Whaley and it also has a natural hydrological connection to Whaley Lake. Connectivity is critical to maintaining bio-diversity, and such contiguous preserved lands support migratory birds, waterfowl and wildlife like bear, bobcat, fisher, and otter, all of which are known to be

present. The property is also listed as an "Important Bird Area in New York State" and the threatened Cerulean and Golden-winged warblers nest there.

Little Whaley has been officially recognized as a very special place, in seven different actions taken by the Town of Pawling, Dutchess County, New York State and the federal government.

FrOGS readers will be kept informed about this exciting new initiative to save this hidden jewel. The Oblong Land Conservancy would be interested in hearing your comments: phone Chris Wood at 855-7014, or Sibyll Gilbert at 855-3266.



## FrOGS' Spring Volunteer Opportunities

1. Save the rare globeflower with Dr. Jim Utter ( Mid-day on May 6 or May 12) call 845-878-0081
2. Protect wood turtle nests from predation, call Gordon Douglas (845)-855-1917
3. Help the Oblong Land Trust with cleanup, call Sybil Gilbert (845)-855-3266
4. Keep the waterways open in the Great Swamp call Rick Saracelli (845)-878-6486
5. Use your paddling skills to help support unable travelers on FrOGS canoe trips (see article for dates), call Evelyn Chiarito (845)-877-6498

# Annual February Hike to Pine Island - 2007



Traveling on foot to Pine Island is only possible in winter over the ice and even then subject to the whims of seasonal weather conditions.

In 2006 there was no ice on the Croton River for a good portion of the winter so we had to cancel our hike. In 2005 the river was frozen and snow pack so deep that we had to break trail with snowshoes for our hikers. This year we were in luck!

Board member Rick Saracelli tested the river ice daily and we were able to take 29 hikers over the frozen floodplain to the shore of Pine Island.

As the hikers gathered, bundled up to brave the extremely low temperatures, Judy talked about the geologic events that formed Pine Island and some of its history as a hide out for counterfeiters in 1740 and of the little cabin called "Hawk's Rest" built there in the 1930's. Board members Lauri Taylor and Gordon Douglas answered questions and chatted with hikers all along the trail.

Rick led the group from the Patterson Environmental Park to Pine Island. He stopped along the river's edge to point out otter tracks, beaver lodges, and beaver dams. On the south shore of the island we looked for evidence that

the cliffs and jumbled boulders might be den sites for bobcat, fox or coyote. We only found raccoon tracks along the top of a log that looked like miniature handprints in the snow. A lone raven announced his presence there with his typical "croaking call" as he cruised over our heads.

After scrambling up through the rocks on the south end of the island, we were met with fierce sub-zero winds along the top of the exposed ridge. The solitary pitch pine on "pine" island was spotted as we hiked to the north end of the island in a forest of hemlocks. The group stopped briefly at an old picnic bench that had been dragged up to the notch on the north end of the island some time ago. The energetic teens on the hike enjoyed scrambling and sliding down past the site of "Hawk's Rest" cabin, to the floor of the floodplain. The older hikers followed the trail of a very large turkey and carefully picked their way down the slippery slope. In a little over two hours we were back at the Patterson Recreation Center.

We hope the weather will cooperate next winter so more hikers can appreciate the unique history and landscape of Pine Island in the heart of the Great Swamp.



## Learn About 21st Century "Damsels and Dragons"

Larry Federman, Assistant Warden/Educator for Audubon New York's Rheinstrom Hill, Buttercup Farm, RamsHorn-Livingston Audubon Centers and Sanctuaries will share his knowledge of *Damselflies and Dragonflies* at a presentation in the Lawlor Building (Rt. 311 and 164) in Patterson at 2:30, on Saturday, May 5th.

