



THE GREAT SWAMP NEWSLETTER

RESEARCH • EDUCATION • CONSERVATION

ICE, ICE, ...MAYBE? WINTER IN THE GREAT SWAMP



Volume 22, Issue 1 Winter 2024

Contributors: Paul Andrews, Judy Kelley-Moberg, Ken Luhman, Kathryn Jaliman, Sharon Nakazato, Mary Rice, Julie Toscano

Friends of the Great Swamp was founded in 1990, as a non-profit volunteer organization. Our mission is to preserve and protect the health of the Great Swamp watershed through research, education and conservation.

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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Observation of Past Winters in The Great Swamp by Ken Luhman



It used to be that in late December through March, The Great Swamp and its central rivers would freeze and eventually be snow-covered. The snow and ice would flatten many open areas covered with phragmites, cattails, and other plants, creating a sort of white tundra. Once the open areas of the swamp were covered with snow and that cold winter wind blew, significant snow drifts were created that got sculptured into odd shapes that often resemble large animals, as clouds do. I always referred to these open, white-covered areas as little white deserts. Unless frozen, there are many wooded areas within the swamp that you can't usually access. These areas have many trees dead and alive, barely holding on before they tumble down into the swamp basin. The dead trees usually have numerous holes and birds live inside them. These are great places to see that you don't usually have access to by foot or boat.

There was nothing like getting up on a bright sunny morning, putting on snowshoes, and hiking up or down the Swamp River. Of course, it takes about two weeks of sub-freezing weather to create this condition, but when it does, it's an experience above and beyond. There are spectacular views, visible nature, and fresh winter air. Bring lunch and remember your camera. Once you are out there and depending on when it last snowed, you will see all the tracks from animals taking advantage of the winter transformation. It's incredible to see how many different animals use the frozen river to travel. While out here, I've recorded up to 17 different types of tracks

going up and down the river in both directions. Deer, coyote, fox, fishercat, and bobcat are among some of them. Port holes or water access in the ice made by otters and beaver would appear along the river in the oddest places. If you get lucky, an otter or beaver might pop out of one of the holes while passing by.

One advantage of the snow-covered frozen swamp is you can venture into places that are not always accessible, and you never know what you will find. Some of my discoveries are old building foundations, duck blinds, boats, and antique cars. Another advantage of the white background during winter is that you can spot animals in the distance in the early morning and late afternoon looking for their next meal, which is a great photo opportunity.

While solid ice exists and all are moving about in The Great Swamp, you never know who you will bump into: not only animals, but sometimes a neighbor, someone from the next town over, or a passing cross-country skier out enjoying this winter wonderland. Few will venture out, but I assure you that when the conditions are right, we regulars will be out there. We can only hope cold winters return, and that this experience continues to intrigue the naturalist and doesn't become a thing of the past. If the opportunity arrives, always travel with others; you must be extremely careful. I have missed this winter experience the past few years and hope the cold season will return. Enjoy!

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SIGHTINGS IN THE SWAMP

So How Do You Count Birds?

By Judy Kelley-Moberg



Next year is the 125th anniversary of the first Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Frank M. Chapman started the first “all volunteer” North American holiday census in 1900 now held from December 14 to January 5 each year. Today, tens of thousands of volunteers participate in one of the oldest “citizen science” events in the world.

In 1924, nine teenage boys were responsible for the first Bronx CBC. As a teenager, I went on the first Putnam County CBC in 1955. It was started by our Naturalist Workshop Club leaders Jim Nolan and Ralph Odell. The CBC data tracks the health of bird species, guides conservation actions, and helps identify environmental issues with implications for humans as well as birds. It is one of the 26 indicators the EPA gathers to track climate change.

In the almost 70 years of the CBC counts in Westchester and Putnam Counties, old farm fields have been developed or returned to forest, and deer have cleaned out the understory. House Finches showed up in New York in the 1950s, Wild Turkeys were reintroduced in the ‘60s and in the early ‘90s Northern Ravens were nesting in the trestle bridge on the Maybrook tracks in Patterson. Bald Eagles are now residents and field-edge birds like the Ruffed Grouse have disappeared.



Red-shouldered Hawk by Wendy Alavarez.
Available at Live 4 Art Gallery in Pawling, NY.

Local Audubon Bird Clubs monitor the Count. The Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club coordinates the “Hidden Valley Count” located within a 15-mile diameter circle that includes a large portion of the Great Swamp Watershed from Dover to Southeast. This year, Carena Pooth compiled the list of species, numbers, participants, weather conditions, miles and hours by car and on foot in the count area.

Dr. Jim Utter and Bill Wallace of FrOGS have been field leaders in the southern Patterson area of

the Count containing Putnam Lake, the Great Swamp flood plain, and Ice Pond. This year there were nine participants. Six Great Horned and two Barred Owls were counted before sunrise. Warm temperatures supported flocks of Eastern Bluebirds, Red-winged Blackbirds and Robins. When temperatures drop, northern species like Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Snowy Owls show up. Of the 56 species counted, Buffleheads, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Ruddy Ducks, and Coots were sighted on Putnam Lake as well as reports of a rare tanager. In the Ice Pond section, lots of Red-shouldered Hawks were seen, one of the two Bald Eagles, and the only Catbird.

The “Count” is a day in the field from predawn to dusk (no lunch, bring toilet paper) trying to hit the hot spots in the morning when the birds are most active. You call property owners ahead to inform them you’re harmless and to get bird counts at their feeders. My brother (an excellent birder and field leader), my kids, and now my grandkids join me to watch the sun rise over Area 7 on the morning of the Putnam CBC. They identify bird songs on their cell phones and if the ducks are too far down the lake for an accurate count, why not send up the drone?

How do you count birds? Besides the season, color, size and song, experienced birders recognize silhouettes, behavioral patterns, if the bird is alone or in a group, on the ground, in brush, at tree-top level, flight patterns, in a specific habitat or by a favorite food source. You rarely count the same bird twice! Learning to really WATCH the birds is what makes you a true birder!



Kelley family readies for the 2024 CBC

Join the local bird clubs, hone up your skills and come out on the 125th CBC next year! (Contacts: Waterman Bird Club, Saw Mill River Audubon, Bedford Audubon Society, and Putnam Highlands Audubon Society).



CONSERVATION DOGS SNIFF COTTONTAIL SCAT

By Paul Andrews

Dogs have a superpower – their sense of smell. Whereas humans have approximately 5 million olfactory receptors in their nasal passages for sensing odors, dogs have on average 125 to 250 million receptors, with up to 300 million in bloodhounds. There are about 350 different olfactory receptors in humans, but dogs have 2- to 3-times that, which allows them to sense a greater variety of smells. Dogs start sniffing through their right nostril, but if the smell turns out to be a familiar or non-aversive odor such as food, they shift to using the left nostril. Dogs differ from humans in the anatomy of their nose and the way air flows through it. The net result is that dogs have a far better range and sensitivity of smell detection than humans. Dogs' superpower of ultrasensitive odor detection and the ability to track the scent to its source, coupled with their trainability, has given them important roles in search and rescue missions; detection of illegal drugs, explosives, pollutants, illegal timber, insect pests, and human disease; and increasingly in conservation work.

Conservation dogs are being used to find invasive plants, wildlife contraband, and difficult to detect or cryptic species such as turtles. Conservation dogs trained to locate scat are also being used as a non-invasive method of surveying low-density species. In December 2023, FrOGS entered into a multi-year partnership with the NY-NJ Trail Conference to harness the ability of dogs to find and differentiate the odor signatures of scat from New England cottontails (NECs) and eastern cottontails.

NECs are the only rabbit native to the Great Swamp. Eastern cottontails were introduced to New England around 1900 as a game species. Eastern cottontails prefer more open grassland habitats, whereas the NECs prefer primarily a young forest with areas of thick shrubs and young trees that push up following natural disturbances such as wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding. NEC populations have declined significantly since 1960 due to loss of shrub lands, habitat fragmentation, and competition with eastern cottontails and deer. Although once considered for protection, in 2015 the NEC was removed from threatened or endangered consideration due to conservation efforts.

