

Friends of The Great Swamp

FrOGS

PO Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564

Phone: (845) 855-1917

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Judy Kelley-Moberg and Jill Eisenstein, Editors



Color the
Autumn Mandala
by Nancy Clark

Join FrOGS for the 20th Annual Great Swamp Celebration

**Saturday, October 22 from 11AM–5PM and Sunday, October 23 from 12PM–4PM
at Thomas Memorial Center, Christ Church, Pawling**

The 20th Celebration will highlight work from a juried competition for both artists and photographers of any Great Swamp subject that has inspired them. The work of high school juniors and seniors that entered the annual Peter Dunlop competition will also be highlighted. As always, the Celebration will feature family-friendly educational programs and presentations.

New This Year

The Great Swamp Quilt, a showcase of artistic talent that was unveiled at the FrOGS 25th Anniversary Celebration last fall, will be on display. And a Great Swamp Coloring Book will be available, each page featuring a panel of the quilt.

Artea, a large fiberglass turtle that has been painted by local artists and students, will be exhibited. Brainchild of ArtEast artists, each one of the scutes has been painted by a different artist with most scenes relating to the Great Swamp watershed.

This year, the winners of all competitions have been invited to showcase their works in a special Great Swamp Exhibit at the renowned Front Street Gallery in Patterson from December 17 through January 15.



Jim Eyring

Photo by Judy Kelley-Moberg

Returning Favorites

Children's art, a favorite of many of the patrons, will fill an entire wall of the great room. Young artists from the local schools have been introduced to four animals and one plant of the Great Swamp—the red-tailed hawk, bobcat, spring azure butterfly, yellow perch, and blue flag iris. They learned a little science about how these organisms live in and interact with the wetlands and rivers of the swamp, and then were invited to artistically portray them in their habitats. The fabulous results will be on display.

Beloved “Bob”, the huge sulcata tortoise who has greeted visitors coming and going for the past



Photo by Judy Kelley-Moberg



Photo by Judy Kelley-Moberg



two years, will be back and available for pats and photo ops.

Visitors will be able to find where they live—whether in, near, or far from, the Great Swamp, and compare their “wingspan” with its birds. Jim Eyring will bring his birds of prey to teach about the lives and adaptations of these flight specialists. Cherie Ingraham of “Chuckie Goodnight” will help young people make their own clay sculptures of a yellow perch and learn about fish adventures in the swamp. The popular Build-a-Bug activity will be back, as well as a kid-friendly interactive display about how a watershed works.

Saturday only, visitors will be able to “get up close and personal” with the insects (macro-invertebrates) that indicate the water quality of streams in the Great Swamp. A Turtle Tracking activity will help people learn about some of the turtles of the Great Swamp and what FrOGS has been doing to protect them.

“THE GREAT SWAMP QUILT” COLORING BOOK IS HERE!

by Judy Kelley-Moberg

A rascally raccoon searches for food near a stream, an otter with attitude guards his fish, wood turtle babies pop out of their eggs and a hummingbird sips nectar from a cardinal flower, just a few of the animals and plants pictured in the Great Swamp Coloring Book.

Beth Herr, Nancy Clark and Judy Kelley-Moberg, the artists who designed the plants and animals featured on the Great Swamp Quilt, wanted to spread its educational message even further by turning the images into a coloring book with a simple text below each picture.

The coloring books will be offered at FrOGS programs and exhibits as well as The Great Swamp Celebration in October. It will follow the Great Swamp Quilt as it travels to libraries and venues throughout Putnam and Dutchess Counties inviting viewers to learn more about the Great Swamp.

The “Traveling Quilt” is now at its very first stop in the Patterson Library through October. The new Great Swamp Coloring Book (one for a \$3 donation and 2 for \$5) will be available at the Holiday Vendor Fair on Friday, October 21 from 6:30-9 PM at the Patterson Library.



