



Friends of the Great Swamp



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

Volume 1, Issue 2
Fall 2007

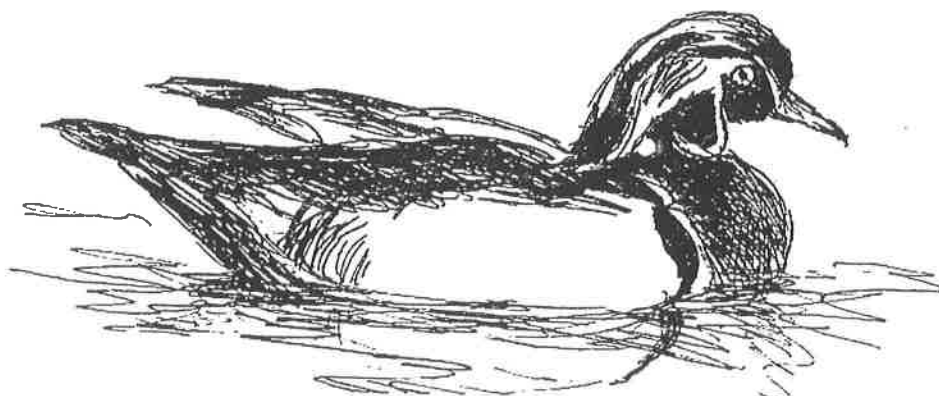
Join FrOGS in a Celebration of the Swamp

The Great Swamp is our local environmental treasure. We are Celebrating the Swamp with Our Fifth Annual Great Swamp Art Exhibit and Other Events on Friday, October 26th and Saturday, October 27th at the Frances Ryan Thomas Memorial Hall at Christ Church, Quaker Hill, Pawling.

State Senator Vincent Leibell and James Earl Jones are the Honorary Chairman. The Art Exhibit features art inspired by the Swamp and its surroundings. There will be a Live Animal Program presented by the Nature of Things, a Bird Banding Demonstration and Water Quality Demonstration as well as refreshments, T-Shirts and much more.

The Art Exhibit features many local artists. There will be paintings, drawings, wood carving and stained glass. Many of the artists creations were inspired by the Swamp and share the artist's feelings about the great beauty to be found in the Swamp and among its creatures, plants, shadows and secrets.

There will be a drawing and painting contest open to all area children. The contest is open to boys and girls in the 2nd through 6th grade. The contest is based on life within the Swamp, a bird, an animal, a flower or tree or other plant or the Swamp itself.



Join FrOGS for a day
Of family fun and
Celebrate the Swamp.
Art Exhibit, children
And adults, Live Animals,
Refreshments, MORE!

Senator Vincent Leibell awarded First Annual Michael Ciaiola Conservation Award

The highlight of the FrOGS May Meeting was awarding the first annual Michael Ciaiola Conservation Award to State Senator, Vincent Leibell for Senator Leibell's strong support for Conservation of the Great Swamp.

A special plaque, emblazoned with a special Friends of the Great Swamp FrOG was created for the award. The award was named after Mike Ciaiola, a member of FrOGS Board of Directors and a long-time President of the Putnam County Land Trust. Senator Leibell expressed his thanks to all assembled for being chosen to receive the award and pledged to continue his conservation efforts in the Swamp.

FrOGS direction for 2001 and beyond

Newly elected FrOGS president, Jim Utter, outlined some of the Goals that the Friends of the Great Swamp hoped to achieve in 2001 and beyond. The Board of Directors has placed emphasis on the goal of outreach and education and to achieve this goal, a new Education Committee will be formed. Plans include developing a Teaching Guide to the Swamp for local school teachers.

Science and research will continue. The breeding Bird and migratory bird study of the Swamp is continuing (supported by the Heineman Foundation) and a water quality monitoring project is being initiated.



FrOGS Canoe trip 2001

Canoe Trip 2001

By Jodie von Gal

The fourth annual FrOGS Canoe Trip in the Great Swamp was a great success! Sunday, May 20th began clear, sunny and warm. Eighty reservations for the Four scheduled trips were filled and I was eager to get started.

Great Swamp Art Show And Celebration of the SWAMP

Drawing and Painting Contest For Children

A drawing and painting contest open to all area children will be a feature of this year's Art Show. The contest is open to boys and girls from the 2nd to the 6th grade. The contest is based on drawing or painting life within the swamp, whether it be a bird, an animal, a flower or tree or life within the swamp itself.

The winner's entry will appear on the cover of Weekend Magazine. There will also be a prize. Entries by second and third place winners will also appear within Weekend.