Nonetheless, conservationists must continue working hard to make sure this rabbit remains among our region's native wildlife.

Surveying NEC populations is critical for determining whether conservation work is having a positive effect. However, NECs and eastern cottontails are very difficult to tell apart in the field. Analysis of fecal DNA is the most reliable way to distinguish the two species, but this is expensive and requires finding their scat in rough vegetation. Our joint project will use conservation dogs to assess the NEC population via scat detection on 70 acres of our Gordon Douglas Reserve. These dogs are agile, hardy, and able to maneuver the difficult and thorny habitat (thickets) that NECs prefer. We can complete rapid and comprehensive surveys over large areas, providing reliable data on NEC populations without the need to genetically verify 100% of samples.



Photo by Jaymi Heimbuch

After the initial survey, two 1-hectare (2.47-acre) management plots will be identified as targets for NEC habitat improvement. This work will include removing invasive species, thinning canopy, building brush piles for cover, and planting native shrubs. FrOGS is excited about channeling the superpower of our canine friends to help with this important conservation project.



WHAT'S ON YOUR SMARTPHONE?

Many of us take to the woods and wetlands to escape the ever-present buzz of the internet world – unending notifications, texts, tweets, emails, and robocalls. Instead of experiencing life staring and swiping away at a 2.5"×6" screen, we often prefer the company of the natural world with all its amazing visual, auditory, and olfactory stimuli. However, none can deny the utility of a smartphone as a key component of our safety gear when we're out exploring nature. Since we always carry our smartphone with us, this internet connectivity could be used to greatly enhance our hiking and paddling experiences. Here is a review of some useful nature-themed apps that you may want to try on your smartphone. There are, of course, many more apps that provide similar functionality.

Nature App Review

iNaturalist: iNaturalist is a social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists built on the concept of mapping and sharing observations of biodiversity across the globe. iNaturalist includes an automated species identification tool. Its primary goal is to connect people to nature. Although it is not a science project itself, iNaturalist is a platform for science and conservation efforts, providing valuable open data to research projects, land managers, other organizations, and the public.

Merlin: Merlin was designed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to be a birding coach for bird watchers at every level. Merlin can identify more than 6,000 bird species across six continents. Birds can be identified by answering three questions, by recording their songs, and by uploading photos.

BirdNet: This app lets you record an audio file using your smartphone. Highlight the section of the recording you would like identified and then an artificial neural network will tell you the most probable bird species present in your recording using your GPS coordinates, location, and date.

eBird: eBird is an online database of bird observations providing scientists, researchers, and amateur naturalists with real-time data about bird distribution and abundance. eBird is an example of crowdsourcing, which gathers basic data on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales.

PlantSnap: Identify plants, flowers, cacti, succulents, and mushrooms in seconds. PlantSnap can currently recognize 90% of all known species of plants and trees. This is a multi-functional app that is well-crafted for children and adults alike. The five tabs on the bottom – “Community”, “Explore”, “Snap”, “Search”, and “More” – each boasts its own useful section. The interactive “Snap” tab allows you to take a picture of a plant and walks you through how to properly care for it.

PeakFinder (\$4.99): Ever wonder what peaks you were looking at in the distance while hiking? Point your smartphone at the ridgeline and an outline of the landscape's contour will appear with each hilltop and mountain peak named. You can also use the “fly” feature which takes the app to the top of the peak you touch and shows you the bird's-eye view from there!



Skyview: Simply point your smartphone at an object in the night sky to identify stars, constellations, planets, satellites, and more.

Weather: Weather Underground, WeatherBug, Windy, Weather Channel, MyRadar, and the NOAA site (not an app) all provide useful information in different formats. Use multiple to get a full forecast!

US Topo Maps: Great for hiking. See your position overlaid on a topographic map and record your hike by position, miles, and time. No need to ever get lost or disoriented again.

HuntStand: A comprehensive toolset for hunting, habitat management, and land ownership. Great mapping, satellite imagery, and other valuable tools. Shows detailed property boundaries with the owner's name (with HuntStand Pro only, \$30/year).



