

## FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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### Friends of Great Swamp Newsletter—Contributors

Marcia Rymer

Paul Steblein

Jack Higgins

Kathy Woodward

Lisa Molinari

Laurel Gould

Judy Schmidt

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## SUNSET WALKS AND GUIDED TOURS — A HIT

Since our last newsletter we've been busy—and it shows. The Friends have hosted six sunset walks during National Wildlife Refuge Week in October.

### National Wildlife Refuge Week Walks

The Friends group led sunset walks into the management area each evening during National Wildlife Refuge Week.

The weather was excellent, the sunsets were spectacular, and the more than 60 visitors were impressed with the area and the birds, especially the many ducks coming in to settle for the night. The Friday evening group recorded twelve species of birds, including a screech owl calling at dusk.

Year-round weekday guided tours for groups have been started as part of our educational outreach program. To date, four groups have taken an informed stroll down the boardwalk—and more are in the works.



If you are interested in helping us conduct these programs, call Judy at 908-647-2508.

These outreach opportunities are fun and rewarding to visitors and volunteers alike.



## HAPPENINGS ON THE REFUGE —

### AN UPDATE FROM PAUL STEBLEIN, DEPUTY REFUGE MANAGER

Why are they doing that on the Refuge? Why aren't they doing that? What are the plans for the next year? Who are the staff, or the Fish and Wildlife Service? These are some questions I would like to touch upon as a regular feature of the Friends Newsletter.

I serve as the Deputy Refuge Manager for Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, arriving several months ago from Forsythe and Cape May NWRs in southern New Jersey. My job is to supervise the daily operations of the refuge, and to work with Bill Koch, Refuge Manager, and other staff to develop short and long-term plans for our program. Well, let's get on with the refuge happenings.

**Repaving of the Access Road to Great Swamp NWR Headquarters** - work is scheduled from late October through the end of November, 2000. Funding and a contractor were finally lined up to rehabilitate the access road from the Headquarters circle to Pleasant Plains Road. The current road is breaking up in places and the ditches are only marginally functional in draining the roadway. Asbestos was also used in stretches as a base beneath the road. Consequently, the paving will improve the road surface and safely encapsulate the asbestos. Refuge staff will complete the ditching on the sides of the road prior to the paving. We expect there will be few times that the road will closed to the Headquarters facilities.

**Facelift for the Refuge Headquarters** - it began in early summer with staining the exterior woodwork of the headquarter buildings, and will culminate with new carpeting, painting, and some reorganization of the interior office space. We have already started cleaning, patching, removing carpet, and painting some of the offices and the public reception area. The effort is being conducted in a way to minimize disruption to staff work and public services, i.e., small areas at a time and during off hours. If you have good painting skills and want to join our highly motivated staff on a weekend (may actually include pizza), contact me by phone or email with available times. We anticipate completing the renovations by the end of January.

**Remediation of the former Harding Landfill** - just about completed, it is located about 3/4 mile from the Friends office and WOC - Wildlife Observation Center. The former Harding Landfill was a municipal dump site that was a source of heavy metal contamination. Several large sludge pits that were identified in the vicinity of the landfill were also found to be sources of high concentrations of metals. The sludge pits primarily received septic tank pumpage, however, high levels of metals found in the residual sludge suggest that other wastes were placed there. Heavy metals were leaching from the landfill and sludge pits into the wetlands surrounding the site. The remediation included removing contaminated sediments, stabilizing the contamination, covering the existing landfill with stabilized material, placing a liner over the waste mass, covering the landfill with two feet of native swamp clays, and hydroseeding the landfill surface. The former sludge pits and adjacent borrow pits are currently being restored to functioning forested and emergent wetlands. Watershed Biologist Mike Horne coordinated the effort for our office.

That is all for now at the Refuge. Stop in, introduce yourself, and by all means, enjoy your visit to Great Swamp!

Here's how you can reach Paul  
 Paul F. Steblein, Refuge Manager, Deputy  
 Great Swamp NWR  
 152 Pleasant Plains Road  
 Basking Ridge, NJ 07920  
 P: 973-425-1222, x16  
 F: 973-425-7309  
 E: paul\_steblein@fws.gov

## WANTED—WORK CREW

**Wanted:** Painters and other laborers needed for several hours in Refuge Headquarters.  
**Dates:** January 6 and 20, 2001.  
**Contact:** Refuge Headquarters, (973) 425-1222, for details.

This event is a Friends gathering...we'll have refreshments, entertainment (of sorts), and lots of fun!





## DE COU RESIGNS

During the summer of 1999, a group of people, many of whom had never met, gathered to explore the idea of forming a Friends of Great Swamp group. In August, the group decided to move forward. One of the first items of business was to elect officers. One person stood out as the person to lead us during those beginning months, Wes De Cou. He knew and loved the Swamp and he had the skills to get a new group started. During our start, Wes wrote letters and grant applications, called many people, attended numerous meetings, helped out at clean-up days and even cooked hotdogs.

At the Board meeting on October 17, 2000, Wes submitted his resignation. He and his wife are moving out of state in the near future. The Friends group expresses our deepest gratitude to Wes for his wisdom and leadership during our early months. We wish Wes and Kathy well and will look forward to their frequent (we hope) visits.

## FLOWERS OF THE SWAMP

The swamp flowers of the summer now reveal a world of ghostly beauty. The berry-studded spheres of wild Sarsaparilla offer nourishment to thrushes, vireos, warblers, and other migratory birds preparing to fly south.

The delicate doilies of Queen Anne's Lace (sometimes called Wild Carrot) now form a tight cup before casting their bristly seeds to the wind.

Milkweed's pink and white flowers now have socket-shaped seedpods that explode releasing clouds of silken parachutes, carrying the flattened seeds aloft. Milkweed leaves are the sole food source of the monarch butterflies.

Goldenrod's feathery plumes of yellow have given way to ruby red and silvery seed heads. Don't blame the glorious goldenrod for your fall allergies! The real culprit is ragweed, which produce light, airborne pollen that causes hay fever.

The fields of pink to purple Teasel disintegrates slowly, leaving behind their spiky skeletons which look like stationary mice, waving in the wind.

The next time you take a trip through Great Swamp, keep your eyes open for these interesting flowers.

## \$1 MILLION FOR GREAT SWAMP LAND ACQUISITION

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge will receive 1 million dollars this fiscal year to purchase additional land. U. S. Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (R - Harding) reported that this money has been earmarked from the Federal Land Water Conservation Fund.

Congress had appropriated \$450 million for Federal land acquisition in this budget for the Department of the Interior, but specific projects had not been previously designated. The Refuge currently encompasses over 7,500 acres and these funds will allow for further expansion as adjacent properties become available for purchase.





## FRIENDS BOOKSTORE AND GIFT SHOP - NOW OPEN!

The Friends Bookstore and Gift Shop officially opened for business on September 9<sup>th</sup> thanks to a start-up grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – and some hard work from our members who helped set up shelves and stock the bookstore. