



Friends of The Great Swamp



FrOGS

PO Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564

Phone: (845) 855-1917

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www.frogs-ny.org

Judy Kelley-Moberg and Jill Eisenstein, Editors

What does FrOGS call a
group of baby Box turtles?

A TRIUMPH!

Harney & Sons Supports FrOGS

by Jill Eisenstein

While they travel the globe in search of the finest tea leaves for their 300 offerings, Michael and Paul Harney are committed to making a difference in their own back yard. In 2006, Harney & Sons of Millerton became a member of 1% for the Planet, and in 2013, the company added Friends of the Great Swamp to the list of nonprofits it champions.



Michael Harney

"We were looking for something local and impactful to support," said Michael Harney. "In riding the train, I have traveled through and appreciated the Ice Pond corridor of the Great Swamp for many years. When our national sales manager, Justin Panzer (who lives in Pawling), suggested adding FrOGS to the list of our 1% for the Planet recipients, it seemed a perfect fit. Here is an environmental group that is working to protect the beauty and water quality of the swamp I have long enjoyed."

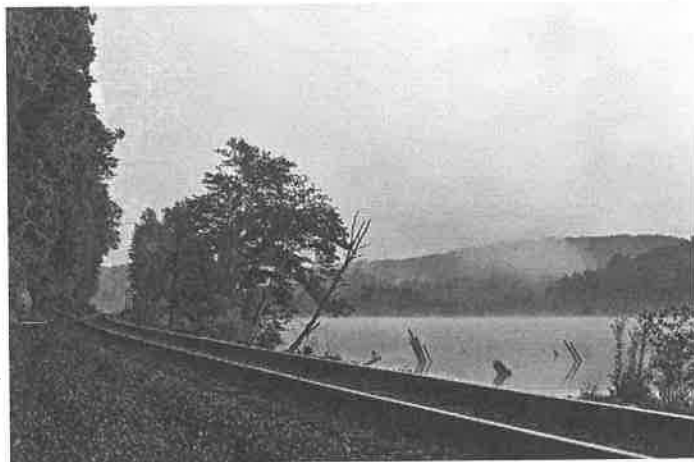


Photo by Rebecca Eisenstein

"The process of shipping tea from the world's tea gardens to Harney & Sons' production facility for blending, bagging and packing, then on to the world's teacups, impacts our increasingly fragile environment. What could we do to give back to the environment that grows the tea of the world?" the company asks on its website. 1% for the Planet was its answer.

1% for the Planet is a charitable organization founded in 2001/2002 by Yvon Chouinard, owner and founder of Patagonia Outdoor Clothing, and Craig Matthews, owner and founder of Blue Ribbon Flies of W. Yellowstone, Montana, to promote "giving from businesses to organizations that are working toward preservation and restoration of the natural environment." The best way to do it, Chouinard explained, is to "just dig into your pockets and give the money away to people who are willing to do the good work."

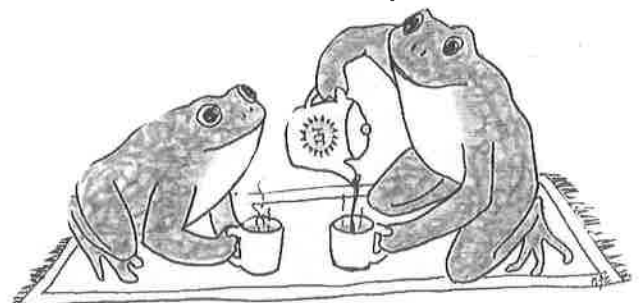


Businesses that join believe that they have more responsibility than to maximize profits; they have a responsibility to the planet. As part of its commitment, Harney & Sons contributes a minimum of 1 percent of its sales, not its profits, to environmental causes. Since it joined 1% for the Planet eight years ago, Harney & Sons has donated more than \$500,000 to support organizations like FrOGS.

Harney & Sons took the commitment even one step further when it invited its local 1% recipients to participate in its second annual Harneyfest on August 16. Employees and owners alike ran tea-tasting and tours of the facility, answered questions, and cooked and served food to hundreds of guests. The nonprofits it supports were invited to set up displays and explain to attendees who they were and why Harney & Sons supports them. Besides FrOGS the list includes Scenic Hudson and the Housatonic Valley Association.

The company's production facility lies minutes from the north flow of the Great Swamp, with the Hudson River to the west and the Housatonic River to the east.

"It doesn't get more important environmentally than the water system," said Michael Harney. "We are proud to support the water quality studies FrOGS conducts and the work they do."