Eagle Project at Gordon Douglas Reserve



By Kathryn Jaliman

The Great Swamp and Wood Ducks are the beneficiaries of Dylan Rodrigue's Eagle Scout project for Troop 77 of Poughquag NY. "I like contributing to the Great Swamp. It is an important duty to help the ecosystem and support the Wood Duck population" said Dylan. To initiate his project, he reached out to FrOGS in March 2023 who eagerly approved his proposal. In the spring, Dylan was able to install three boxes on FrOGS' property in the south flow. He recently completed the installation of six more Wood Duck boxes on the Gordon Douglas Reserve in the north flow. "After I was approved for my Eagle project, FrOGS invited me to a dedication honoring Gordon Douglas. It was an honor to meet the gentleman for whom the Reserve is named."

Dylan shared his experience of creating and organizing his project and what he learned in the process. "I

enjoy nature. It is peaceful and interesting. My whole family loves to go kayaking on the Great Swamp. We noticed all the old duck boxes and thought adding

some new ones would be a great Eagle Scout project." Every Eagle project is designed to embody the spirit of what the Boy Scouts stand for: bettering the community, planning and leading a project without pay, and completing this project with honor.

The first step was to get the supplies ready and set up a workday. Next Dylan reached out to his Troop and organized the day the boxes would be made. He taught his fellow scouts woodworking safety and oversaw the construction of the boxes. "This was the easy part," Dylan said. "In Scouts we learn to lead by example. My troop knows the importance of the Eagle project and are always willing to help." His biggest challenges came from Mother Nature! When Dylan originally planned to install the nesting boxes, the water level was too high, barring access to the sites. When the water level went down, the land was so overgrown that his plan to install the boxes was

thwarted again. "After being delayed by a rainy, hot spring and summer, we were finally able to install six Wood Duck boxes in the Gordon Douglas Reserve in October."

"I learned that the woods grow very quickly. This project also helped me develop my communication skills – verbal and writing. There is a lot of communication involved in doing the Eagle project from getting permission, organizing people to help, putting together a

PowerPoint presentation, and finally the review by the Eagle Board of five adults, including Scout Masters." Dylan successfully completed his review and was awarded the Rank of Eagle on January 21, 2024.

Now that his Eagle badge is earned, he will participate more as a mentor to the younger scouts. The Wood Duck house project, however, will continue another season for Dylan. "Wood Ducks mainly nest in March and April so I will go out in the spring, weather permitting, to clean and put fresh aspen bedding in the boxes. We may find that the boxes were already used by owls, squirrels or Kingfishers, since the Wood Ducks are not here during the winter." Dylan's goal was to improve the Gordon Douglas Reserve, and especially to make it more habitable for Wood Ducks. The natural world is very important to Dylan who sees himself becoming a DEC or a conservation officer.



Wood Duck box builders of Troop 77, Poughquag, NY.



Dylan Rodrigue and Gordon Douglas at the Reserve's dedication, May 2023. (See Spring 2023 Newsletter)



Dylan with his father and brother installing a Wood Duck box.

THE COLOR OF SNOW

By Sharon Nakazato

What color is snow? A question for the beginner's crossword, surely....

Snow is white, right? Sometimes right, sometimes not.

Before answering that question it's helpful to recall how we "see" color in any case. We perceive colors as our brains interpret the frequencies of light vibrations reflected to our eyes from objects. All the colors together — the whole visible spectrum — we see as white. When we see a section of the spectrum in something — remember ROYGBIV? — we are actually identifying the color that is reflected back from the object while all the other colors are absorbed by the object.

So, what about snow? Snow looks white when it is falling, maybe not a color at all, strictly speaking. In fact, it's clear but appears white because the snow crystals reflect light in all directions. Once on the ground its story becomes more complex.

Gifts from the Impressionists

As landscape painters like Claude Monet (1840-1926) were aware, once the snow accumulates and achieves density, it can appear bluish because it is water, especially in the shadows. As the snow packs and turns to ice, the red is absorbed and blue progressively deepens, such that mountain climbers can guess the depths of crevasses by the intensity of the blue color.

