

FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



Our new home at 148 Pleasant Plains Road

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This newsletter
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ONE YEAR AND STILL GROWING STRONG!

One year ago, a group of enthusiastic people who cared deeply about the Great Swamp NWR voted to create a Friends Group. We now have members, an office, a web site, projects and jobs to do. We look forward to many more years and accomplishments to benefit the Swamp.

Did someone say an office? That's right. Come see our new office space and meet fellow members on Open House Picnic Saturday, September 9, noon to 4 P.M. We are in the former Refuge Headquarters at 148 Pleasant Plains Road, right along the auto tour route. We'll have hamburgers, hot dogs and beverages. Bring a friend and help us celebrate.

A web site? Right again. Stop on in to our brand new site on the net and learn about what is going on. Come visit us at

www.friendsofgreatswamp.org

A special thank you to Assumption School in Morristown for sponsoring the site.

Projects and jobs? You bet! Earlier this year, the Friends Group received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to support projects in the Refuges. A portion of these funds is being used to assist in the renovation of the blind and to complete the boardwalk on New Vernon Road. Look for a fall opening!

A whole lot more is going on but, you really don't think we're going to tell you everything here on the front page — now do you?

A GREAT (SWAMP) START FOR THE WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING

by Laurel M. Gould

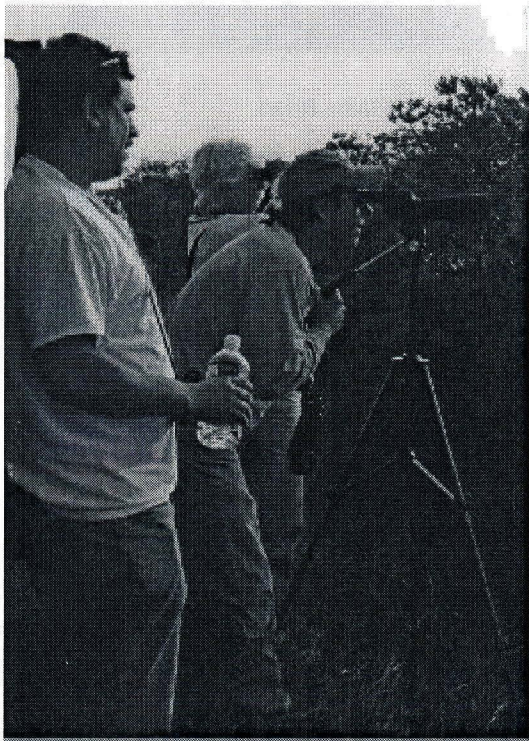
- It was 3:30 a.m. A little early to be up and about!
- And, it was dark. Well, that's what you'd expect!
- And, it was quiet.

Now that was bad! At least if you're in the Great Swamp during the World Series of Birding, hoping to get a running start with the nocturnal birds.

So begins the May 13, 2000 World Series of Birding for the PSE&G Power Birders team. Eight of us - all eager to identify as many birds as we can before midnight, the deadline for submitting official team lists at the Cape May lighthouse.

For those of you who may not know - the World Series of Birding is New Jersey's ultimate birding challenge. For 24 hours, teams of birding enthusiasts crisscross the Garden State identifying as many birds as they can by sight or sound. There are rules to follow - and all members of the team must see or hear the bird - and all agree, before it can be counted.

So, back to the Great Swamp and the PSE&G Power Birders. Thanks to new Friends member and Great Swamp neighbor Lisa Molinari, the Power Birders were persuaded to add the Great Swamp to their itinerary for the first time in several years. We discovered that the Great Swamp provides a limited number of keys to the non-public wilderness areas of the refuge to registered World Series of Birding teams - an adventure in itself.



Picture this - driving down a dirt path, in the pitch dark, in an oversize van - hoping we don't meet anyone along the way! We unlock the gates, drive along the "road", stop the van. Eight people pile out. Everyone listens. It's very quiet. A Canada goose - our first bird! We're on our way! A swamp sparrow calls close by. The unmistakable descending notes of the veery - haunting and clear. Was that a Virginia rail? Not everyone agrees so we can't count it. A great horned owl - off in the distance calls "Who's awake?" It's getting lighter. Turkeys are waking up noisily in the woods behind us. A night-hawk swoops overhead - and then again. Yes, we all see it, the white bars on the wings clearly visible in the early light. A turkey descends out of the trees over our heads startling the team. It's an exciting start for all of us.

