



the Swamp Scene

friends of great swamp national wildlife refuge

ISSUE THIRTY TWO
NOVEMBER 2009

Highlights

Friends Receive NJACD Award	2
Refuge Update	3
The Owl in the Box	5
Fall Festival	7
New Coloring Book	9

Board of Directors

Laura Nally
President

Susan Garretson Friedman
Vice-President

Kathy Woodward
Secretary

Laurel Gould
Treasurer

Karen English

Pat Giaimo

Jack Higgins

Jane Kendall

Judy Schmidt

Dorothy Smullen

Marilyn Kitchell
GSNWR Liaison

Laurel Gould
Editor

241 Pleasant Plains Road
Basking Ridge, N.J. 07920
973.425.9510
www.friendsofgreatswamp.org



Printed on recycled paper

WE DID IT! THANK YOU FRIENDS

By Judy Schmidt

You have heard the saying: "A Friend in need is a Friend in deed." Well our volunteers are the best Friends you could have. The task was to move from the Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop, our home of 10 years, and set up our shop and exhibits in a new location—but we had a plan.

- Step 1 The new Nature Shop at the Visitor Center had to be set up. Our volunteer carpenters made it look easy.
- Step 2 Time to pack! The call went out for boxes. I don't think there was a liquor store around with any left.
- Step 3 Inventory and packing. In two days, the volunteers had the job done.
- Step 4 Moving day. The call went out for trucks and strong backs. With the help of interns and volunteers, the job got done. It took three different days, and lots of trips up the road, but things were moved, unpacked, and stored.
- Step 5 The GardenKeepers transplanted native plants from the old garden to the new Native Plant Bird Feeding Garden.
- Step 6 The redbud tree was moved with help from Refuge staff member Tony Cullen and the refuge backhoe

THE VISITOR CENTER & FRIENDS NATURE SHOP OPENED ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2009



*You are the most
remarkable group
of volunteers
and Friends.
Thank you.*

Judy Schmidt



SETTLING IN (clockwise)

- Laura Nally volunteers at Reception Desk and Nature Shop
- Exhibit Room
- Saving the Great Swamp Display

Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center
32 Pleasant Plains Road, Harding Township
Hours: Thursday & Friday, 12:00–4:00
Saturday & Sunday, 10:00–4:00

FRIENDS SELECTED FOR 2009 NJACD CONSERVATION AWARD



Pictured left to right: Laura Nally, Friends' President; Barbara Rosko, President of the NJACD; Joe Dunn, Director of the Morris County Soil Conservation District; Friends Board members Laurel Gould, Judy Schmidt, Pat Giaimo, Kathy Woodward.

The Friends of Great Swamp have been awarded the 2009 Award for Outstanding Service as an Organization for Conservation Achievement presented by the New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts (NJACD).

The award was presented at the Association's annual meeting on October 27 in Freehold, NJ. David Welch, Chairman of the Morris County Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors, who nominated the Friends, noted that "the Friends are one of the most productive and beneficial groups that we have, with supporters and volunteers who are attracted to the group because of their dedication to their mission and their focus on educating people on environmental and conservation issues."

Joe Dunn, Director of the Morris County Soil Conservation District, made the presentation. Friends President Laura Nally spoke for the entire board when, in accepting the award, she said the Friends were "extremely proud and honored to receive this recognition from the NJACD."

The Morris County Soil Conservation District is one of the state's 15 soil conservation districts. The NJACD is a state chapter of the National Association of Conservation Districts with 3,100 conservation districts in the country.

BOCKOVEN FARM WATERCOLOR DONATED TO FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NWR



The Morris County Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors recently donated an original watercolor painting to the Friends of Great Swamp. Director Joe Dunn presented the painting to the Friends at their regular Board meeting in October. The pastoral scene depicts the George Mills Bockoven farm in Harding Township with sheep and a farmer in the distance and fence along Pleasant Plains Road in the foreground. This farm is now the location of the new Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

The painting was commissioned by the Morris County Soil Conservation District for their exhibit at the New Jersey Flower & Garden Show in 1985. The artist, Ludlow Thurston, was the art teacher at Parsippany High School at the time. The theme of the exhibit that year was farmland preservation to focus attention on the pending Farmland Preservation bill. The goal was to get the public informed to support the bill, which they did. Mills Bockoven served as chairman of the Morris County Soil Conservation District for 30 years and the

painting was a way to celebrate his tenure. Mills Bockoven died in 1986.

The painting is now hanging in the Library at the visitor center—and if you turn and look out the library windows you will see the same view as in the painting, although somewhat overgrown now. Friends Board member Laurel Gould said: "The Friends are thrilled to have this painting of the Bockoven farm hanging in the original farmhouse and we are so appreciative of this gift from the Morris County Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors."

COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLANS (CCP) PROGRESS

By Tom Clifford and Beth Goldstein

The refuge began its Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) process last year. One of the first things the refuge did was develop a list of issues that we will tackle as we move through the CCP process. We also met this summer to discuss the purposes of the refuge's establishment and to develop a draft vision statement and draft goals for the refuge. We will present the draft vision, goals and issues at our public scoping meeting sometime in the spring of 2010, when we officially and publicly kick off the CCP process. We have also begun to organize an 'experts panel' for our first meeting on public use. This panel will be comprised of Service and non-Service personnel who are experts in the field of outdoor recreation and who are knowledgeable about the needs of local residents and out-of-town visitors. For updates on our CCP process, please visit the refuge's planning website, at the following web address: <http://www.fws.gov/Northeast/planning/Great%20Swamp/ccphome.html>

REFUGE UPDATE... WITH DEPUTY REFUGE MANAGER STEVE HENRY

Editor's note: Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is a busy place. A lot goes on to manage and maintain a refuge, and many of these activities are not highly visible to visitors. That's what makes it a treat to sit down with Deputy Refuge Manager Steve Henry and catch up on significant Refuge activities.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Mowing of grassland habitats is done on a prescribed cycle to set back succession and maintain habitat diversity for wildlife. This fall, 220 acres were mowed including the fields around the visitor center. The work went quickly and well, and the staff exceeded their goal by 10%. The four-acre display pond, visible from the access road to Refuge Headquarters, was disced this fall and almost immediately the waterfowl were back making use of the newly flooded area.

Over the winter, the old Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop, technically known as Q99, will be demolished and the building site will be restored to grassland. The existing parking lot will remain for visitors to use when walking or bicycling on Pleasant Plains Road and there are tentative plans for an outdoor restroom, interpretive kiosk, and the bird sightings log. Recently the Friends relocated some of the native plants and the red-bud tree from the Q99 site to the visitor center gardens.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT

Cold, wet spring weather led to a decline in 2009 bluebird breeding with 182 bluebirds fledged from refuge boxes, down from 249 in 2008. Waterfowl banding numbers were back to previous levels after blackbird interference with the traps led to a reduction in the number of waterfowl banded in 2008. In 2009, 140 waterfowl were banded: wood ducks (9), mallards (124), and black ducks (7). A new survey of mourning dove populations was initiated this year by the State of New Jersey and Great Swamp was selected as one of the locations for banding. (Some visitors this past summer noticed the traps behind Q99.) One hundred mourning doves were banded at Great Swamp, the highest total for any of the sites in the state.

PERSONNEL

The Refuge completed a very busy and productive summer with nine interns including a crew of five dedicated to studying Indiana bats, the Friends-

sponsored intern, and one sponsored by the Mushett Family Foundation. Chris Hernandez returned for his third and final season as a SCEP intern, and Tom Clifford, an intern in the 6-month Conservation Internship Program, will be on board through December.

Outdoor Recreation Planner Tom McFadden will retire at the end of the year after a 31-year career in federal service, 28 as an employee at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Tom's position will be advertised early next year. Park Ranger Marilyn Kitchell is expecting her first child and will be on maternity leave for a few months beginning in January 2010. Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge has also seen some significant personnel changes over the past few months. The maintenance position, which was relocated to Wallkill from Great Swamp, has been filled; however, both the manager and the biologist at Wallkill recently took new jobs elsewhere. These positions will both be advertised shortly and hopefully filled by Spring.

BUDGET

The Refuge received a Challenge Cost Share Grant for \$10,300. This money will help fund the Visitor Center dedication event, the 2010 Fall Festival, the annual Volunteer Recognition Event, and a new series of "Let's Go Outside" programs for schools. Two additional proposals, an e-Bird Trail Tracker station at the visitor center and a second for a stream salamander monitoring survey were approved with grant funding pending.

VISITOR CENTER

The access road and the parking lot have been completed. Work on the cul-de-sac will be completed shortly at which time the north end of Pleasant Plains Road will be closed to refuge traffic. The new trail ran into a snag with an unexpected need for an archaeological survey, which was funded from the trail budget. The results of the survey are due shortly but preliminary indications are that nothing significant was uncovered.

The Refuge received \$105,000 in ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funding for a roof-top solar system which will be installed following a re-roofing of the building. Visitor Center exhibits are in the final design stage. Production will begin next year with installation expected by summer 2010.

WINTER PROJECTS

The replacement of South Gate is in final design and will be sent out to bid shortly. North Gate is now operating on a solar-powered timer to coincide with visitor center hours. Ducks Unlimited is engineering the replacement of Water Control Structure 14 (between Pools 1 and 2) which is in final design stage.

PUBLIC USE

The 2009 deer hunt was successful with 113 deer harvested, up from 79 deer in 2008. There was a significant increase in the numbers of bucks taken, primarily as a result of liberalized muzzleloader regulations. The Refuge's deer management program has led to a reduction in the population to the management objective of 20 animals per square mile.