But snow can also be grey or black of course when contaminated by grit, dirt, or petroleum. It can turn brown, or yellow through leaked plant pigments such as fallen leaves or, ugh! urine. The impressionist and post-impressionist painters mined the color lodes present in shadows on snow: blues, blue-greys, even lavender and purples. Areas in full sun show pink, orange, and sun yellow. These artists' fresh look at snow colors has enriched the world of our senses enormously.

All the Colors in the Rainbow

That's not the end of snow colors in nature. Snow can even be red or green when it contains certain algae. Snow over the alpine algae *Chlamydomonas* is known affectionately as "watermelon snow" and is even said to emit a scent reminiscent of the red juicy melons.

There are times when it's possible to see rainbows in snow from small round raindrops prisming or very small crystals forming haloes in the ground as the snow begins to melt. Watch for them.

Photographing Snow Scenes

Here are some camera tips from the pros:

Photographers wishing to capture alluring or dramatic snow scenes are reminded to take advantage of the "blue and yellow hours." The blue hour is the time just *before* sunrise and just *after* full sunset when the natural sunlight runs to blue, while the yellow hour is the time just *after* sunrise and just *before* sunset when the yellow sunlight is richest. With snow, the challenge is to achieve sufficient contrast and avoid dead flat white spaces. Go for manual focus, not autofocus, if you can. To avoid grey use exposure compensation (+1). A lens hood reduces glare from bright daytime snow and ice. Keep the flash off. Smartphones on HDR give even lighting throughout. Of course, you can post edit to compensate to some extent, but try to get your best shot lighting-wise out of the camera. Another best time to photograph is just after the storm passes and skies begin to clear but there is still some cloud cover.

The word snow tends to bring up groans and cries of woe, but there is such an abundant field of beautiful surprises and discoveries for the child and artist in each of us! How many colors can you find in Monet's *The Magpie*?



The Magpie by Claude Monet

COMBATING SOLASTALGIA

By Paul Andrews

The serious impacts of global warming on our physical world are well documented: melting glaciers, sea level rise, droughts, wildfires, floods, collapsing ice shelves, more intense storms, warming oceans, atmospheric rivers, biodiversity loss, and heat waves. Less appreciated is the impact environmental degradation has on our psychological wellness. The term solastalgia was coined in 2003 and is defined as the emotional and psychological distress caused by environmental change and destruction. Synonyms for the concept of solastalgia are existential distress, eco-anxiety, environmental melancholia, and eco-grief. These words portray the idea that the destruction of our natural world has a profound impact on our mental health and well-being. In contrast to nostalgia, which is a longing for home at a time in the past, solastalgia is the distress caused by being in a home undergoing profound environmental change. Solastalgia can be caused not only by climate-driven degradation, but also by destructive mining, deforestation, and volcanic eruptions.

A significant majority of people believe that climate change is a global emergency. The psychological toll of this widespread concern is profound. For many, it's not just about recognizing a global issue but feeling a deep, personal impact on their mental well-being. For those with a strong connection to their environment or homeland, this pervasive anxiety manifests in many ways. A person experiencing solastalgia may feel deep grief over changing landscapes that were once familiar, helplessness over the inability to halt or influence environmental changes, chronic stress from ongoing changes, declining hope for the future of the planet, and a feeling of being disconnected from one's community due to rapid alterations.

As individuals, we might not be able to reverse any of the environmental damage already done, but there

are actions we can take to help process our feelings. FrOGS and other local environmental conservation groups have numerous programs that can help alleviate the effects of solastalgia on your emotional wellbeing and cultivate the strength to cope with ecological loss. Some of the actions you can take include:

– Participating in Community Environmental Initiatives

Volunteering in local community groups such as FrOGS provides a proactive approach to dealing with environmental concerns. These activities foster a pro-environmental social identity that binds participants and reinforces their dedication to action. Activities such as habitat restoration, native plantings, litter removal, group hikes and paddles, and opposing inappropriate development instills a deep sense of belonging and purpose. These group activities also provide vital social connections and peer support for coping with the debilitating feelings of solastalgia.

– Embracing the Healing Power of Art

Join FrOGS' Plein Air events! Plein air art merges the creativity of traditional art therapy with the healing power of nature. Sketching, painting, or photographing natural landscapes can serve as a bridge between one's emotions and the environment. Plein air artistry allows one to capture the emotional and sensory dimensions of a particular landscape at a particular moment in time and counter feelings of grief and hopelessness.

