



Friends of the Great Swamp



FrOGS
PO Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564
Phone: (845) 855-1917

Volume 9, Issue 2
Summer 2008
www.frogs-ny.org

Who Speaks for Quaker-Haviland Hollow Brook?



Not a simple question since one might answer it in multiple ways. The stream's location on a political map, or tax map runs through private property, State and County owned lands, Land Trust properties and two states. But the brook is not just the land its main course travels over but where the water came from. The main course is fed by rivulets and smaller streams that runoff the surrounding

high lands to form the stream's drainage basin. What's on the land in the drainage basin will affect the quality of the water in the stream. The water quality will determine its suitability as drinking water and the diversity of life forms able to live in the watercourse.

Quaker Brook or Haviland Hollow Brook runs north out of Ciaiola Conservation area in New York, before turning south through private

Who Speaks for Quaker-Haviland Hollow Brook? *Continued from page 1*

lands in Sherman and New Fairfield, Connecticut and back into New York through Ciaiola Park and Putnam County Park land in the town of Patterson. It then travels westward through about 2 miles of private lands along Haviland Hollow Road passing into an 18 acre wet meadow purchased by FrOGS with North American Wetlands Conservation Act funds until it enters the Great Swamp near Route 22 and lands acquired through the federal NAWCA grant in the East Branch Croton River watershed.

Like The Great Swamp, Quaker-Haviland Hollow Brook has been acknowledged as a valuable resource by governmental agencies, local communities and the general public (especially fishermen) but in fact no concerted action had been taken to make sure the brook and its watershed would be protected from degradation in the future. The brook still passes through areas of undeveloped and historic countryside, its water is pure enough for pollution sensitive trout populations, and it's the most pristine tributary of the Croton River in the Great Swamp, which feeds into the New York City reservoir system. Protecting the future of the brook will take the cooperation of two states, several counties and towns and their environmental agencies, landowners, local conservation groups, national conservation organizations, as well as concerned citizen's groups to make it happen. Persistence and raising public awareness of the values of Quaker-Haviland Hollow Brook is an important step in this direction.

The good news is that the Highlands Coalition is attempting to both look at the specific state issues in the Hudson Highlands and also look at the region as a whole without political boundaries. The Hudson Highlands are an ancient mountain range that forms a "greenbelt" from Pennsylvania, across New Jersey through Putnam County in New York and into the Taconic uplands of Connecticut. Quaker-Haviland Hollow Brook watershed falls within this belt. The Coalition can reach a larger interstate audience. It can raise the awareness of the metropolitan areas to the values of the Highlands both as a recreational area and as the provider and protector of their drinking water.



The Coalition can carry the message to the states and lobby at the federal level. Congress votes each year on whether to budget for the 2 million a year promised (over 10 years) in the Highland Conservation Act Bill. The monies were to be used to preserve or acquire prioritized lands in the Highlands. We still hope the Bill will be funded this year since the Great Swamp watershed was to be a priority in 2008.

Peter Rostenberg, of Sherman, organized "Friends of Quaker Brook Haviland Hollow Watershed" and has been a tireless advocate for protecting the Quaker-Haviland Hollow Brook from the Connecticut side and the Trust for Public Land, working with the New York, D.E.C. (Bill Rudge, District #3), has been a constant presence on the New York end of the brook. These groups brought their concerns about the future of the brook to the attention of the Highlands Coalition. At the spring meetings of The Highland Coalition Councils, both the Connecticut Council (Tim Abbott, chairman) and the New York Council (Ted Eisenman, chairman) voted to designate Quaker-Haviland Hollow Brook as a "critical treasure" in the highland's region. This bi-state designation will give the brook more status in the larger landscape and hopefully encourage local, state and national attention on financing the acquisition of more interconnected lands in the brook's watershed and along the stream corridor.

A big "hat's off" to Peter, and all the individuals and organizations both private and public that decided they should take action and become stewards of the future of this unspoiled waterway.

Summer—The Season of Deserts!

Most growing things need time to season and reach their full potential. It's a partnership with the sun the rain and the soil and rushing or forcing them seems to decrease them in some essential way. The seasonal bounty of forest and field is full of fragrances and delicious tastes often overlooked in today's "season-less", "get it when you want it", life style. Summer, is the prime time for berry picking! Berry patches and their locations were and still are prized bits of information.

Wild strawberries like to grow among the grasses in the hot June sun. A number of small, flavor packed berries dangle from a slender stalk beneath the leaves. The ladies groups of the local churches used to prepare dishes of strawberries and whipped cream piled on homemade biscuits to welcome in summer with a "Strawberry Festival".



Acidic wetlands and meadows boast big bushes of red twiggled blueberries. Sometimes one swipe of your hand can yield a whole bunch of these fat dusty-blue berries. Catbirds and bears love them! The rocky hilltops of Putnam are covered with mats of low bush blueberries that bear fewer and smaller berries that taste just as good as the high bush variety in pies, pancakes and muffins.

As July rolls around the tangy black raspberries (black caps) ripen. The new stalks and the underside of the leaves are a startling chalky white. The red berries are mature when they turn black and pull away from the husk like a tiny cup in your hand.



The true bramble in my mind is the blackberry. To really get into the patch you need to dress for battle, boots, jeans, long sleeved shirt and hat even though it will probably get torn off. This is a bloody encounter and the heavy stalks and thorns make you pay for every big berry you collect. A good blackberry patch

will be full of trampled pathways. When the berries are sweet they're very, very, sweet and make excellent pies, jams and wine but sometimes they're so sour they make your whole face pucker up.

Most people don't recognize the versatile and handsome elderberry. Elderberries prefer moist edges and can grow into fountain shaped bushes over ten feet tall. In June platters of tiny white flowers that look like lace doilies rest atop the dark green compound leaves. Small purple-black berries replace the flowers by July and it's a race with the birds to harvest each cluster. The dark berries are rich in vitamins, calories and protein and were even used to make blue and purple dye. The mellow, woody flavored berries make a bold full-bodied wine as well as jams and jellies. *The Yankee Cook Book*, by Imogene Wolcott, Ives Washburn Inc., NY, 1939 (1963), has great recipes for berry wines, jams and jellies. It does take some calculation to cut down the amounts of the ingredients from pecks, pounds, and gallons to cups, ounces and pints.



Old timers wonder where the berry patches of yester-year have gone? The sunny corners and edges of farm fields have surrendered to suburban sprawl or grown back into forest. Roadside vegetation is cutback and salted further reducing berry habitat.

The non-native "wine berry" seems to have tolerate these changes. This jewel-like, red-orange berry is born on drooping stalks covered with reddish hair. You can still pick quarts of this sweet-tart "sticky" berry. They freeze well and are good as jams and jelly or fresh picked in a dish with cream and sugar.

Folks used to celebrate each fruit in its season and then "put them up" using their favorite family recipes as jams, jellies, and preserves or bottle them as flavored vinegar and wine. It takes lots of labor and time but it's still worth the effort to store up the "true" tastes, colors, and fragrances of summer.

River Keepers

When I came to Patterson in 1972, what would become the Patterson Environmental Park was an abandoned garbage dump. With the encouragement and assistance of the town administration, the old garbage was removed and clean fill was used to cover what remained. A linear park was created from this area to access the Croton River and Great Swamp. A road within this park now leads to an island called Beech Island which is the launching point for canoes and kayaks into the Great Swamp. From this point boaters can opt for a 3.5 mile trip to Route 22, a 7 mile trip to Green Chimneys or a 10 mile trip to East Branch Reservoir.

In the 36 years that have passed since the Environmental Park was created there have been some significant changes in the Great Swamp. The park has grown from 22 acres to 90 acres, FROGS has preserved much of the west side of the Croton River from the park to Route 22. Beavers returned to the Great Swamp after about a 200 year absence, and I became the Town of Patterson Park Ranger. One of my jobs as Park Ranger is to keep the Croton River open to recreational boaters from the park to Route 22. With the help of volunteers from the FrOGS organization, obstructions in the river are removed and any trash is taken out.



The obstructions that need to be removed are trees that come down across the river in storms and trees the beavers cut down that fall across the river. As smart as beavers seem to be, they really can't tell which way a tree will fall when they start working on it. I have read that a leading cause of beaver death is that they get killed by a tree they are felling. Keeping a 3.5 mile stretch of river free of obstructions is no simple



task. In the middle of two thousand acres of wetland there is no river bank to stand on and work from. This calls for a delicate maneuver called "chain saw canoeing." It is what it sounds like: two people go out on the river in a canoe with a chain saw and while one person balances the canoe, the other person cuts the obstruction. If this sounds like an unsafe act, it is.

Over the years I have found a much easier, safer and quicker way to maintain the river. It is called "chain saw snowshoeing." Or depending on the winter, it might be "chain saw cross country skiing." In this activity either snow shoes or cross country skis are used to access the area to be worked on. The chain saw is carried in a back pack. What makes these methods so much quicker and safer is that there is a solid surface to work from. When the river is frozen I can do in hours what it would take days to do in the summer. Unfortunately, not every winter is conducive to this form of maintenance. Some winters are not cold enough to freeze the river solidly. Sometimes the freeze-thaw fluctuations keep the river from freezing for a long enough period of time so that no work can be done. For these reasons I keep my "chain saw canoeing" skills sharp.