Sketch by Nancy Clark

An Interview With The Turtle Men

by Judy Kelley-Moberg

You might spot Michael Musnick and John Foley in high boots, with antennae held high above their heads, anywhere along the wetland edge from June to September. They spend their free time tracking turtles, protecting turtle nests, and collecting data from eighty turtles with transmitters attached to their shells. FrOGS supports their turtle studies and helps pay for the equipment.



Michael Musnick

John Foley

Why did they get interested in turtles? What were their concerns this year? What do they hope to accomplish?

Michael remembered his uncle taking him to the circus at Madison Square Garden when he was a boy and the baby turtles with painted shells they sold as souvenirs. He was fascinated by the tiny harmless animal with arms, legs, head and tail sticking out of a hard shell. What a concept!

He feels the literature leaves out all the subtleties of seeing turtles in the wild and getting the information first hand. He discovered Box turtles will travel great distances contrary to cited literature. One female he was tracking traveled 3000 ft. (a long way for a Box turtle) from her nesting area.

This year someone stole one of his excluders (nest protectors); turtle 2-3F10 was run over while attempting to nest at the edge of a road and a turtle he had followed for ten years was found dead with no apparent cause. Bluto was trapped in a storm sewer for about a month before being rescued by the Putnam County Highway Department.

Turtle 10F12 trailed three eggs along the ground. Michael took the eggs home and one hatched. Humpy, a turtle with only one back leg, nested and produced two live offspring in an area which contained the nests of two other turtle species. The area is up for sale and possible development.

Through his public talks and Adopt-a-Turtle Program, Michael hopes to interest people in the turtles in their community and make them aware of the devastating effects of development on turtle habitat and survival: fragmentation (more roads to cross) as well destruction of habitat.

John Foley's interest was fostered by his mother. She loved turtles when she was a child and gave him his first turtle, a Box turtle named Tootsie. John's passion stuck with him through his teen years into adulthood. On his 21st birthday, he bought a tortoise with his birthday money!

He's learned that turtles are ecological indicators, their presence in the forest and wetlands means the biodiversity is high and the habitat is healthy. John said, "Turtles don't soar through open skies majestically, like an eagle, and lack the beauty of a butterfly, but no other animal in my opinion portrays such a symbol of wisdom, longevity and utter humbleness as does a turtle."



Photo by Michael Musnick

Turtles have changed very little during their almost 300 million years of existence and John thinks we should take a step back into the slow lane like the turtle and realize what's really important to our future.

He is interested in developing a turtle management plan for Great Hollow, part of the Walter Merritt Park in New Fairfield, CT. Quaker Brook runs through the area and into Haviland Hollow Brook a major tributary in the Great Swamp. John would like to study some of the changes he's noticed

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The Importance of Upland Forests

by Jill Eisenstein

The dock-dock-dock of water hitting the broad leaves of the canopy signaled the storm had come an hour earlier than predicted. A half hour later, I was out in the open, running through the rain to the car...while back in the forest, those rain-drops had just begun to reach the ground.

for birds, amphibians, mammals and reptiles that move overhead, on the ground and underground.

Some of the water makes its way to larger streams. As it splashes down the moss-covered rocks in forest shade, the water provides food and shelter for trout and insects that need clean, cool, highly-oxygenated water. The leaves and sticks that fall into the streams form natural dams that also help slow the flow of the water and make pools filled with aquatic life.

Scientists have discovered a more anthropocentric plus in these forests: free personal health benefits with no side effects. The Japanese call it *shinrin-yoku*—it means taking in the forest atmosphere, or “forest bathing,” and they are studying the effects of it on the human immune system. Researchers have found that inhaling chemicals released by trees in the forest significantly decreases anxiety, depression, anger, confusion and fatigue—and since stress inhibits the immune system, the immune system gets a boost. Spending time in the forest, they say, gives the cognitive portion of our brain a break, allowing us to focus better and renew our ability to be patient. Added benefits include increasing energy level and improving sleep.

According to an article “Immerse Yourself in a Forest for Better Health” posted on the NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation website, “research is showing that visiting a forest has real, quantifiable health benefits, both mental and physical. Even five minutes around trees or in green spaces may improve health.”

Ah, the benefits of the upland forests. The tree leaves provide a buffer between the downpour and the ground, filtering the rainwater in their canopies and keeping the water from instantly eroding the soil. The tree roots hold that soil in place, stopping mud, silt and soil nutrients from rushing into human water supplies. In fact, just one tree can reduce storm water runoff by 13,000 gallons per year, according to the Watershed Agricultural Council.

Underground, a network of tiny rootlets more complex than any interstate intercept the water and draw it in. On top, some of the water forms little streams and tries to make its way downhill, slowed by moss and leaves, stems and sticks, rocks and logs.