LAND ACQUISITIONS

One million dollars is earmarked for the purchase of 18 acres and a large house on Woodland Road. This land is valuable wildlife habitat which backs up to Great Brook; the house would be used as offices for the Service's Office of Law Enforcement currently stationed in Elizabeth. The Refuge is working closely with partners and Congress to secure the additional funds needed to complete this purchase. The Refuge recently closed on a 6-acre subdivision on Woodland Road that also backs up to Great Brook and includes excellent wood turtle habitat. Closing is proceeding on a 27-acre property in Chatham Township which is surrounded on three sides by the Refuge's Wilderness Area. All of these areas are within the Refuge acquisition boundary, the approved area within which the Refuge has the authority to purchase land. This boundary is periodically reviewed and revised to reflect changing conditions.

GREAT SWAMP BIRDS CHECKLIST REVISED... WITH SOME NOTABLE CHANGES

By Steve Byland

In 2009 the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge birds checklist was updated by Steve Byland and Bill Boyle. There are a few changes to the checklist, including updating the order of species to reflect the latest groupings used by the American Ornithologists' Union. There were also tweaks made to some of the seasonal occurrences of several species to reflect observations made since the checklist was last updated in 2001.

A few rarely-seen species were dropped to make room for some of the species reported by observers at the Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop, during the World Series of Birding, on the Christmas Bird Counts, at the Wildlife Observation Center, and at The Big Sits! Thanks to everyone for all of your reports of bird sightings throughout the years. They really helped to make this checklist better.

Some additional comments on the new checklist... by Laurel Gould
Many thanks to Steve and Bill Boyle for updating the Refuge birds checklist. It is one of the most popular handouts for Refuge visitors.

The first thing you notice about the new checklist is that it's in color! Inside photos of a bluebird, hooded merganser, chickadee, American kestrel and others make this a very attractive brochure; and the cover photo of a great blue heron as well as the inside close-up of a male eastern bluebird were taken by the Friends' own Steve Byland.

There are some other noticeable changes in the relative abundance noted for various species. The black vulture is now shown as "common" in all seasons as is the eastern screech owl. The American kestrel is now shown as "uncommon" and "rare", a decline in relative abundance. These changes reflect what Great Swamp birders already know and have been reporting. Another interesting change is the indication of New Jersey State threatened and endangered (T&E) species. There are no Federally listed T&E spe-

cies inhabiting the Refuge as of this printing, a result of the bald eagle having been removed from the Federal list. A valuable notation, not always noticed, is that birds known to nest on or near the Refuge are indicated by a black dot.

The 2001 edition listed 244 species of birds. The new brochure lists 223 species of birds but this number does not include the 25 "accidentals" and 4 "extirpated" species shown on the back page. Adding these numbers makes the comparable count 251, which is up by seven species. This increase is due in large part to the number of excellent birders who frequent Great Swamp as well as the increased opportunities for visitors to record their sightings. Pick up the new checklist at the visitor center or download a copy from the Friends website or from the Refuge website. It's fun to compare the old and new list and see what's changed.



CHECK OUT THESE GREAT NEW BOOKS—JUST IN TIME FOR HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING



NEW JERSEY WILDLIFE VIEWING GUIDE

At long last, the second edition of this popular guide is now available. The completely revised guide provides detailed descriptions of 104 of the state's best places to see wildlife. The sites featured in this book have been categorized into three types: *premier*—most significant sites, especially if you have only a limited time; *great*—important wildlife viewing sites; and *other*—sites worth visiting when time is not a factor.

Beautiful, full-color photos illustrate the book. Friends members will be pleased to note that many of the photos in the guide are credited to (the Friends' own) Steve Byland. Great Swamp is listed as a *premier* site and includes the Refuge and both the Somerset County and Morris County education centers. Unfortunately, due to timing, the Refuge visitor center is not mentioned; we'll have to wait for the third edition!

In addition to a site description, there are driving directions, amenities, trail information, contact information and web addresses. This is a book you'll want to keep in your glove compartment for all your wildlife viewing trips.

FIELD GUIDE TO DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES OF NEW JERSEY



This long awaited field guide, written by Allen E. Barlow, David M. Golden, and Jim Bangma, has just been published. With detailed descriptions of 182 species and 334 full-color photographs, this guide will aid users in accurately identifying damselflies and dragonflies found in New Jersey.

There is also a wealth of information on life history, anatomy, when and where you can find each species, how to recognize them by their behavior, and more. The plates frequently show photos of both male and female (a real boon to observers) as well as quick keys to species identification, their range, and season—a lot of information is packed into a small space!

A reference guide as well as a field guide, this book will be a staple in every naturalist's library, regardless of their level of expertise.

Did you know that even though New Jersey is 47th in geographic size, it has the fourth longest list of dragonfly and damselfly species (behind Texas, Virginia, and New York)?

Both guides are now available at the Friends Nature Shop.

THE OWL IN THE BOX

Story and photos by Leo Hollein

The Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge has a robust eastern screech owl population and offers a unique situation for studying them. The small (about 8-9 inches long) tufted eastern screech owl is a cavity nester that typically uses a natural cavity or old woodpecker hole in a tree. Eastern screech owls are unusual in that they have two distinct color morphs, red and gray. Pairs of screech owls may be any combination of the two color morphs. All eastern screech owls have yellow eyes, greenish gray bill and needle sharp talons. Screech owls prey primarily on rodents but will eat most anything including birds, moths, insects, salamanders, frogs, toads, fish, crawfish, or earthworms. The feathers of other birds are often found in screech owl roosts with the most common being those of blue jays or woodpeckers. A blue jay is longer and weighs about half as much as a screech owl—it is an impressive catch by this small owl. No wonder blue jays and other birds harass any screech owl they locate during the day.