Fishers in the Forest

by Jill Eisenstein

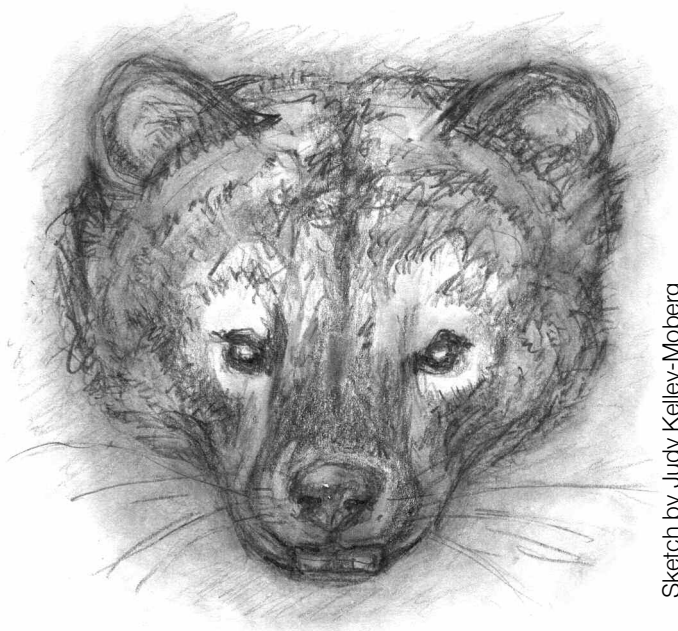
My brother had a trapline when we were growing up in the Adirondacks. The thick, dark brown fur of a fisher made a valuable pelt, but the extremely sharp teeth and feisty character made a personal encounter formidable. The animal is not known to attack humans, but looks alone can keep humans away.

For many years, fishers were scarcely seen except deep in the Adirondacks. They had been over-hunted for their pelts and their forest habitats were decimated by logging and clearing for farms.

A fisher needs a forest. Furtive member of the weasel family, the fisher (*Martes pennanti*) boasts long, strong claws and a sleek, muscular body that enable it to be equally agile in the trees or on the forest floor. Some say it is the fastest animal in the treetops, wrote Donald Wharton in *The Conservationist* (December 2014). Speaking of forest adaptations, fishers are capable of rotating their hind feet nearly 180 degrees, allowing them to descend trees headfirst!



Opportunistic omnivore, a fisher will eat what's most readily available. Forest favorites include birds, squirrels, voles, mice, and snowshoe hare (or around here, rabbits). If allowed to be picky, it prefers meat—but if tree nuts and berries are



Sketch by Judy Kelley-Moberg

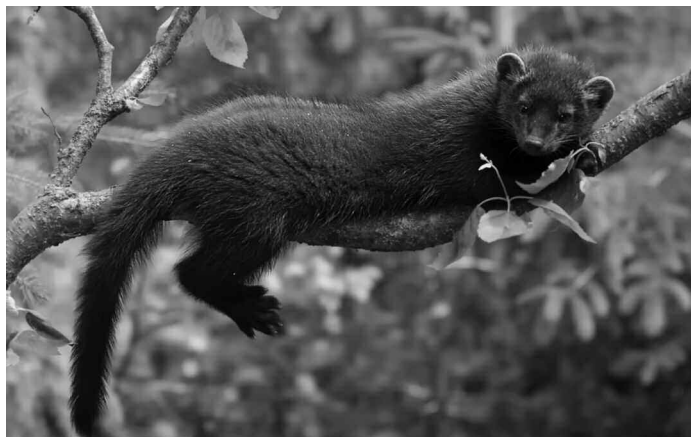
abundant, those will do. It is also one of the few predators that will go after a porcupine. A fisher can get by on one snowshoe hare, a squirrel or two, or 14 or more mice per week. A porcupine will sustain a fisher for a month.