In summary, solastalgia can be emotionally debilitating, but by engaging with community groups and finding comfort in nature-art therapy, we can navigate our emotions and find the strength to adapt to the rapid changes occurring in our natural world. Embracing these strategies not only alleviates the negative feelings associated with environmental loss but also connects us to the world and instills hope for the future of life on planet Earth.



WHERE IN THE GREAT SWAMP?

There was a winner of our challenge in the Fall Newsletter to identify the location in the photo! Richard Reinhardt wrote a wonderful letter, which you can read in the adjacent column. The photo was taken from the summit (elev 870') in the Ice Pond Conservation Area overlooking Ice Pond and The Clough Preserve (purchased with the help of The Nature Conservancy) to the east with its hemlock grove. Ice Pond and the two forested ridges on either side offer a wide range of habitats for birds, aquatic species, mammals, reptiles, insects, plants, and amphibians. The pond is the headwaters of Muddy Brook which flows north. A large 4-story commercial ice house was built on the shore by the Knickerbocker Ice Company around the turn of the century. Commercial ice-house operations ended in the mid-twenties due to advances in refrigeration. The foundations of the ice house, bunk house, and foreman's house can still be seen in the forest floor.

This issue's "Where in the Swamp" photo captures a large cattail marsh stretching off into the distance. A nature preserve covers the ridgeline in the distance. No more clues!



If you can name this location, write us at P.O. Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564 or send an email to info@frogs-ny.org. Please describe what special meaning or remembrance the location has for you. The Editors will choose their favorite response and send the winner a free T-shirt or cap from our donation site (<https://friends-of-the-great-swamp.square.site/>).

I believe the photo is of ICE POND in Patterson, NY. In 1975, my wife and son and I visited this lake which is behind a hill that is in back of our house. We live on Farm to Market Rd. We walked south towards Rt. 312 and about a quarter of a mile from our house we turned right onto a dirt road. Then we crossed over a bridge that was the spillway for Twin Hills Lake. Once we were over the bridge, we entered the woods to our left. We passed by a 'stone chamber' (or a root cellar). We continued walking west about another quarter of a mile and were awed by this BREATH TAKING view of the lake in front of us. We had to cross over railroad tracks in order to get closer to the lake. Those tracks are now known as the Bike/Rail Trail. The track was originally the Maybrook train track. As we were looking at the lake, a man in a boat rowed by going north. It was a wonderful scene for us as we grew up in the Bronx where there were not too many lakes! Across from the lake (on the west side) was a cement block building. We found out later that the building was owned by a group of men from Mt. Vernon, NY. About 10 years ago, I read an article about ICE POND and there was a photo of a building. It was about 200 feet long with 2 levels. It was used to cut and store the ice which was later possibly shipped to NYC and points south, because the south bound train was on that side of the lake. The article also said that the workers who cut the ice out from the lake lived in small huts along the lake's edge. I remember fondly, when I was a young boy in the Bronx and lived in an apartment house, that there was an alleyway between two buildings and occasionally an 'ice man' would come to deliver ice to the tenants for their "ice box" (pre-refrigerators). He would yell out "Ice Man" and "ICE FOR SALE". People would open their windows and yell "we need ice" and he would say "how much ice do you - need?" They would say "25-cents worth". They would have to throw the money down to him. Then he would ask "what apartment do you live in?" He then would chip the right amount of ice with his ice pick and fling it onto his shoulder (which was protected from the ice with a leather pad) and then bring it to the right apartment. The refrigerator had a small box in it where the piece of ice was stored, thus the name 'ICE BOX'! We were not allowed to open the ice box frequently because the ice would melt! I like to think that the 'ice' from my childhood came from the very ICE POND that's in the back of our house! Now there is a Nature Trail off of Farm to Market Road for anyone to walk in and hike to ICE POND. I'm sure they will have the same BREATH TAKING experience that we had that day!

Richard Reinhardt

NEWS IN THE GREAT SWAMP

Patterson Environmental Park Sign Dedication

On December 9, the Town of Patterson's Supervisor Rich Williams, Councilmen Shawn Rogan and Peter Muentener, Environmental Conservation Inspector Ted Kozlowski, and park caretaker Ed Napierkowski joined with FrOGS to dedicate an educational sign on the boardwalk in the Patterson Environmental Park with approximately 30 people in attendance. The sign installation is the culmination of a multi-year, multi-constituent collaboration to build and enhance the boardwalk into the swamp. The sign encourages visitors to pause and look around, to understand the history of the area, to appreciate the value of this wetland to the community and the wildlife that depends on it, and to help protect this critical environmental resource.



Laurel Ledges Walkway Rebuild

Due to busy beavers persistently raising the height of the concrete outlet dam, the Turtle Pond water level has risen significantly over the last couple years. As a result, the footbridge around the wet area at the cliff face on the eastern shore became inundated, which made passage treacherous and shoe soaking. The original walkway was built in 2008 as the Eagle Scout project of Stephen Maddock. This fall, Putnam County Land Trust who own the Laurel Ledges Natural Area began construction of a new elevated walkway to replace the submerged structure with the help of a grant from the Land Trust Alliance. Work was suspended for the winter but will resume in March with the hope to finish by spring or summer. We all look forward to renewed easy access to this beautiful property.



PCLT work crew

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW ENVIRONMENTALISTS?

See if you can match the quote with the person who spoke it. Answers below.

A) Greta Thunberg, B) David Attenborough, C) Rachel Carson, D) John Muir, E) Jacques Cousteau, F) Farley Mowat, G) Mahatma Gandhi, H) Edie Keasbey



1. "In nature, nothing exists alone."
2. "We're under some gross misconception that we're a good species, going somewhere important, and that at the last minute we'll correct our errors and God will smile on us. It's delusion."
3. "Young people - they care. They know that this is the world that they're going to grow up in, that they're going to spend the rest of their lives in. But, I think it's more idealistic than that. They actually believe that humanity, human species, has no right to destroy and despoil regardless."
4. "If we go on the way we have, the fault is our greed and if we are not willing to change, we will disappear from the face of the globe, to be replaced by the insect."
5. "There is sufficiency in the world for man's need but not for man's greed."
6. "The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness."
7. "You cannot separate politics and environment; they require each other to reach agreement."
8. "I have learned you are never too small to make a difference."



Answer Key: 1-C, 2-F, 3-B, 4-E, 5-G, 6-D, 7-H, 8-A

Winter Reading List

Winter is a great time to catch up on your reading list. Here are a few suggestions to take you on journeys throughout the natural world while sitting in the warmth of your home.

***Of Time and Turtles: Mending the World, Shell by Shattered Shell* 2023 Sy Montgomery**

Naturalist Sy Montgomery describes her experience as a volunteer with the Turtle Rescue League and provides an antidote to the instability of our frenzied world. Elegantly blending science, memoir, and philosophy, and drawing on cultures from across the globe, this compassionate portrait of injured turtles and their determined rescuers invites us all to slow down and slip into turtle time.

***Ten Birds that Changed the World* 2023 S. Moss**

For the whole of human history, we have hunted and domesticated birds for food; venerated them in our mythologies, religions, and rituals; exploited them for their natural resources; and been inspired by them for our music, art, and poetry. The author tells the gripping story of this long and intimate relationship through key species from all seven of the world's continents in a fascinating, eye-opening work of natural history.

***The World Without Us* 2023 Alan Weisman**

What would happen to our planet if humans were to disappear? Weisman reveals Earth's tremendous capacity for self-healing and shows which human devastations are indelible and what of our highest art and culture would endure longest.

***Around the World In 80 Trees* 2018 Jonathon Drori**

The author uses plant science to illuminate how trees play a role in every part of human life, from the romantic to the regrettable. From the trees of Britain, to India's sacred banyan tree, they offer us sanctuary and inspiration, not to mention the raw materials for everything from drugs to maple syrup. The book combines history, science and a wealth of quirky detail with surprises for everyone.