Pair of red morph owls with owlets

The Refuge currently maintains about 200 wood duck boxes in the management area. Screech owls roost in these boxes in the winter. About 20 to 30 owls are typically found in these boxes when they are inspected and cleaned during January and February. Some owls also nest in the wood duck boxes.

Finding a significant number of screech owls either roosting or nesting in natural cavities is a daunting task. A study kicked off in May 2009 takes advantage of the tendency of screech owls to roost in wood duck boxes in the winter and to nest in these boxes in the spring. This presents opportunities during two seasons to band screech owls or to record the bands of previously banded owls. The banding and recapture of banded owls will provide data for assessing the habits of the screech owl population. Data obtained during the planned multi-year study will help to assess such things as reproductive success, nesting density, owlet dispersal and mate/nest box fidelity.

SCREECH OWL NESTING IS EARLY AND LONG

Screech owls do not make a nest. The wood shavings placed in the wood duck boxes support their eggs that are laid in late March. This is earlier than for song birds in the Refuge. Screech owls typically lay 4-5 nearly round white eggs. The female owl will use her wings to gather the eggs under her body for brooding. Incubation of eggs lasts about 4 weeks and is done primarily by the female. The male feeds the female during this period and may remain in the nest box during the day. Like many raptors the female is larger than the male.



Gray morph owlet ready to fledge

The owlets hatch with fluffy white down and closed eyes. Both parents feed the owlets. The male eventually spends the days outside of the nest box while the female typically remains in the box. During weekly checks of the nest box to observe nesting progress, the young usually wake. At times they snap their beaks making a clicking sound. The adult female usually remains asleep evidently exhausted from a night of hunting to find sufficient food to feed her growing brood of owlets.

After about four weeks developing in the nest box, the owlets are ready to fledge. Fledgling screech owls do not have fully developed wings. They can hop and climb out of the box and into the tree canopy. Both parents feed and protect their young for several weeks after they fledge until they become accomplished fliers.

FOURTEEN OWLS AND OWLETS BANDED

Eleven owlets and three adult female owls from three nest boxes were banded on May 19. The owlets were about 3 weeks old. The nest boxes used by the screech owls are similar in a number of aspects.

- Boxes are located 100 feet or more inside a tree line in a densely wooded area.
- The tree line is adjacent to large open areas.
- The boxes are in areas that are not subject to flooding.

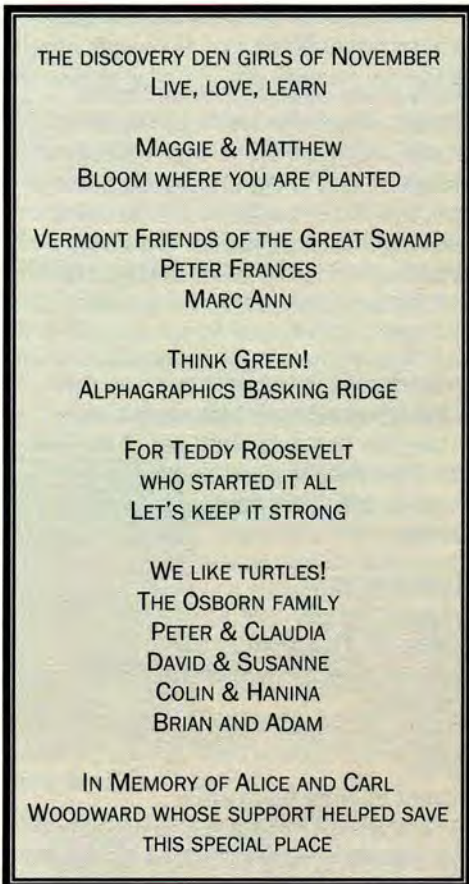
These nest boxes also had roosting owls in the box or roosting in an adjacent box during the winter box inspection. The screech owl nest boxes were well dispersed, with the closest boxes about 0.3 miles apart. As there may be other pairs of screech owls nesting in natural cavities in the Refuge, more data is required to confirm the nesting dispersal. All boxes with roosting screech owls will be checked for nesting owls in April 2010 in hope of locating more owl nests during the next breeding season.

FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP BRICK FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

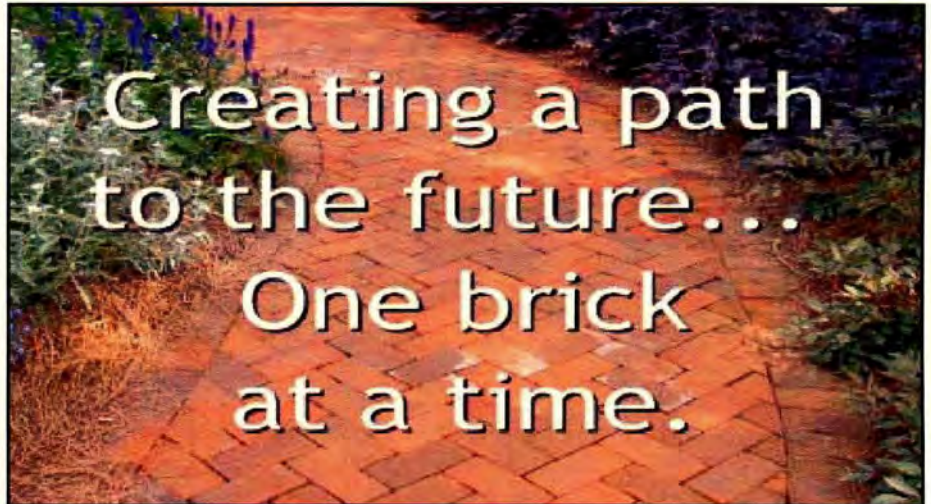
The Brick Fundraising Campaign is off to a great start. The campaign was officially launched at the Fall Festival on September 12. To date, 43 engraved bricks have been sold—so we're well on our way... but, with a goal of \$100,000, we have a long way to go.

Each member of the Friends board has purchased a brick; these are on display at the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center to showcase the various brick sizes and engraving options. The Friends have also purchased a brick to celebrate our ten year anniversary.

Some of the inscriptions we've received are shown in the box below.



There are many more inscriptions: memorializing and celebrating family; recognizing generations past and the young generation just starting out; sharing love of Great Swamp and all it means; honoring Helen Fenske and her legacy as an activist, an aunt, a mother, a wife.



Thank you to all who have purchased one or more bricks.

- Laura & Joe Nally
- Laurel & Charles Gould
- Karen English
- Pat Giaimo
- Susan & Charlie Friedman
- Dorothy Smullen
- Carl & Kathy Woodward
- Jack Higgins
- Jane Kendall & David Dietz
- Judy Schmidt
- Alphagraphics, Basking Ridge
- Peter S. Mallett Family
- George & Betsy Coyne
- Candace Paska
- Paul Fenske
- Arthur G. Fenske
- Lisa Molinari
- Assumption School, Sister Merris Larkin
- Teri Catalano
- Amy Dziemian
- Susan Fenske McDonough
- Peter & Claudia Osborn
- Karl Fenske
- Anita & David Beechner
- Antoinette J. Messina
- Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
- John & Marie Higinbotham
- Sandra Lee Fenske
- Inez Artico
- John Slattery
- Laura & Larry Fuhro
- Karen Marty
- Deb Scala & Dorothy Smullen & Judy Schmidt & Gail Rapaport
- Paul Acomb
- Joanne Foster
- Keith & Lora Cooper

- Cindy Ris Zanca
- Nancy Schenck

You can pick up a brick engraving order form at the Visitor Center or download a copy from the Friends website. Donations are tax deductible and you will receive a letter of acknowledgement for tax purposes. Send in your order now!

To help out, Judy Schmidt and Deb Scala have compiled ten reasons to buy a brick. Perhaps you can think of more!

- 1 Need a special, different gift—Buy a Brick
- 2 Help pave the way for nature's future—Buy a Brick
- 3 Be remembered always for your love of Great Swamp—Buy a Brick
- 4 Inspire future generations—Buy a Brick
- 5 With your friends or family—Buy a Brick
- 6 Help us out—Buy a Brick
- 7 All buildings need a strong foundation—Buy a Brick
- 8 Movie stars get a star on the sidewalk—you can have a brick on our patio—Buy a Brick
- 9 Don't be in doubt, shout it out—Buy a Brick
- 10 Get off the shtick—Buy a Brick!

TENTH ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL—FIRST PUBLIC EVENT AT HELEN C. FENSKE VISITOR CENTER

By Susan Garretson Friedman; photos by Tom Clifford



The Blue Goose "purchases" a commemorative brick from Board member Jane Kendall.

Our first Fall Festival in the new visitor center was quite an event—not to mention an undertaking. We had to move everything from the old Friends Bookstore and get it all ready for the big day. Then we had to set up for the festival, making it up as we went along. But with help from many Friends and volunteers we did it—and it was a success! Even though the weather didn't cooperate and it was overcast and misting, we had over 240 visitors come to enjoy the day.

The Raptor Trust, Friends of Walkkill NWR, NJ Fish & Wildlife, and Base Camp Adventure Outfitters all joined us with their own exhibits. The Friends' exhibits included one on bats, a water critters table, craft tables for children, a Big Sit birding station, heavy equipment, the greenhouse and native plant garden interpretation.

Steven Richman and Deb Scala were on hand to autograph their new books. Artist Ron Orlando displayed his fabulous artwork and donated 10% of his sales to the Friends. We also unveiled the 2009 Ron Orlando t-shirt design—a great blue heron. Playing throughout the day were short videos about the life of Helen C. Fenske, the center's namesake. The Fenske family came and were kind enough to stay for most of the day. Other notable visitors included Congressman Frelinghuysen and the Blue Goose! Following the festival's theme "Play on the Wild Side—Connect With Nature!", several birding walks were a big hit, as was the river seining—despite some muddy feet! Altogether a fun and "festive" day!