Trees and shrubs, forest debris and rotting logs not only slow runoff but provide food and shelter

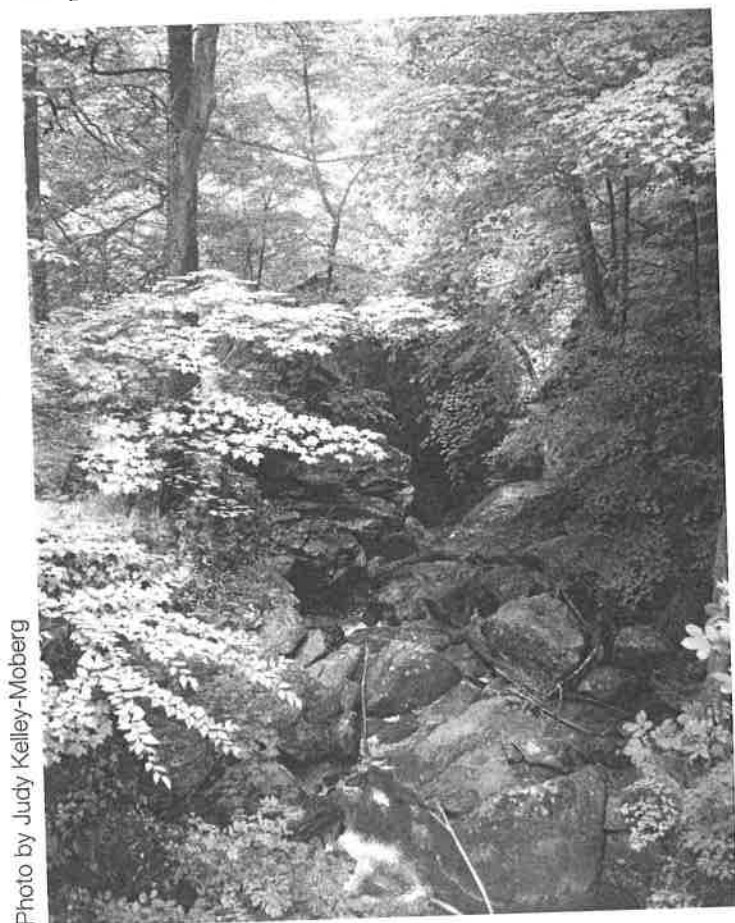


Photo by Judy Kelley-Moberg



Photo by Judy Kelley-Moberg



But the forests surrounding the Great Swamp, indeed 80 percent of the nearly 19 million acres of forested land in New York State, are privately owned. And landowners face tremendous financial pressure to sell forest land for subdivision. Not only does a subdivision fragment the forest corridors that animals need for healthy habitat, but once a subdivision is put in, impervious surface area follows, causing an irreversible increase in flooding. Losing 10 percent of forest cover to imper-

vious surface can double runoff and increase flood frequency by as much as 28 percent.

In a recent presentation, Marilyn Wyman of Cornell Cooperative Extension suggested several ways for landowners to manage their forests in order to keep them. One was for owners to plan for "sustainable forest regeneration" by selectively harvesting trees and planting new ones. The harvested trees could be sold to local businesses. A forest that is not too "thickly stood" is less stressed and can actually provide even more carbon sequestration than old, thick stands of trees.

Some towns are beginning to use biomass energy for public buildings—schools and other commercial/institutional buildings—saving thousands of dollars.

But, said Wyman, none of this will succeed if the forests fall to disease or get choked out. As part of managing their forests, landowners can monitor for diseases and invasive species of plants and report unusual findings to the DEC.

The forests above the wetlands of the Great Swamp provide vital flood protection, corridors for bobcat and other keystone species that roam widely, habitat for threatened and endangered species such as the Jefferson and Blue-spotted salamanders, vernal pools and shaded streams that offer breeding and feeding grounds. Forests give us oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide from the air. They are a source of renewable energy. And of course, they can offer amazing human health benefits. Let's preserve them.