Scouting ahead of time is a key component of a successful big day; it can help the team locate a number of species very quickly. Our scouting had paid off. The killdeer was in the parking lot where it was supposed to be. The pectoral sandpiper was on the hard bottom pond near the headquarters. The American kestrel was perched near its nesting tree. But we searched in vain for the red shouldered hawk - a regular sighting on our scouting trips. And though we hung around longer than we had planned, the red-headed woodpecker, a regular sighting on our scouting forays, was not to be found on this day. At 7:30 a.m., we re-locked our last gate, and headed reluctantly out of the Great Swamp - on to Hunterdon County, Brigantine, Stone Harbor, and a midnight deadline at Cape May.

But we all agreed that the highlight of our trip was birding in the Great Swamp - a special place for big day birding, a super place for birding anytime.

PSE&G Power Birders Team Members: Bob Rovetto, Peggy Armstrong, Laurel Gould, Lynn Murphy, Jack Murphy, Sheldon Kaye, Jim Meinhold, Lisa Molinari.

We Need Your Help

Every Saturday from September 16th until November 4th, our office will be open to visitors to the Refuge from 11:00 to 4:00. These same weekends, Refuge Headquarters will be open on Sundays. We need volunteers to answer questions and share information about the Swamp during this peak season. Please call Kathy Woodward at (973) 635-1083 to sign up for a date that suits you.

MEET THE REFUGE INTERN

by Kathy Woodward

Hi, my name's Laura Nawojchik and I'm interning for the summer at Great Swamp. My internship is sponsored by AT&T and started in mid-June. Until mid-September I will be working full time at the refuge and living in 148 Pleasant Plains Rd - right upstairs from the Friends of Great Swamp office.

So far I've really enjoyed my time here. Things I've done include helping band and release rehabilitated mallard ducklings twice, and participating in a Canada goose round up, banding, and blood testing. Working with wildlife is where my real interest lies.

I graduated from Cornell University this May as a biology major, and I plan to go to graduate school for a degree in zoology after my current year off from school. Other things I do at the refuge include maintenance and office work, biological fieldwork like recording water levels throughout the swamp, and helping with various projects. It's great being able to spend much of my workday outside in such a beautiful setting, and I've already seen an amazing amount of swamp flora and fauna. If you want to contact me for my help or participation in any Great Swamp activity, please feel free to stop by or email me at aliceasleep@yahoo.com.



(Editor's note: Laura sat in our last Board meeting and contributed information and suggestions. Thanks, Laura.)

Wanted/Needed

Used nature books/guides, in good condition, for our new home. Also, used binoculars for visitors to use at our window. Call Kathy Woodward at (973) 635-1083 or bring to the Open House September 9.
(See details on first page)

TURN YOUR YARD INTO A HAVEN FOR WILD BIRDS

By Nancy Schenck

One of the greatest joys of spring and summer is being outdoors and watching birds up close. To attract and enjoy more birds, provide the four basic habitat elements: food, water, cover and places to raise young. The average yard may be visited regularly by 15 to 20 different bird species. By offering a feeding program of seed, suet, nectar and fruit, you should be able to attract a greater variety of birds to your yard.

Providing nesting boxes will encourage birds to make your yard their home. You will be able to watch the various stages of the nesting cycle including nest building, feeding the hatchlings and watching the fledglings as they venture into their new world.

Adding a birdbath can attract species that might not normally come to a feeder. All birds need water to bathe and drink.

Birds need plantings for protective cover, food, nesting and places to roost at night. With just a little effort, you can plant specific trees, shrubs and flowers that will feed and encourage more birds to visit your yard.

HAPPENINGS

On April 8, 2000, five hardy members of the Friends of Great Swamp NWR walked the Black Brook to note the location of snags - and to enjoy the Swamp from a different viewpoint. The hikers discovered 35 snags of varying sizes. This information was relayed to Long Hill Township and Morris County Mosquito Commission for appropriate action.

GUIDES NEEDED

To celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week, October 5-11, the Friends will be hosting sunset walks each night into the wildlife management area. The walks will begin at the Friends' Office on Pleasant Plains Road.

This is an opportunity to see areas of the Swamp which are normally closed to the public. Refuge Volunteer Coordinator, Tom McFadden will escort all guides on a training walk the end of September. For more information, please call Judy Schmidt at (908) 647-2508.