Above: The Raptor Trust always draws a crowd.

Right: Future Heavy Equipment Operators?



Members of the Fenske Family in front of the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Donations made to Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge make up a significant portion of the Friends annual income and allow us to fund a variety of projects and programs which benefit Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, its wildlife, and its visitors. Thank you to all who have made recent donations to the Friends.

Membership Donations

To all of you who added an additional donation to your membership renewals, thank you. Ann & Don McCord, Mary Ann Schmit, Suzanne Wilcox, Steve Gruber, Bob Hofmann, Kevin Ashton, Naomi Epstein, Donna Sharpe & Paul Fenske, Ruth Yanoff & Charles McLellan, A. Michael Noll, John Cantilli, Mr & Mrs Vincent Klimas, Geoff & Dawn Buchan, The Timoneys, Alec & Hilary Malyon, Angelo Giangerelli, Allen Marshall, Rosemary Collins, Michael Stadelmeier, Sister Merris Larkin, Jay Pultz, Robert Lin, Janet Stadelmeier, Neil & Cathy Borman, Assumption School-Morristown, Michael Hiotis, Pat Giaimo, Diane & Dixon Peer, David & Anita Beechner, Mr & Mrs William O. Watts

INDIVIDUAL & CORPORATE DONATIONS

Annette G. Lasley: "In great gratitude for my friendship with a new volunteer of yours, Betsy Boles."

ExxonMobil Foundation in recognition of the volunteer hours donated by Jack Higgins and Leo Hollein.

IN MEMORY OF CARL R. WOODWARD JR. & ALICE F. WOODWARD

Harriet & Frank DeMatteis, Pat Giaimo, Charles & Barbara Whitmore, Donald F. Miceli, Peter G. Stewart, B. Theodore Bonzonelis & A. Helen Bonzonelis, Russell & Margaret Holland, Christopher & Wendi Barry, Barbara Hauser & Herbert Rosenberg, Mariel & Walter Bossert, Mildred Woodward Stackhouse, John & Mary Musto, Judy Schmidt, Sally & Tom Abbott, Cindy Glass, Hon. & Mrs. B. Theodore Bonzonelis, Christine N. Dougherty.

EAGLE SCOUT CANDIDATE LEAVES HIS MARK AT THE WILDLIFE OBSERVATION CENTER



During October, Eagle Scout candidate Eric Mazer completed a project to work on the trail to the Friends Blind by putting down wood chips. This project involved using wheelbarrows, and friends, to transport the chips from the service road where they were piled, along the boardwalk trail, and then onto the path leading to the Friends blind. This is a long distance and wood chips are heavy!

Eric is from Troop 53 in Randolph New Jersey. Pat Giaimo, Friends volunteer coordinator, took a walk on the trail recently and she remarked: "The new wood chips on the trail to the Friends Blind have smoothed out the many rough spots and make walking easier and the path more clearly identified."

Thank you Eric and friends.



Volunteers & Refuge Staff (back row, left to right): Colin Osborn, Amanda O'Connor, John O'Connor, Mike Snyder, Mary Jane Walsh, Blair Langston, Chuck Spock, Chuck Whitmore, John Wilmot, Steve Henry, Front row: Claudia Osborn, Kathy Woodward, Hanina Osborn, Laurel Gould

VOLUNTEERS CLEAN UP REFUGE ROADS

The weather forecast was dire with rain predicted all day. Undeterred, 13 hardy volunteers turned up for the annual Fall roadside cleanup at Great Swamp. The volunteers, armed with plastic bags, one for recyclables and one for everything else, were driven to various spots on the public roads and let loose on the litter that had accumulated along the roadsides and in ditches since the spring cleanup. Refuge staff drove along the roads picking up the full bags as the volunteers kept moving along. Cars and bicyclists stopped to thank the workers for their efforts. Once again, beer cans take the prize for the most abundant litter. The most interesting find was a completely intact round glass bowl, complete with gravel; Friends volunteer Lori Prosser is going to turn this into a terrarium for the visitor center. At the final count, the recyclables weighed in at 112 pounds and the non-recyclables were over 200 pounds. It's always rewarding to drive through the Refuge following a cleanup and, for a short time at least, enjoy the pristine roadsides.

2009-2010 FEDERAL DUCK STAMP ON SALE

You can help buy land for national wildlife refuges with every duck stamp that you purchase. This is a great way to help fund new refuge habitat for wildlife, waterfowl, and other migratory birds. Ninety-eight cents of every dollar generated by the sale of duck stamps specifically targets breeding habitat within the National Wildlife Refuge System. Last year funds were approved to add more than 3,500 acres to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

This year's winning artist is Joshua Spies from Watertown, South Dakota with a painting of a male long-tailed duck floating with a decoy. Some duck stamp trivia: 1967 was the last time this waterfowl species appeared on the Federal Duck Stamp, when Leslie Kouba won with a pair of old squaws. Since that time the species has been reclassified as long-tailed ducks—the first time in the history of the duck stamp that a waterfowl species has won under two names!