***The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year* 2023 Margaret Renkl**

Fifty-two chapters follow the creatures and plants in Renkl's backyard over the course of a year. Along the way, we also glimpse the changing rhythms of a human life. This book is a memoir, a manifesto, and a call to action, told in a lyrical, voice that demands

we look at the world beyond us, and do something, no matter how small, to make it better.

***The End of Eden: Wild Nature in the Age of Climate Breakdown* 2023 Adam Welz**

Although we can never really know what a creature thinks or feels, this book invites the reader to meet wild species on their own terms in a range of ecosystems that span the globe. An exquisitely written and deeply researched exploration of wild species reacting to climate breakdown, *The End of Eden* offers a radical new kind of environmental journalism that connects humans to nature in a more empathetic way than ever before and galvanizes us to act in defense of the natural world before it's too late.

***Fen, Bog and Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis* 2022 Annie Proulx**

By storing the carbon emissions that accelerate climate change, fens, bogs, swamps, and marine estuaries are crucial to the earth's survival. Proulx provides a riveting deep dive into the history of our wetlands and what their systematic destruction for profit means for the planet.

***Wilder* 2022 Millie Kerr (for Young Adults)**

Rewilding is a new approach to wildlife conservation that offers remarkable potential. While conservation generally seeks to preserve what remains and prevent further decline, rewilding seeks to restore entire ecosystems. Instead of leaving land to recover naturally, habitats are actively restored and keystone species reintroduced to quicken the process of recovery. By focusing on success stories and showing that there are bands of determined conservationists fighting for a better future, *Wilder* inspires us all to become part of the solution.

***Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults* 2022 Robin Wall Kimmerer, adapted by Monique Gray Smith**

This adaptation of the adult book (2015) is filled with nuggets of wisdom, a wealth of information about plants, and a call to embrace the kinship between plants and humans. As a member of the Potawatomi Nation, Kimmerer maintains the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. This wondrous work emphasizes the importance and need to protect the environment and take care of our kin.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dutchess Land Conservancy Winter Webinar Series

Register at: <https://www.dutchessland.org/get-involved/events-and-programs>

March 6 – Palimpsest of Land Use: Reading the Landscape as a Historical Source

April 3 – Etuaptmunk: Two-Eyed Seeing in Our Daily Lives

FrOGS Annual Meeting

Saturday, February 24 (11:00 am)

Open to all FrOGS members. We will review some of our key projects on habitat restoration, conservation, and environmental advocacy as well as hold a short Board meeting. Registration required at Patterson Library: <http://tinyurl.com/42kdtj3u>

End of Winter Hike (Ice Pond Conservation Area)

Sunday, March 17 (11:00 am), a FrOGS-guided hike

This is a great place to learn the history of the area from its geologic formation to early human habitation and to the ice harvesting days. The hike will reach the top of the hill overlooking Ice Pond and the Clough Preserve where we'll have a lunch stop. It's St. Patrick's Day so wear green! This relatively easy hike will cover approximately 2.5 miles and last 2 hours. Meet at the trailhead is on the east side of Ice Pond Road, 0.8 miles south of Bullet Hole Road. Suggested \$5 donation payable at: <http://tinyurl.com/ykf2c55c>

For all FrOGS events, please contact Ken Luhman at frogspaddle22@gmail.com. Paddling events have fees.

Audubon Deer Pond Hikes (Sherman, CT)

For details, see: <https://www.ctaudubon.org/deer-pond-farm-programs-classes/>

February 10, 10:00 – noon: Second Saturday Hike

March 1, 10:00 – noon: First Friday Hike

March 9, 10:00 – noon: Second Saturday Hike

New England Cottontails: Saving New York's Rarest Rabbit

Saturday, March 9 (2:00 – 3:00 pm)

Talk sponsored by Putnam Highlands Audubon Society. Dr. Susan Booth-Binczik, NYSDC wildlife biologist, will speak at the Desmond-Fish Public Library at 472 Route 403 in Garrison, NY.

The most up to date list of events can always be found on our Facebook page:
facebook.com/FrOGS.NY

You can also sign up for email updates via our website:
<https://frogs-ny.org/mailchimp-newsletter/>

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