An Interview With The Turtle Men *continued*

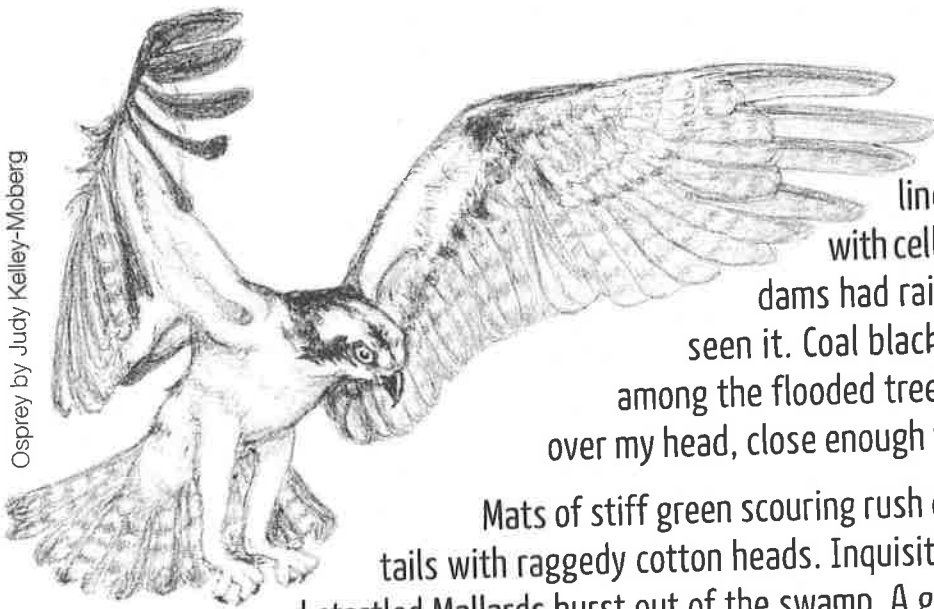
in the field. What is the effect of beaver on Wood turtle habitat? Wood turtles require flowing streams to hibernate and mate. Beaver dam the stream channels and create ponds that could potentially flood nesting sites and hibernacula. Should something be done about invasive plants in turtle habitat? Multiflora rose, Japanese knotweed, and Mugwort are growing over nesting areas in the floodplain. Autumn and Russian olive and Black locust shrubs have invaded the wet meadows used by the turtles in the summer months and have started unhealthy

forest regrowth. But John and Michael found that Box turtles hibernate under the roots of Japanese barberry which might be a concern if burning is used to kill the plant.

The Turtle Men have a lot of work to do. Of course they would appreciate financial support, but if you have the time and need to experience things "first-hand", you might want to volunteer for field work with them in the spring. Contact Michael at mmusnick@comcast.net

What's So Special About Ice Pond?

by Judy Kelley-Moberg



Osprey by Judy Kelley-Moberg

Let's take a walk...

"On one of those deceptively warm late fall days I walked down the old rail line towards Ice Pond. Tiny red dragon flies with cellophane wings flitted everywhere. Beaver dams had raised the water level higher than I'd ever seen it. Coal black Coots with chalk-white beaks paddled among the flooded trees. With a sharp cry an Osprey flew right over my head, close enough to see the light in his eye.

Mats of stiff green scouring rush edged the tracks followed by rows of cat-tails with raggedy cotton heads. Inquisitive chickadees emerged from the bushes and startled Mallards burst out of the swamp. A group of bluebirds dabbled in the water at the edge of the tracks before flying up into the same dead tree to preen. Each bird puffed out its breast and turned to face the setting sun.

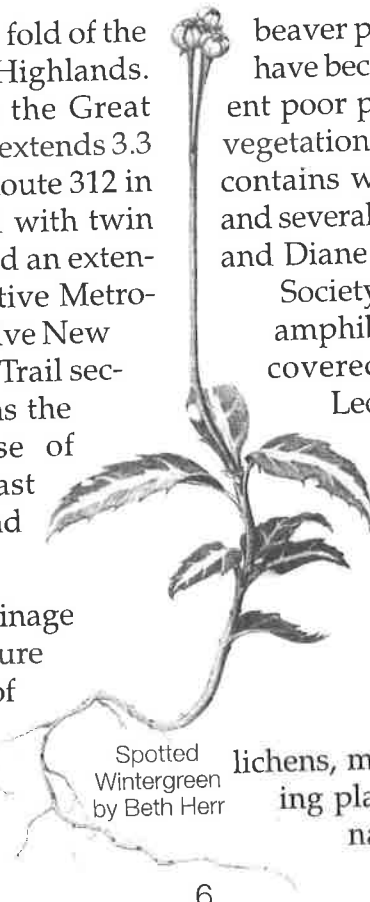
Returning home, the soft tassels atop a bed of slender reeds were back-lit by the sun and strands of spider web glittered from the branches of dead trees. Cool shadows that hinted of winter filled the valley and a pair of Red-tailed hawks soared above the ridge-top. It was a good day."