Entry blanks can be found in the Putnam County Courier, the Pawling News Chronicle And the Harlem Valley Times.



*Debbie Mumford with Snake (right above)
And assistant with their animals.*



Debbie Mumford of The Nature of Things will bring her Animals

Debbie Mumford of the Nature of Things will be back again this year with her animals to share with us some of the lives and habits of animals in general and especially those we are likely to find in the swamp.

We will learn about snakes and their habits Habitats and the lives and of the small mammals like the opossum and the river otter and the turtles and frogs that are a part of the swamp too.

The Great Swamp

The Red Maple Swamp Forest

The Red Maple Swamp Forest in the Patterson section of the Great Swamp encompasses 1,858 acres and is the largest Red maple hardwood forest in New York State. Red maples dominate of course, but the understory vegetation is often dense. Shrubs such as silky dogwood, spicebush and sweetpepper bush abound. Ferns and skunk cabbage carpet the ground level.

This section of the Swamp is the most important area for breeding birds. At least 90 species of birds breed within the Swamp. Many of these species are area sensitive. They are affected by the width of the forest corridor. They need wide areas of undisturbed forest to breed successfully. Areas that are at least 500 meters wide are preferred. If forested areas are narrow, these birds can not successfully raise young due to predation from other more aggressive birds like jays, crows and cowbirds or from raccoons or feral cats. These predators are usually found in areas adjacent to the swamp but do not venture too far within it.

This section of the Swamp is home to many other creatures as well. Mammals found here include river otter, beaver, opossum, mink and fisher. Wood frogs and other amphibians thrive here as well as over 58 species of dragonflies and damselflies.

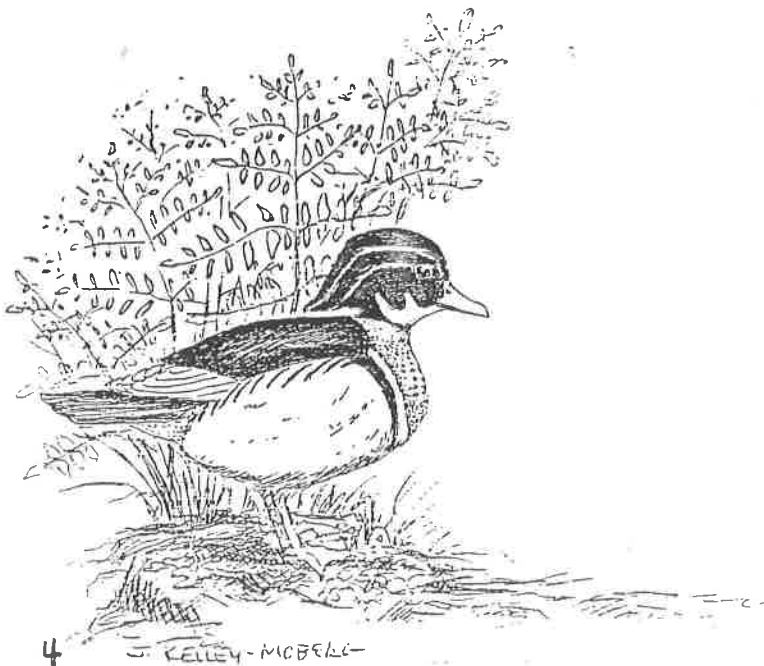


Red Maple Swamp Forest

Wood Ducks found in Abundance in Great Swamp

Canoeing down the East Branch Croton River through the Swamp in the spring one is sure to flush out at least a dozen wood ducks. They seek out spots of deep wooded solitude as they prefer the undisturbed deep forest.

The Wood Duck is the most colorful of all waterfowl. Male Wood Ducks have iridescent plumage and markings. The female is a less colorful brownish grey but still has the crest and distinctive eye markings.



Wood Ducks cont.