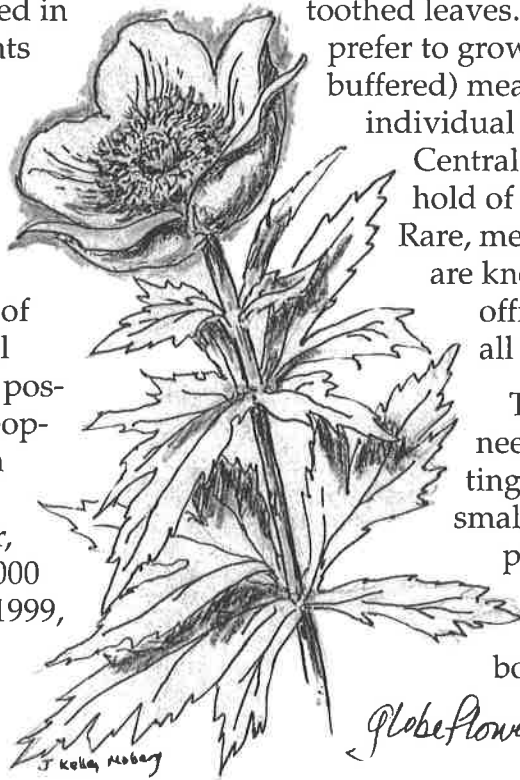
Larry describes himself as a "dyed in the wool birder" that has embraced the study of odonates

(damselflies and dragonflies). After birds have settled down for the day, the odonates take to the air. This illustrated PowerPoint presentation will introduce you to their wonderful world. It will include basic odonate biology, an overview of odonate families, and an introduction to the New York State Damselfly and Dragonfly Survey. You will also find out how to become involved in this extremely rewarding project.

# Free the Globeflower Stewardship Project

Among the rare species harbored in the Great Swamp are several plants that have shown significant declines over the past thirty years. These include a lily called Devil's Bit (*Chamaelirium luteum*) and spreading globeflower, (*Trollius laxus laxus*) a wetland buttercup. Each of these plants can be found in small isolated populations that make it possible for stewards to protect the population sites. FrOGS is initiating a plan to protect and enhance the known population of globeflower, which has declined from about 1000 plants in 1990 to less than 200 in 1999, as a result of increased shading from shrubs and trees.

The globeflower looks like a large yellow buttercup on a sturdy stem encircled with whorls of deeply



toothed leaves. They bloom in April/May and prefer to grow in wet, sweet (limestone buffered) meadows. In healthy communities individual plants cluster into masses.

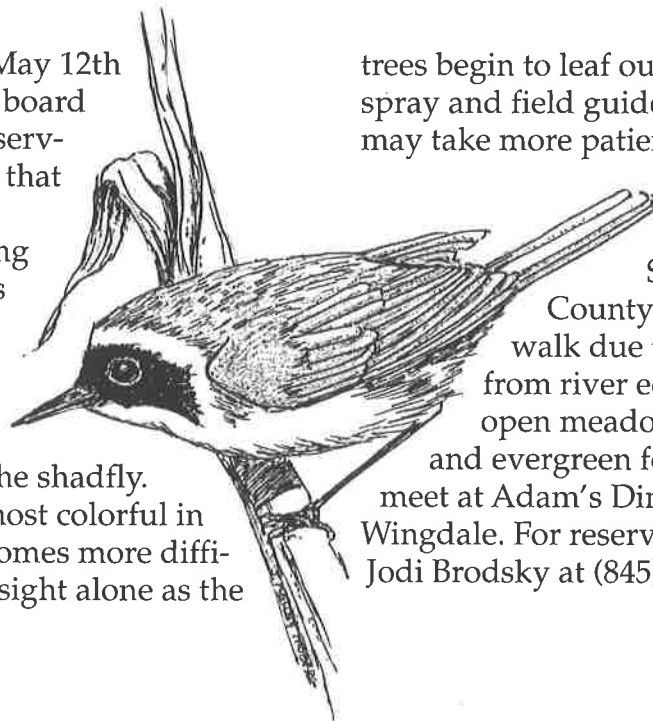
Central New York State is the stronghold of this species where it is listed as Rare, meaning only 20 to 35 populations are known. The globeflower is officially listed as Endangered in all of our surrounding states.