Ice Pond is a glacial lake caught in a fold of the tough metamorphic rocks of the Highlands. A large and important sub-basin in the Great Swamp, its steep-sided, narrow valley extends 3.3 miles from Route 164 in Patterson to Route 312 in Brewster. Two wooded ridges topped with twin hills dominate the valley. The pond and an extensive shrub swamp lie between the active Metro-North tracks on the west and the inactive New Haven/Maybrook tracks (future Rail-Trail section) on the east. Muddy Brook drains the valley northward around the base of Cornwall Hill before entering the East Branch Croton River below Pine Island in Patterson.

Scientific studies of the Ice Pond drainage began around 1991 as part of The Nature Conservancy's comprehensive study of the Great Swamp. Tracking teams found evidence of bobcat, otter, and mink, indicators of a healthy habitat for all mammals. Since then the

beaver population has exploded and black bear have become more common. Although the nutrient poor pond does not support a lot of aquatic vegetation, a Syracuse University study found it contains white and yellow perch, bass, pickerel and several species of sunfish. Dr. Michael Klemens and Diane Murphy of the Wildlife Conservation Society conducted a survey of the reptiles and amphibians for the TNC study. A newly discovered species of frog, the Atlantic Coast Leopard Frog (*Rana kauffeldi*) has recently been identified in the wetlands.

The rocky knob on the west with its spectacular view of the pond is covered with low-bush blueberries and chestnut oak while hemlocks run down the face of the eastern hill. Experts from the New York Botanical Gardens (Daniel Atha, Robert Naczi and Bill Buck) listed the lichens, mosses, ferns, gymnosperms and flowering plants they found growing in 20 different natural habitats. The number of plant



Spotted Wintergreen
by Beth Herr

species was surprising (47 kinds of sedges alone); some were rare or never before recorded in this area.

More than 180 species of birds have been spotted around Ice Pond including rails, bittern, Barred and Great horned owls, Red-tailed hawks, ravens, and Great Blue heron. In the fall and spring waves of migrating birds pass through the valley. On a good night FrOGS observers have counted over 4,000 migrating ducks including: Wood, Black, Mallard and Teal.

Over the past 15 years FrOGS, with Federal NAWCA grant funds and the Putnam County Land Trust (recently joined by the Westchester County Land Trust), have spent an enormous amount of time and effort working with private, state and county organizations as well as willing land owners to connect the existing preserves and protect the Ice Pond drainage.

You are the future stewards of this special place. Walk the trails, fish, explore, enjoy viewing nature, but remember it is still a work in progress. FrOGS and the Putnam and Westchester County Land Trusts need your support to fill in the missing pieces.