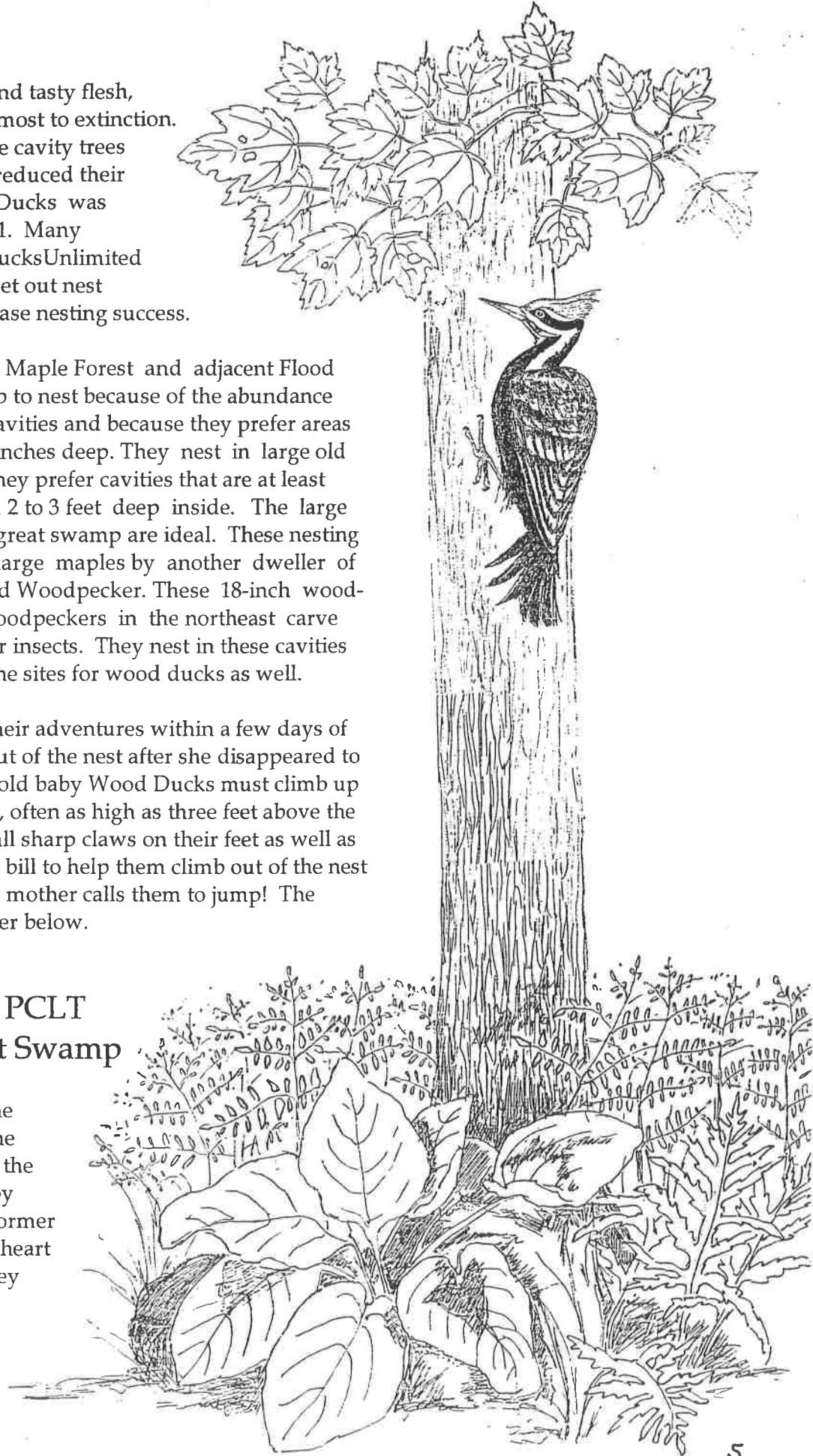
Because of its great beauty and tasty flesh, the Wood Duck was hunted almost to extinction. In addition, logging of the large cavity trees that they need to nest further reduced their nesting sites. Hunting Wood Ducks was banned between 1918 and 1941. Many conservation groups such as Ducks Unlimited and local sportsman's groups set out nest boxes in wetland areas to increase nesting success.

Wood Ducks choose the Red Maple Forest and adjacent Flood Plain Forest of the great swamp to nest because of the abundance of trees with suitable nesting cavities and because they prefer areas with water that is less than 18 inches deep. They nest in large old trees with interior cavities. They prefer cavities that are at least 30 feet above the water and 2 to 3 feet deep inside. The large older red maples found in the great swamp are ideal. These nesting cavities are carved out of the large maples by another dweller of the Great Swamp, the Pileated Woodpecker. These 18-inch woodpeckers, the largest of the woodpeckers in the northeast carve the cavities while searching for insects. They nest in these cavities themselves, but also create the sites for wood ducks as well.

Young Wood Ducks begin their adventures within a few days of hatching. The hen calls them out of the nest after she disappeared to the water below. The two-day old baby Wood Ducks must climb up to the level of the nest opening, often as high as three feet above the nest level. The chicks have small sharp claws on their feet as well as a hooked nail at the tip of their bill to help them climb out of the nest up to the cavity opening. Their mother calls them to jump! The leap and float down to the water below.