INTERVIEW WITH TONY CULLEN

BY KATHY WOODWARD

In the beginning of May, the Directors of the Friends group attended the 14th annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony to honor people who had volunteered in Great Swamp NWR during the year. Awards were presented to those serving 100, 250 and 500 hours. Two dedicated workers, Irving Tanzer and Anthony Cullen received the 500-hour certification of appreciation. Recently, I had the opportunity to talk with Tony about his hours at the Refuge.

Tony grew up near the Swamp, and he and his brother spent summers with the Youth Conservation Corp. program in the Refuge. In 1995, Tony returned to serve as a YCC youth leader for a summer. His interest in the Swamp continued to grow. After completing his associate's degree at Morris County College in 1999, Tony received an AT&T sponsored internship at the Refuge. During this period, which he extended, Tony contributed many hours and skills to the Swamp.

When Tony arrived at the Refuge, preparations were under way for the fall deer hunt. He helped mark boundaries and establish parking lots. He learned to estimate the age of a deer by examining its teeth and became more knowledgeable about data collection. His expertise was put to good use during the hunt. He also spent time in the gatehouse on Pleasant Plains Road, assuring that only hunters were in the Refuge during the hunt.

As the weather turned even cooler, Tony and a staff member set out to clean wood duck boxes. The wood duck is one of the species which the Refuge manages. Emptying the boxes during the winter provides valuable information and a few surprises. By examining the content of the boxes, it is learned how many eggs were laid and how many hatched. There was a good hatch rate last year. Other critters use wood duck homes, including kestrels and swallows. Occasionally, the team found a screech owl, complete with cold-storage voles.

Tony also recorded weather data each morning and checked water levels frequently in the brooks and several wells. He helped with many every day routine activities of the Refuge. Tony also has helped the Friends group during our organizational year by serving as liaison when Tom McFadden, Outdoor Recreation Planner, could not attend our meetings.

Tony has filled an interim staff position for the past several months. In a few weeks, Tony will be attending Stockton State, to major in Environmental Studies with minors in Marine Biology/Geology. Tony is modest about his contributions to the Refuge and talks about all he has learned. He emphasized that by volunteering in the Swamp, people can take pride in contributions to a very valuable natural resource. He notes that volunteers range from members of Scout troops to retirees who do a variety of tasks. Some people come once a year for the annual clean-up and others come several times a week for specific jobs. He knows, as I do, how many people love the Swamp and how important it is to be there and help. Our Friends' hats are off to Tony for his terrific example of stewardship. KW

EVENTS TO REMEMBER

AUGUST MEETING — NIGHT SOUNDS

Ever wonder what's behind the night sounds of summer? Refuge staff member, Mike Horne, will lead the Friends on an evening walk into the Swamp.

Meet Tuesday at 8:00 p.m. at Friends' Auditorium, 148 Pleasant Plains Road. We'll learn about the sounds of the Swamp before venturing out to "hear" more. The regular monthly Board Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

AUG. 15 MEETING & NIGHT SOUNDS WALK

SEPT. 9 OPEN HOUSE & PICNIC

SEPT. 16 SATURDAYS—STARTING SEPTEMBER 16TH—VOLUNTEERS
TO HELP AT THE FRIENDS OFFICE

OCT. 5 NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FRIENDS GROUP
CONTACT US (BY MAIL)

FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
152 PLEASANT PLAINS ROAD
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY 07920

OR VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.FRIENDSOFGREATSWAMP.ORG

FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

A new organization, just starting its second year, Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is a grassroots group that needs your support now. The Friends is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation as defined under the laws of the state of New Jersey and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service under section 501-(c)-(3).

Membership offers ways to get involved at many different levels. Members...

- receive a quarterly newsletter
- have opportunities to participate in special events
- contribute to the improvement of the refuge for all visitors.

If you would like to become a member of the Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, please fill out the information on this form, and mail with your check to

Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
152 Pleasant Plains Road, Basking Ridge, New Jersey 07920

Yearly Membership

Membership is tax deductible!

Family (up to 4 members)	\$25.00
Individual	\$15.00

Renewal?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

E-Mail Address _____

Occupation (Optional) _____

I would be interested in volunteering (check one or more)

- ☐ Buildings & Grounds
☐ Membership
☐ Sales
☐ Communications
☐ Outreach
☐ Staffing
☐ Fundraising
☐ Programs & Events