Photo by Judy Kelley-Moberg

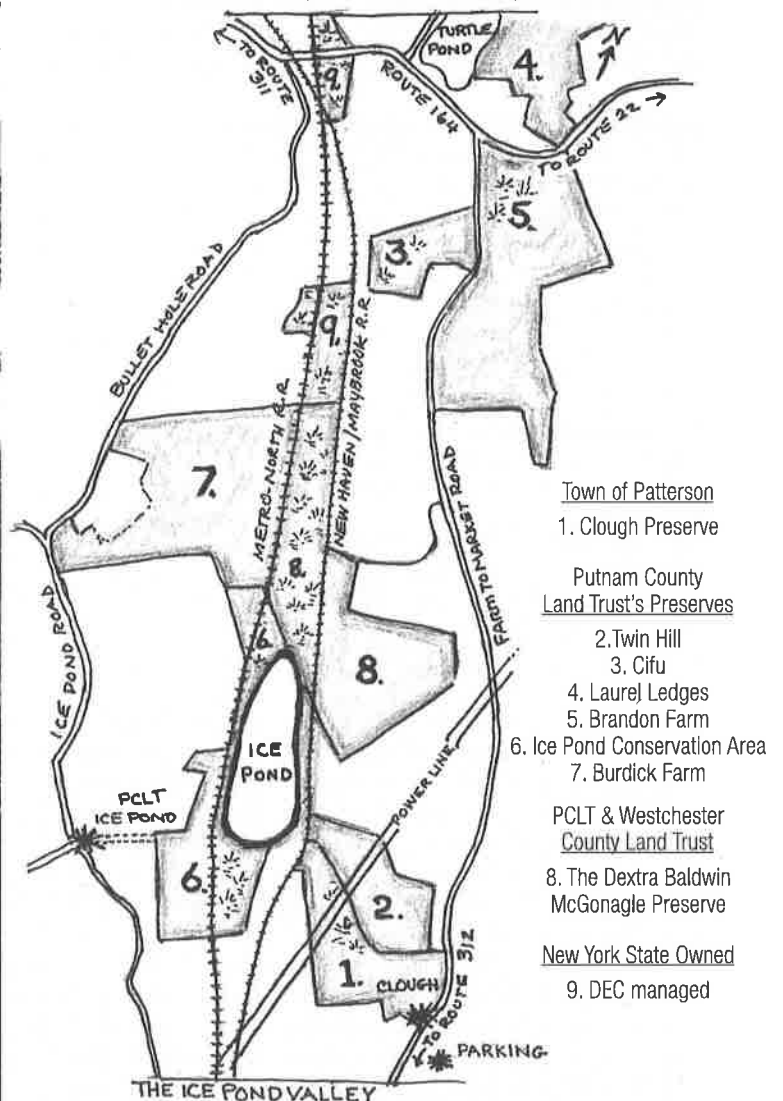
VIEWING ICE POND

Putnam County Land Trust's Ice Pond Preserve, (off Ice Pond Rd.) has several trails that branch off before reaching the active (no trespassing) Metro-North railroad tracks. The trails lead to huge rock formations and views of Ice Pond from the crest of the western knob. This spring butterflies were "hill topping" in a clearing on the knob and updrafts supported a migrating Rough-legged hawk.

The Town of Patterson's Clough Preserve (off Farm to Market Rd.) contains a "family friendly" trail over a small brook, through a pine grove, along the forested edge of a marsh to the inactive New Haven tracks and the shore of Ice Pond. Spring wildflowers edge this trail and otter and fishermen share the shoreline.

ICE POND PROTECTED PROPERTIES

(AS OF DEC 2014)



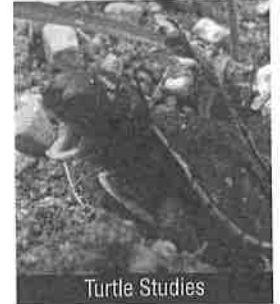
What We Did in 2014: Research Projects: Turtle studies, migratory waterfowl & Audubon bird counts, water quality studies. Educational Presentations & Activities: Vernal Pools in the Great Swamp (FrOGS Annual Meeting), Turtle Talk, Dover Earth Day & The Annual Great Swamp Celebration. Hiking, Ski Touring & Rambling: Hike to Pine Island, Ski Tour at Cranberry Mountain, Exploring South Hollow, Photo Ramble at Clough Preserve & First Annual "Paddle for the Great Swamp". Tabling Events: Putnam County 4-H Fair, Birds of Prey Day, Patterson Day, Harneyfest, Pawling Farmers' Market, Eastern Mountain Sports. Conservation: With partners, conserving habitat and corridors for waterfowl and other animals through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act



Chris Fishel of WAA with FrOGS volunteers, collecting samples for water quality study



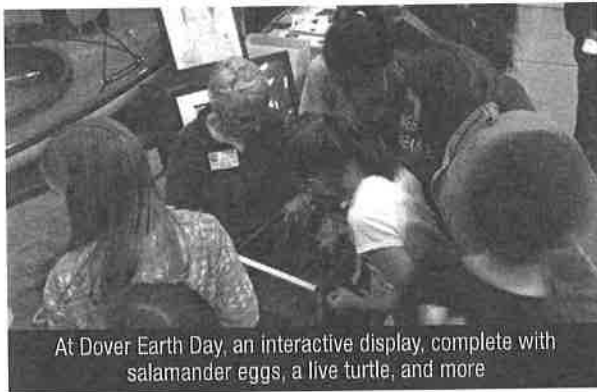
Tabling event at
2014 Birds of Prey Day



Turtle Studies



Ribbon cutting at the new Dextra Baldwin McGonagle Preserve



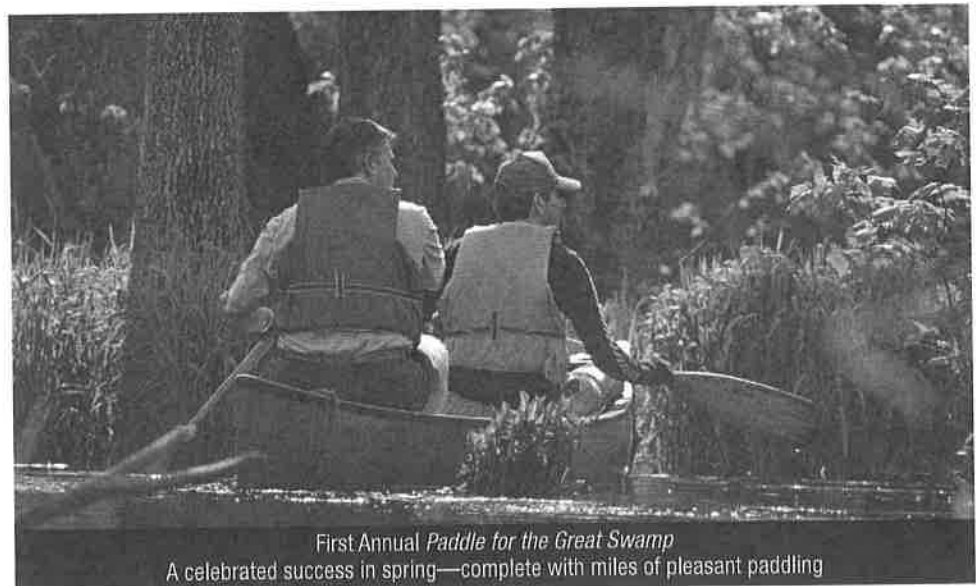
At Dover Earth Day, an interactive display, complete with salamander eggs, a live turtle, and more