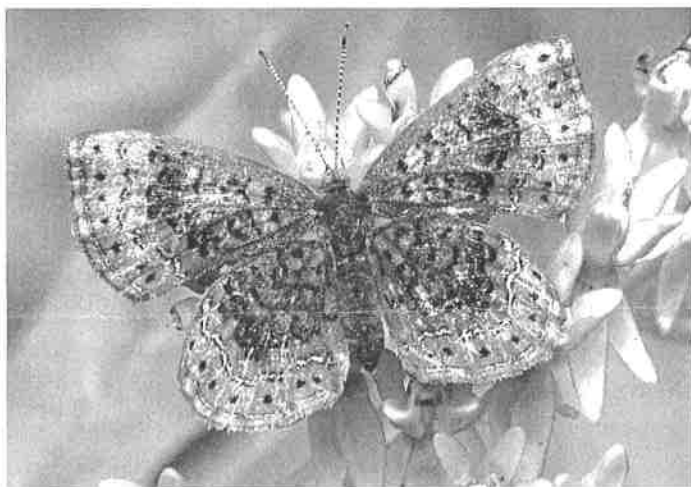
Currently the only obstructions in the 3.5 mile part of the river that I maintain are two trees that fell this spring and some beaver dams. It is illegal to dismantle beaver dams without a permit from the D.E.C. The beaver dams are easy to get over and I figure the Great Swamp belongs to them anyway. The canoeists and kayakers will just have to learn to co-exist with the beavers.

by Rick Saracelli

FrOGS' Dr. Jim Utter Rediscovered Rare Butterfly Not Recorded In New York State Since 1866

Luck favors the well prepared. So it was with Dr. Jim Utter, chairman of Friends of the Great Swamp (FrOGS) and Associate Professor of Environmental Sciences at SUNY, Purchase, when he photographed an unusual butterfly in the Great Swamp on July 12th of last summer.

Heretofore butterflies were not near the top of Dr. Utter's long list of interests and involvements. He is better known for his studies of behavioral ecology of birds, work with rare turtles, study of a rare woodland lily and work with migratory birds in the Great Swamp—and for his tireless and successful efforts to preserve the Great Swamp.



Birders usually pay only passing attention to butterflies. However, if interesting birds are not around and the sun is out many birders will look for butterflies as a backup alternative.

Last summer Jim Utter purchased a new camera with a macro (close-up) lens to assist in making a record of butterflies, small orchids and other tiny creatures on a property in the Great Swamp that FrOGS had recently acquired.

Jim's interest in butterflies had been encouraged by his former student, Bill Wallace, of Brewster, who, a superb birder himself had recently taken up the study of butterflies.

Walking into an open area in the Great Swamp on July 12 and armed with his brand new camera, Utter headed towards a bright orange butterfly bush that Monarchs often visit.

A small butterfly with muted but beautiful

markings flew off the orange flower but quickly returned. Jim froze in his tracks. Without disturbing the butterfly he was able to take several photographs of it before continuing on his inventory.

That night Dr. Utter transferred his day's butterfly pictures to his computer and emailed a sampling of them to Bill Wallace. When Wallace looked at the pictures a few days later he rushed to call Utter and told him that photo number 5 was of a rare Northern Metalmark last seen and recorded in New York State in 1866.

Like so many butterflies, the Northern Metalmark has a very short life in its winged metamorphosis. The several specimens that he found had ragged wings. They had finished breeding and were soon to pass from the scene. Had he been a few days later he would not have discovered them. Had he been more than two earlier they would not have emerged from their cocoons.

What is the outlook for this rare and precarious colony of Northern Metalmarks? Many species of butterflies (and moths) have disappeared from the Great Swamp area and all upstate New York in recent decades. Every municipality needs to have a strong policy to protect what remains of our butterfly heritage. Often a butterfly species' habitat area is very small and protection would not be onerous. It is our responsibility to not allow these beautiful creatures to needlessly drift into extinction. Butterflies are not free, but with just a little effort we can ensure that our children will thrill to their sight in times to come.

Dr. Jim Utter will do his part. "This summer", he says, "he will survey the area for other populations, identify and inventory nectar sources, more accurately estimate population size, and work with the landowner to protect and manage the habitat of this beautiful, vulnerable species".

For all who love butterflies I highly recommend *Butterflies through Binoculars* by Jeffrey Glassberg. You might also join NABA (the North American Butterfly Association). The beautiful magazine alone is worth the modest cost of membership.

2008 SPRING CANOE TRIP

Thanks to FrOGS board members Edie Keasbey, Liz Cowan, Rick Saracelli, Laurie Wallace, Mike Purcell, Gordon Douglas, Judy Kelley-Moberg, Jim Utter, Laurie Lewis and volunteers Carl Moberg, Edie Garvey and Joe Chiarito for making FrOGS Spring canoe trips such an enjoyable and successful event.