Three or four volunteers are needed to spend a few hours cutting and removing shrubs and small trees that are shading out the plants. We anticipate working with hand tools such as loppers, pruning shears, and bow saws. The target date is May 6 or May 12. Call Jim Utter (878-0081) if you would like to participate.

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## Celebrate Spring Warbler Migration with a Bird Walk

At 8:00 AM on Saturday May 12th join experienced birder and board member Jodi Brodsky in observing some of the bird species that flow through the swamp on their seasonal trip to breeding grounds in the north. This is the peak time for spring warbler migration. These diminutive travelers flit in and out of the branches to snag emerging insects like the shadfly. Even though warblers are most colorful in their spring plumage, it becomes more difficult to identify the birds by sight alone as the



trees begin to leaf out. Bring binoculars, bug spray and field guides for this moderate hike. It may take more patience and quiet observation than small children can sustain.

Sharparoon in Dutchess County is the likely site for the walk due to its rich variety of habitats from river edge through wetlands, to open meadows, as well as deciduous and evergreen forest. Birders will probably meet at Adam's Diner on Route 22 in Wingdale. For reservations and information call Jodi Brodsky at (845)-225-1257.

# Calendar of Events

## May thru June 2007

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

### MAY

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**Saturday, May 5th 2:30 PM**

**Damselfly and Dragonfly Program**

With Larry Federman, Audubon Educator, at the Lawlor Building (corner of 311 and 164) in Patterson.

**Saturday, May 12th 8:00 AM**

**Warbler Walk**

With Jodi Brodsky. Call Jodi for information and reservations. 845-225-1257

**Saturday & Sunday, May 26th & 27th**

**at 8:15 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:45 PM, 2:45 PM**

**Great Swamp Canoe Trips**

FrOGS naturalist led canoe trips in the Great Swamp, for reservations & information call Evelyn Chiarito 845-877-6498

### JUNE

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**Saturday & Sunday, June 9th & 10th**

**at 8:15 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:45 PM, 2:45 PM**

**Great Swamp Canoe Trips**

FrOGS naturalist led canoe trips in the Great Swamp, for reservations and information call Evelyn Chiarito 845-877-6498

**Saturday, June 9th 1:00 PM**

**Butterflies of Summer**

A Putnam County Land Trust program led by Bill Wallace at Cranberry Wildlife Management Area on Stagecoach Road. Contact for information at 845-279-8858.

*Bring binoculars!*

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## “Saving the Heart of New York’s Great Swamp” *Continue from page 2*

of the 24 (tax lien) parcels the county acquired in the Great Swamp totaling 230.35 acres to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as part of their role in the NAWCA grant. Most of these properties were old woodlots scattered throughout the swamp with several larger pieces adjacent to the Patterson Environmental Park.

Thanks to Mr. Bondi’s support and the assistance of George Michaud, Putnam County’s Director of Real Property Tax Services, the resolution was passed by the Putnam County Legislature this April. The County properties will make a real difference in meeting the wetlands goals of the NAWCA grant and enhance the possibility of unified management of the Great Swamp.

The county will receive NAWCA grant monies for the property and once the State has legally accepted the 24 parcels, they will pay

County, Town, and School taxes on the land. They will be managed by D.E.C. as a Wildlife Area open for public hiking, hunting, fishing and boating.

FrOGS plans to meet with all the NAWCA grant partners to review the Grant progress and plans for the future. The success of this consortium in completing the grant’s goals will affect future grant requests to protect other sections of the Great Swamp. It will also affect FrOGS long-term mission to bring together the state, counties, towns, hamlets, private landowners, and conservation experts to manage and care for the future of the whole Great Swamp from Dover to Brewster.