At South Hollow, we explored forensic evidence of human & animal populations past & present



A new interactive educational
display at the Celebration



First Annual *Paddle for the Great Swamp*
A celebrated success in spring—complete with miles of pleasant paddling

SPECIAL EVENT

Bears in Your Backyard?

The number of bears sighted in the Great Swamp watershed is on the rise, and many homeowners have reported visits to their birdfeeders. What do we do now?

FrOGS has invited Felicia Ortner, a Connecticut Master Wildlife Conservationist (MWC) and bear enthusiast, to come speak to us about "The Bear Reality." The program will be held Sunday, March 15 at 1:30 PM at Trinity Pawling School in Pawling.

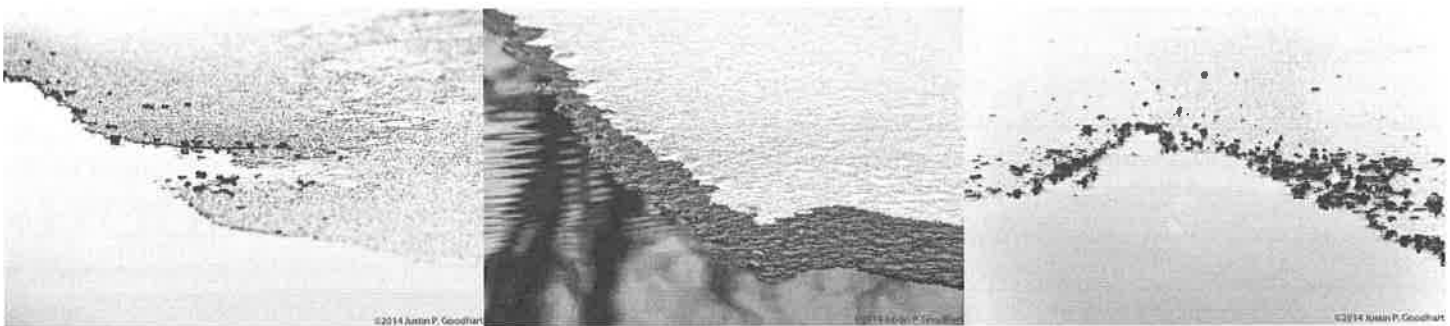
Ortner will address the natural history of the Black bear as well as awareness, safety and conservation. Having studied bears for almost 30 years and logged over 280 educational outreach hours throughout New York and New England, she hopes "through outreach and education that these magnificent creatures will become better understood, we will learn to respect them instead of fear them." She will suggest some strategies for the coexistence of humans and bears in the area.

Mark Your Calendar Now!
Sunday, March 15 @ 1:30PM
at Trinity Pawling School



Winners of the FrOGS Photo Competition

FOCUS on The Great Swamp



Ice Triptych by Justin Goodhart, first place in the triptych competition.



Left: *Skunk Cabbage*
 by Jeremy Wolff, first
 place in the single
 image competition.

Right: *Tree Reflections*
 by Annika Moberg,
 first place in the
 student competition.

Great Swamp Acres Preserved in Dover by Laurie Wallace

Friends of the Great Swamp extends its thanks to the Town of Dover for donating 44 acres of Swamp River floodplain as a partner in our North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) project. The diverse site includes two rock outcrops that rise out of the water amidst a red maple swamp forest, with shrub swamp and marsh along the river channel.



Gliding down the river in a kayak (the best way to see it), you might disturb a Great Blue heron searching the shallows for minnows. Reluctant to leave his fishing spot, he freezes in place and watches you from the corner of his eye until you pass. Although the Great Blue heron may be the

first bird to catch your eye, this section of the Great Swamp is also home to Wood duck and Wood thrush, Mallard duck and Scarlet tanager, Kingfisher, Pileated woodpecker, and several species of warblers, as well as numerous turtles, dragonflies, butterflies and wetland mammals.