Helen Sprague gives PCLT forest tract in Great Swamp

An important tract of pristine Red Maple Swamp Forest in the Great Swamp was donated to the Putnam County Land Trust by Helen Sprague. The four acre former farm woodlot is located in the heart of the Red Maple Forest and key nesting area for Pileated Woodpeckers, Wood Ducks, Rose Breasted Grosbeaks, Cerulean Warblers and Scarlet Tanagers.



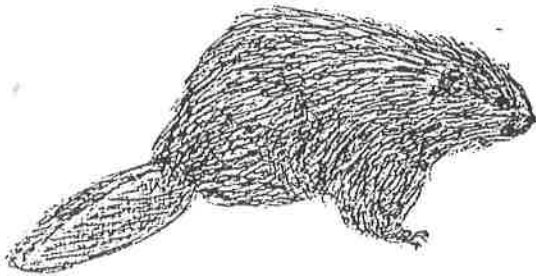
Canoe Trip cont.

Green Chimneys School rented us ten canoes, paddles and life vests. We hired two of their life guards who have extensive experience in the swamp. Each of the four scheduled began with the life guards fitting everyone with a vest and a proper sized paddle and an excellent short but-in-depth demonstration/lesson on paddling and safety. This was followed by an enlightening discussion by Jim Utter and Gordon Douglas our naturalists enlisted for the trips, explaining the Great Swamp's value and vulnerability through their most educated eyes.

Then all climbed in and off they went with Jim Utter, Gordon Douglas, Edie Keasbey and Dave Albano leading the way and imparting their knowledge and love for this natural treasure as they went. The trips took about one and a half hours each from launch to return with people coming back exclaiming having been through a "life altering experience".

Please watch the papers and the fliers in and Around Brewster, Patterson, Pawling and Dover Plains for next year's trip. Call early as the reservation's get filled fast!

The primal beauty of the untouched swamp land reaches a deep place in every human soul awakening and affirming our connection to nature and our responsibility for keeping wild places wild.



Patterson Community Day

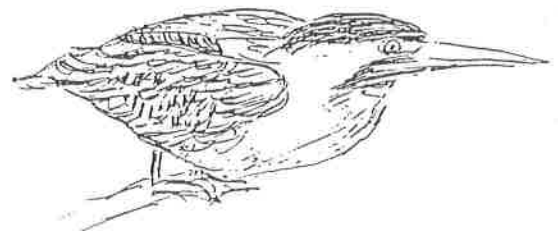
Under a bright blue sky on September 9th, FrOGS welcomed Patterson residents to our tables. We met a lot of people, our FrOGS t-shirts and caps were sold and a large amount of information about the Swamp was distributed



4-H Fair

July 28th and 29th were among the best Summer Days in Putnam. Great Days for a 4-H Fair. FrOGS joined the Putnam County Land Trust in setting up a joint table at the Fair to show fairgoers some of the FrOGS activities in the Great Swamp and PCLT Open Space Preserves. Both of our organizations are committed to conservation and PCLT has two Preserves in Swamp as well as its large three-preserve complex at Ice Pond.

FrOGS also co-sponsored with 4-H the appearance of Debbie Mumford and the Nature of Things. Hundreds of children Enjoyed seeing and learning about the small animals that Debbie brought. A Great Time was had by all!



Great Swamp Art Show And Celebration of the Swamp

Local Artists to Exhibit

Local artists will exhibit their paintings, drawings, sketches, stained glass and wood carving at the fifth annual Great Swamp Art Show.



Wood Carver with large carved Wild Turkey
In wood from last year's Art Show



Bird Banding and.....

To highlight some of the research projects that are taking part in the swamp, Jim Utter and some of his students from SUNY Purchase will set up a bird banding demonstration.

Water quality in the swamp is a major FrOGS initiative and other students will describe and demonstrate their research and measurement techniques re water quality in the Swamp and its tributaries.

Peter Dunlop and FrOGS Team

To provide refreshments

Peter Dunlop has agreed to provide Refreshments for exhibitors and viewers again this year. Peter also does all the floral decorations for the FrOGS tables. Come join us for some delicious snacks while we Celebrate the Swamp!

Friends of the Great Swamp is a successful organization, and the Generosity of our members and supporters extends FrOGS Reach and Effectiveness. Contributions support our special events, educational Programs, scientific projects and this newsletter. Donations also help Ensure that membership remains free to all. Please consider a tax deductible contribution to FrOGS. Send your gift to:

*Friends of the Great Swamp
PO Box 373,
Pawling, New York 12564*

Thanks for your generous support !