Here in the Great Swamp watershed, though they can cross snowshoe hares off the menu, we have something fishers love—trees with cavities, often the den or nesting site of small animals and birds. The fishers have no problem climbing up to the hollows and ransacking them.

An adult fisher averages three feet in length. Native to North America, it is a member of the mustelid family, commonly referred to as the weasel family. Males are usually about twice the size of females, weighing in at the size of a small dog, about 8-12 pounds. Although its catlike movements have earned it the nickname “fisher cat”, the fisher neither fishes nor is it feline. People often think they look black, especially at night; they have even been mistaken for panthers. Not even related. One thing is clear from most pictures of them—they can look mysterious and haunting.



Today, two-thirds of New York is again forested, happy news for the fisher. Happy, too, is the news that hunting fishers is prohibited, and there is a limited fall trapping season with tight restrictions. Our tracking team found fisher tracks here nearly 20 years ago, but it is not surprising that sightings of fisher have been increasing in the Great Swamp watershed and elsewhere, even near human homes. Don't be TOO surprised if you see a fisher in the forest!



A Spring Sighting

It wasn't in the forest, but on the edge. On a very dark and cloudy morning, around 9:00 a.m., I saw a dark lump under the forsythia shrub near a very active rabbit den. What in the world? I thought, a garbage bag that blew into the back yard and got stuck on the shrub? A large cat huddled there on the hunt? Or did the neighbors get a new dog the size and color of a Scottie?

Binoculars only helped a little. Definitely an animal, very dark with small ears. I pulled up a chair. I would wait til it moved (hopefully toward me), however long that took, so I could get a better look. About fifteen minutes later, it stood up on short legs and walked away (not toward me, more's the pity), but the huge bushy tail gave it away. I had been watching a hungry young fisher, hunting at an odd time and in an odd place for a fisher—typical youth.

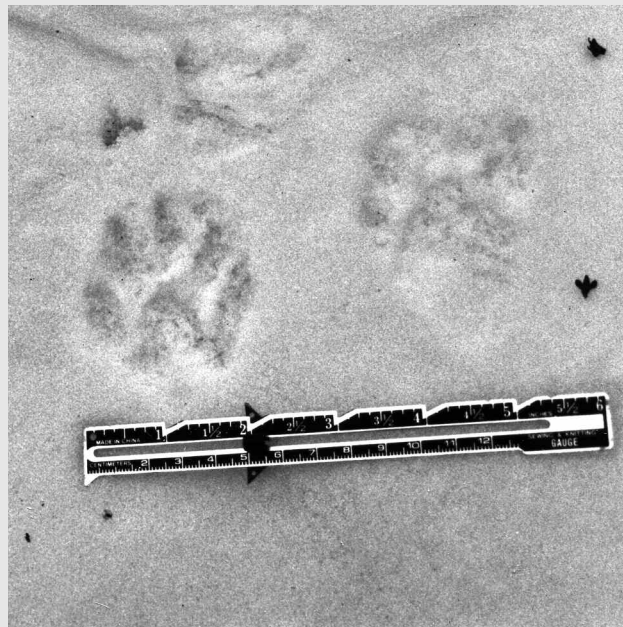


FIELD NOTES/FISHER

Judy Kelley-Moberg

In 1997, one of the many scientific studies of the Great Swamp supported by The Nature Conservancy and The Wildlife Conservation Society was the creation of mammal tracking teams trained by Sue Morse of "Keeping Track".

On a winter's day, as we searched for tracks in the snow behind Dover Furnace, Sue found the tracks of a fisher who had traveled up a snow-covered snag resting against a hemlock stump. Sue, a native Vermonter, was familiar with fishers but was surprised to see one this far south.



Edie Keasbey and I took part in the training and thought we'd check for tracks in the snow around Wonder Lake in Putnam County, which had just been acquired by New York State. We photographed what we thought were fisher tracks with their unique upside-down "U" pad impression. The State Park Commission told us, "Not possible". A week later we got an apology when a fisher was killed on the Taconic Parkway in Fahnstock State Park!