Plans for this donation began about 10 years ago when Brad Kendall, the Dutchess County Legislator from Dover, requested the County transfer two Great Swamp parcels it owned to the Town of Dover. This land was to be donated as a Match for federal grant money in FrOGS' NAWCA proposal, and the donation was approved by



Photo by Diana Lee

Supervisor Jill Way and the Town Board. However, it was not until 2011, after Supervisor Ryan Courtien and the Town Board re-approved the funding for the donation, that the project moved forward. This fall, the paperwork was completed and the land was transferred to the Oblong Land Conservancy as permanently protected habitat.

The area not only plays an important role for wildlife but also an important role in flood control for the Town of Dover and protection for property owners downstream. It slows runoff and acts like a sponge in heavy rainfalls, purifies the water by absorbing pollutants from the RR tracks to the east, and the water in its floodplain re-charges nearby well aquifers during dry periods.

This part of the Great Swamp will now be preserved for perpetuity, owned and managed by the Oblong Land Conservancy with help from FrOGS.

Member Spotlight: Dr. Jim Utter

In October, the Dutchess County Ducks Unlimited Chapter awarded its first annual conservation award to Dr. Jim Utter for his work as Chairman of FrOGS.

Dr. Utter has promoted conservation education and action in the Great Swamp for over 20 years. As current Chairman of FrOGS, he promotes awareness of values and vulnerability of the wetland and is active in land and water conservation throughout the watershed.

Ducks Unlimited Inc. is a national organization dedicated to wetlands conservation and sportsmanship. DU conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl.



Calendar of Events—Winter 2014/Spring 2015

Celebrate Nature's New Year

Thursday, January 1, 2015 (NOON)

Celebrate the New Year! Easy to moderate hike. Meet at Ninham multiple use area on Gypsy Trail Road. Co-sponsored by Kent CAC and FrOGS. Call Beth Herr at (845) 228-5635 to register.

Hike to Pine Island

Saturday, January 24 (NOON), ice permitting

A perennial favorite! A short, but moderate to difficult, hike over the ice to Pine Island (not for children under 12 or those with heart problems). An alternate hike location will be selected if there is no ice. Due to limited space and changing conditions, you must call ahead and reserve! Call Rick (845) 878-6486 or Judy (845) 878-7740.

Winter Walk

February 28 (NOON)

An easy to moderate naturalist-led interpretive walk at Lakeside Park in Pawling. Meet at the Pawling Recreation Center parking lot. Call Beth (845) 228-5635 or Judy (845) 878-7740 to reserve your spot.

FrOGS' Annual Meeting

Sunday, Feb 8 (2 PM)

All About the Great Swamp. Learn about the Great Swamp and the work FrOGS does to take care of it. Presentation by Dr. Jim Utter. Tentative location: Patterson Library. Check our website www.frogs-ny.org for more information.

The Bear Reality with

CT Master Wildlife Conservationist Felicia Ortnor

Sunday, March 15 (1:30 PM)

Populations of Black bears are increasing throughout the Great Swamp Watershed. Our program will give participants information about their natural history and behaviors, as well as address bear awareness and conservation. At Trinity Pawling School in Pawling.

Putnam County Land Trust's 46th Anniversary Banquet and Auction

Saturday, April 18 (5:30 PM)

At the Starr Ridge Banquet and Conference Center in Brewster. A great event with music, food, and an exciting live auction! The proceeds will help fund land protection in Putnam County. Check www.pclt.net or call (845) 278-2808.

FrOGS' Second Annual

"Paddle for the Great Swamp"

Saturday, May 16—Tentative

Mark your calendar and stay tuned for details. This event involves a paddle and fun, food and festivities follow.

Give a Gift of Swamp Preservation!

Our beautiful donation gift cards make a wonderful gift—all year round!

Show someone you care about them and The Great Swamp. Contact Beth Herr at (845) 228-5635 to get yours!

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...

DONATION

Remember your donations are tax deductible! Send yours to:
Friends of The Great Swamp, P.O. Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564

- ☐ Supporter \$25 ☐ Contributor \$50 ☐ Friend \$100
☐ Patron \$250 ☐ Sponsor \$500 ☐ Benefactor \$1,000
☐ Other _____

VOLUNTEER

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

- ☐ Annual Celebration ☐ Canoe Trips ☐ Mailings
☐ Educational Activities ☐ Citizen Science ☐ Studies
☐ 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 _____