We thank Putnam County for their vision in protecting and preserving the Great Swamp not only for its important environmental values but also for its recreational value to the residents of the County and the State.

## Catch up on Earth Day in Pawling

The Oblong Land Conservancy is looking for volunteers to help with the clean up of Dutcher Avenue. We need a few good people to help with litter pick up at our Scudiere Preserve and along Dutcher Avenue in the Village of Pawling. Some light trimming of brush is also required.

Please phone Sibyll at 855-3266, for more information.



# 2007 SPRING CANOE TRIP

Saturday and Sunday:  
 May 26 & 27 And June 9 & 10  
 8:15am, 10:00am, 12:45pm

Cost: \$18 adult members      \$11 child (6-14 years)  
 \$22 adult non-members      \$15 child (6-14 years)  
*(child must be 6 years or older)*



**Forward stroke** – basic paddling stroke– an easy and natural motion.

BACK STROKE



**Back stroke** - opposite of the forward stroke –pull on the paddle grip while pushing forward with the shaft hand. – used to slow down or back up canoe when coming into shore

Join FrOGS at Green Chimneys where one of our naturalists will lead canoe trips through the amazing Great Swamp, one of New York’s largest wetlands and home to many aquatic species, migrating and breeding birds. Audubon New York has designated this wetland as an Important Bird Area.

We provide canoes, paddles, life jackets (bring your own if you wish) and a licensed lifeguard. We suggest you bring bottled water, sunglasses and layered clothing. **We will canoe rain or shine. In extreme conditions, call for cancellation and rescheduling information**

DRAW STROKE



**Draw stroke** -another basic stroke. Reach out over the gunwale, dip the blade into the water as far from the boat as you can easily reach, then pull the blade toward the boat. This moves the canoe toward the paddling side.



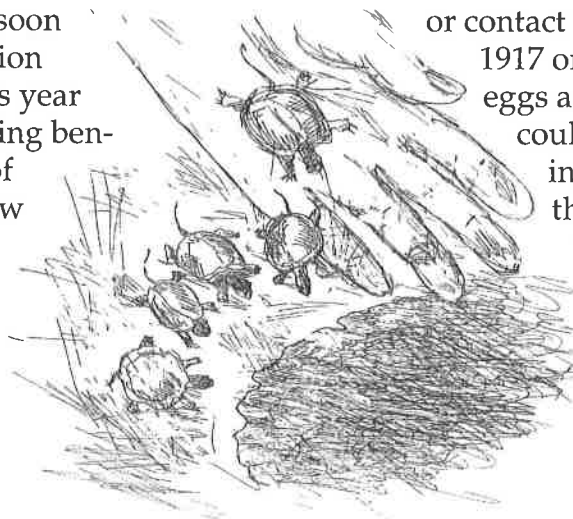
PUSH STROKE

**Push stroke** –opposite of draw stroke. Put paddle in water close to side of canoe, keep blade parallel with canoe gunwales and push it away from the side of the boat. This will move canoe sideways, pushing it away from side on which you are paddling.

**For information and reservations contact: Evelyn Chiarito at 845-877-6498. Reservations are a must!** Volunteer paddlers and other helpers are needed and appreciated. Please let me know.

## Wood Turtle Protection

Wood turtles will be nesting soon and FrOGS wood turtle protection program will be underway. This year the program will have the exciting benefit of knowing where several of the turtles are, thanks to our new radio tracking equipment. Anyone who is interested in helping and can spare a few evenings in early June can email wood turtle expert Michael Musnick at [mmusnick@comcast.com](mailto:mmusnick@comcast.com)



or contact Gordon Douglas (845 855 1917 or [pawling5@Verizon.net](mailto:pawling5@Verizon.net)). The eggs and baby turtles you help save could be around and still breeding seventy years from now, thus assuring the survival of these ancient and threatened creatures.