<—Fisher Tracks: 5 toes (fox and coyote have 4); often appear in pairs, about 20 inches apart; look bigger than they "should" because they spread their toes.

The Uncommon Goldenrod

by Judy Kelley-Moberg
Article and goldenrod sketch

Deprived of color through the winter, we idolize every new bud and blossom that appears in the spring, but where is the excitement for the abundant pollen and nectar-filled flowers of fall? What we see the most, we seem to notice the least.

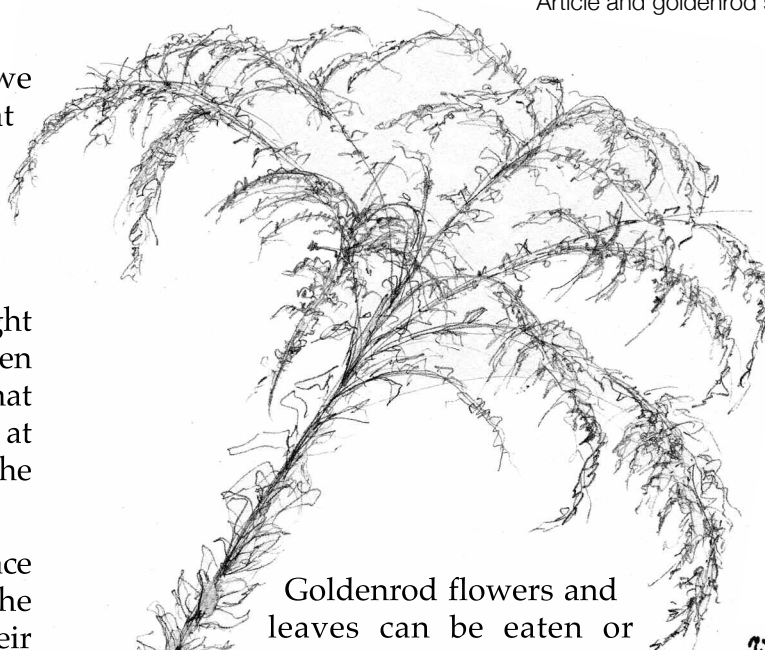
This year a goldenrod on my back hill caught my attention. It looked like a fountain of golden flowers. I had never seen anything like it! What had I been missing? I began to really “look” at the fall wildflowers in the fields and along the roadsides.

The dead flower heads of Queen-Anne’s lace looked like bird’s nests on a stick, while the sky blue flowers of chicory still floated on their stems above the roadside grasses. In the shadows and ditches, thumb-sized cornucopias of yellow or orange flowers dangled like ladies earrings on mounds of jewel weed. Clouds of tiny white asters hung over the roadsides and purple loosestrife was everywhere.

Spikes of brilliant blue great lobelia flowers hid in the wet meadows. Majestic Joe-Pye weed, topped with faded mops of pink flowers, pasture thistle, with fat rosy paint brushes for blooms and the pale yellow flowers of evening primrose on a candelabra- spike towered over the meadow edges. Cardinal Flower, the “scarlet” lobelia, turtle-head with its cluster of closed white flowers and purple pickerel weed preferred the shady stream edges.

All the flowers held their own special appeal but goldenrod by its sheer mass, diversity and color, was clearly the “King of the Fall Flowers”. The fields glowed with gold in the early morning light and trapped the sunshine against the evening shadows.

Goldenrods belong to the aster family. The tiny “daisy-like” yellow-rayed flowers, massed in clusters are an attractive source of nectar for bees, wasps and butterflies. Fall insects pollenate multiple blooms as they feast. The sticky, protein rich pollen has been accused of causing allergies but the real culprit is the wind born pollen of ragweed that blooms nearby.

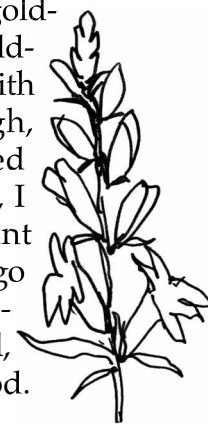
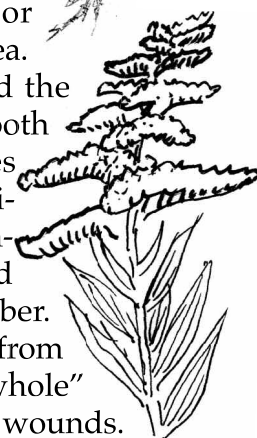


Goldenrod flowers and leaves can be eaten or steeped to make a bitter tea.

Native Americans smoked the leaves and used them to soothe sore throats. Folk medicines were used for kidney and urinary problems. The leaves contain a small amount of latex and were studied as a source of rubber.

Its genus name *Solidago*, comes from the Latin verb *solidare* “to make whole” referring to its ancient use in healing wounds.

There are 10 or more local species of goldenrod. Identifying them is tricky. My goldenrod was “elm-branched” in shape, with six foot long hairy stems and rough, deeply toothed and “feather” veined leaves. A sample of the plant in hand, I cross-referenced several native plant guides and finally decided it was *Solidago rugosa*, a widespread and variable goldenrod commonly called rough-stemmed, fireworks, or wrinkle-leaved goldenrod. A stunning plant, by any name.



Clockwise:
Early Goldenrod,
Great Lobelia, Aster,
and Jewelweed.
Sketches
by Nancy Clark

Calendar of Events

Fall 2016

Harlem Valley Appalachian Trail Community's Annual Trail Day

Saturday, October 15 (10 AM to 4 PM)

Harlem Valley Appalachian Trail Community celebrates its Annual Trail Day with hikes, exhibits and family activities, parking at Native Landscapes on Route 22 in Pawling.

Pine Island Kayak and Hike

Sunday, October 16 (10 AM)

Bring your own kayak and paddle from the Patterson Environmental Park to Pine Island where you'll hike to "Hawk's Rest" with Rick Saracelli. Call Rick at 845-878- 6486 to reserve.

20th Annual Great Swamp Celebration

Saturday, October 22 (11AM-5PM)

Sunday, October 23 (12PM-4PM)

Thomas Memorial Center, Christ Church, Pawling.
This year's Great Swamp Celebration promises to be a treat! See pages 2 and 3 for details.

Nature Walk

Saturday, October 29 (12:15 PM)

Nature Walk at 12:15 led by Beth Herr from the Kent Library at the Town of Kent's Halloween Day.

Welcome, Artea!



ArtEast's Lonna Kelly invited Pawling high school art teacher Phyllis Chadwick and students to participate in the planning and painting of the large fiberglass turtle, christened Artea. The second ArtEast public art project, each scute's art was mentored by a different artist, and most scenes are related to the Great Swamp watershed.

Other Ways to Help

There are so many ways you can remain an active part of Friends of the Great Swamp: volunteering, donating, even remembering FrOGS when you shop. If you shop online, you can use iGive.com, GoodSearch.com, GoodShop.com, and AmazonSmile. Select FrOGS as your nonprofit of choice before you shop, and a percentage will be automatically donated to FrOGS at no extra cost to you.

FrOGS Needs Your Help!

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

There are two great ways to help...

Remember your donations are tax deductible! Send yours to:

Friends of The Great Swamp, P.O. Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

We can always use another helping hand! Let us know which activities you're interested in helping with. You can pick more than one.

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Celebration | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoe Trips | <input type="checkbox"/> Mailings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suggest an activity: _____ | | |

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

So we know whom to thank...

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, ST ZIP _____

DAY PHONE _____

EVENING PHONE _____

EMAIL _____





Upcoming Events!

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