Everyone had fun and many want to come back again next year. We had several large local scout troops join us and the event counts towards their Naturalist badge.



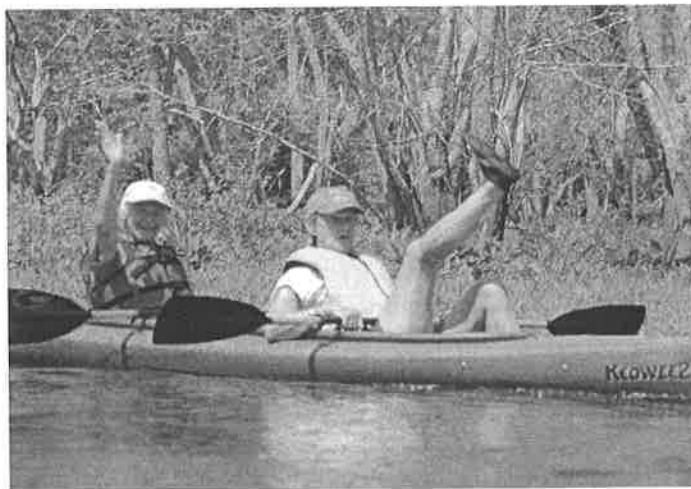
The Katonah Scout Troop Pack 1 join us each year and request their favorite canoe leader, Judy Kelley-Moberg. Judy has the gift of making the swamp come alive. Even a large beaver joins in when Judy leads the group out. As if on cue, he swims to the surface, gracefully floats around the canoers for a while and then furiously slaps the water with his tail and disappears into the depths. All the children are so excited and amazed

to see this display. We are a bit suspicious that Judy may spend all winter training this particular beaver since no one else had this happen.



P.S. Evelyn failed to mention that the Scouts were even more excited when I fell out of the canoe and clung to a beaver lodge on the next trip.—Judy

Green Chimney lifeguards Ryan, Joe, and James gave paddling and safety instructions as well as pointing out interesting features and animals such as turtles, different birds and wildlife that make the Great Swamp their home.



Be sure to join us next year for the Great Swamp Canoe Trip. Experience the tranquility this huge wetland offers and learn about the ecology and challenges facing this wetland which runs through Dutchess and Putnam counties.

by Evelyn Chiarito

FrOGS On The Go!

This summer FrOGS has appeared at many more events thanks to tireless volunteers like Laurie Lewis who is willing to set up the displays and spend hours manning the table as well as offering tee shirts and caps.

The year started off in May with our popular canoe trips, followed with a table display at Green Chimneys annual Birds of Prey Day on June 1st. This is always a spectacular event and should not be missed.

On June 7th and 8th we ran more canoe trips that brought lots of local scout troops into the Great Swamp.

On June 28th, Carol Paterno of Mistover Farms graciously invited FrOGS to set up a table in the viewing room for the duration of a very successful horse show that featured dressage and jumping events. We hope to return for Mistover's next show on October 25th.

FrOGS has been invited to set up a table at the Elk's first annual Community Awareness Day on July 20th and we wouldn't miss the yearly opportunity to attend the Putnam County 4-H Fair on July 26th and 27th.

September 7th will find us at Patterson's Community Day, always a lot of fun and many friends. Our biggest community event will of course be the annual Great Swamp Art Show and Celebration on October 18th and 19th at Christ Church on Quaker Hill.



Patterson Rotary *"Service Above Self"*

On June 17th, FrOGS was one of the local Putnam organizations honored by Patterson Rotary. Edie Keasbey accepted the award and check on behalf of FrOGS. The funds will be put towards our on going work in the northern flow of the Great Swamp in Dutchess County. We are deeply grateful to Patterson Rotary for this recognition.

by Edie Keasbey

Ripples In The Swamp



Round about this time every year you can see ripples signaling that the FrOGS Great Swamp Art Show committee has started working on this fall's celebration. It is always a high point of the autumn scene, and a meeting place for hundreds of area adults and children. Look forward to the slide show of the swamp in it's seasonal glory, live birds of prey, small animals and reptiles from The Nature of Things, the music of Great Blue (Shirl Lawrence and Steve Kaplan), Chuckie Goodnight, nature and ecological exhibits, hats and tee shirts, great food, and of

course the high point—beautiful artwork from area artists, both adult and children.

The show will be as always in it's wonderful setting at Christ Church on Quaker Hill in Pawling, and this year's dates are Saturday October 18th and Sunday October 19th. Keep your eyes out - artists notices will be coming, and for information call; Nancy Clark 845-878-9248, Edie Keasbey 845-661-8766, or to volunteer to help call Evelyn Chiarito at 845-877-6498. See you before you know it!

by Nancy Clark