If you enjoy the refuge, do your part to help—stop by the Visitor Center or Refuge Headquarters and buy *your* Federal Duck Stamp. By the way, as an added bonus, the current year's Federal Duck Stamp serves as an entrance pass to any National Wildlife Refuge that charges a fee.



ANOTHER FRIENDS PROJECT—JUST FOR KIDS!

By Laurel Gould

The Friends have a new educational tool—a Great Swamp coloring book. The new book was illustrated by Friends member Deb Scala with assistance from other members of the Friends Discovery Den Committee: Dorothy Smullen, Judy Schmidt and Gail Rapaport. The idea came to Deb after a visit to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge where she purchased a coloring book in a local shop and brought it back with the thought that we could do something even better. The Friends' Board enthusiastically endorsed the idea. The next step was to assemble the Discovery Den Committee and come up with a master list of plants and animals that could represent each letter of the alphabet while trying to make sure that the habitat scene being planned was realistic. Deb then drew the scene illustrating the various plants and animals and creating a descriptive sentence for each letter. Deb remembers that the letter "X" was the hardest and that mycologist Dorothy Smullen was a great help in coming up with the ideas.

The entire process, with many critiquing sessions and numerous revisions, took nearly two years, but Deb is very pleased with the final book. She elaborates: "It came out really great and it's more than just a coloring book; it's a great educational tool, not just for the early elementary ages but also for higher grade levels where students can research and determine accurate colors for the flora and fauna and then write a report about the page." The project has been very rewarding for Deb and she says, "I can't believe how much I learned doing this project, learning to look at things more critically and gaining a much better understanding of habitat and wildlife." She would like to see the Friends obtain a grant so that the coloring book could be given free to teachers to use in the classroom, or priced at a discounted rate so each child who comes for a group tour at the Refuge could take a copy home. *Discovering Great Swamp: A to Z Coloring Book* is available at the Friends Nature Shop for \$4.30, which includes sales tax.

DISCOVERING GREAT SWAMP



Coloring Book

Illustrations by Deborah Morse Scala

FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Here are some of the descriptions for selected letters—it's easy to envision the scene.

A

Ants climb on the aster as the American Woodcock probes for a worm in the soft mud among the cluster of arrowheads rising out of the water.

G

The American Goldfinch is New Jersey's state bird. Two goldfinches watch from the goldenrod as the Great Blue Heron grapples with a Garter Snake.

K

The katydids hide from the Eastern Kingbird and American Kestrel in one of the managed fields of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

V

The Vole hides as a volunteer of the Friends of Great Swamp NWR cleans around the vernal pools to view the Marsh Blue Violet.

X

See the "x" marking on the back of the Spring Peeper as it hops past the Xylaria fungus. The Xeromphalina mushrooms on a decomposing log are part of nature's recyclers.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS—DECEMBER 2009 TO MARCH 2010

DECEMBER 2009

Saturday, December 12, 10:00 am—4:00 pm
HOLIDAY SHOPPING—DOUBLE DISCOUNT DAY AT THE FRIENDS NATURE SHOP

Can you imagine a better place to do your holiday shopping? 10% off all purchases—20% for members. No lines, free parking, refreshments all day. Best of all, proceeds are used to fund Refuge projects. At the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center.

Saturday, December 12, 5:00—8:00 pm
ANNUAL FRIENDS MEMBER MEETING & POT LUCK DINNER
 Members Only. Business meeting, election of directors, the year in review (briefly). Bring your favorite dish or dessert to share. The Nature Shop will be open for late shopping—and double discounts still apply! At the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center.

Sunday, December 13, 1:30—3:30 pm
SECOND SUNDAY... WITH FRIENDS—WILDLIFE ORNAMENTS
 Especially for kids. We'll make a variety of holiday ornaments to decorate your tree, wreath, or just hang outside for the birds. Adults are welcome to assist with the crafts. Refreshments. Double discounts apply all day in the Friends Nature Shop. We'll also lead a guided walk along the new trail. Come join us for an afternoon of fun. Refreshments. At the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center.

JANUARY 2010

Sunday, January 10, 1:30—3:30 pm
SECOND SUNDAY... WITH FRIENDS—HELPING CAVITY NESTERS
 Join us as volunteer Leo Hollein relates the success stories of the Eastern bluebird and wood duck here at Great Swamp. Learn why dead trees are beneficial and how you can set up your own bluebird trail. A lucky visitor will win a bluebird nest box! Program includes a guided walk and a look at a variety of nest boxes used at Great Swamp. Dress warmly. Meet at the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center.

Saturday, January 23, 1:30—3:30 pm
MEMBERS ONLY—EVENT PLANNING MEETING
 We need your ideas, suggestions, expertise. Come for an afternoon of brainstorming to develop event ideas for the Spring–Summer 2010 program. What would you like to see? What do you want to learn more about? Light refreshments. At the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center.

FEBRUARY 2010

February 12–14, 10:00 am—4:00 pm
GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT (GBBC)
 Join us at the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center and help count birds seen (and heard) on the Refuge during the 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Learn how to track and report your own backyard bird count. Birders at every level are welcome.

Sunday, February 14, 1:30—3:30 pm
SECOND SUNDAY...WITH FRIENDS—I LOVE NATURE IN WINTER!
 Winter is a wonderful time at Great Swamp. Program is yet to be determined but it will be interesting and will include a guided walk. And we guarantee a luscious chocolate treat to celebrate Valentine's Day. At the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center.

Saturday, February 27, All day workshop
MEMBERS ONLY—ADVANCED VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP
 This day-long workshop is still in the planning stages and will be rescheduled for spring.

MARCH 2010

Sunday, March 14, 1:30—3:30 pm
SECOND SUNDAY...WITH FRIENDS—GARDEN PARTY
 Yes, it's early—but not too soon to think about plants and planting! The Friends GardenKeepers Committee is hosting a garden party for those interested in learning about native plant gardening. Perhaps you'd like to volunteer to help with the gardens or the greenhouse. Here's your chance to get involved—or just learn more about native plant gardening. At the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center.

Saturday, March 23, 10:00—Noon
REFUGE WORK DAY AT THE WILDLIFE OBSERVATION CENTER
 Come help us get spruced up for spring migration season. Rain date March 24, same time. At the Wildlife Observation Center.

Thursday, March 26, 6:00 pm—dusk
WOODCOCK WALK
 Join the Greater Watchung Nature Club and the Friends as we watch the elaborate mating displays of the American woodcock. Indoor program on woodcock will be followed by a guided walk to see their spectacular flight. Meet at the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center. Rain date, April 1.



Saturday, March 27, 1:00—3:30 pm
VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION
 For new and experienced volunteers—or those just interested in learning about volunteer opportunities available at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Light refreshments. Come and join us. At the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center.

Sunday, March 28—Sunday, June 13
SPRING MIGRATION STAFFING SEASON
 During the busy spring migration season, volunteers staff the Wildlife Observation Center to provide visitor information. It's a great time to visit the Refuge and an easy way to become a volunteer. Come help us out.

Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center 32 Pleasant Plains Road, Hours: Thursday & Friday, Noon—4:00; Saturday & Sunday, 10:00—4:00

FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Friends of Great Swamp is an independent, non-profit organization organized in 1999. Our operations and activities are managed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors. As our mission statement indicates, our focus is Refuge-centric — we support the goals, projects, and mission of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

To become a member of the Friends of Great Swamp, fill out the information on this form, and mail with your check to:

Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
241 Pleasant Plains Road, Basking Ridge, New Jersey 07920
Ask about our school or group memberships.

Annual Membership

Membership Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual—\$15
Gift	<input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual—\$15
Renewal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Donation—Thank You! \$ _____

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State, Zip Code _____
 Phone Number _____
 E-Mail Address _____
 Gift Membership From: _____

(If this is a gift, please include your full name on the line above so we may notify the recipient)

We need more friends . . .



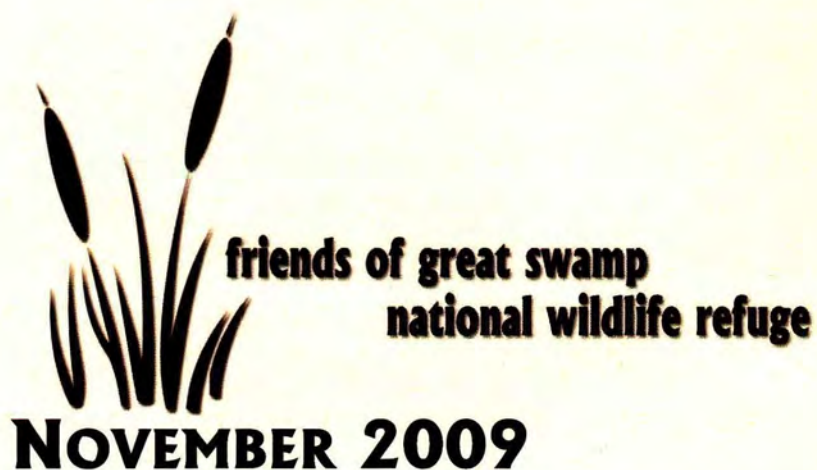
**Members are important!
Give a gift of membership
to a friend.**

Memberships help support the mission and projects at Great Swamp.

Members also receive the following benefits:

- Swamp Scene Newsletter
- 10% discount in Friends Nature Shop
- Notification of coming events
- Feeling of accomplishment in supporting the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

Gift Memberships will include a coupon redeemable at the Friends Nature Shop for a free Great Swamp pin or Great Swamp patch.



Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
Is an independent, volunteer, non profit organization
dedicated to

Promoting stewardship of the natural
resources of the Refuge,
Inspiring an appreciation of nature through education and outreach,
Engaging in partnership activities that support and enhance the
Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System.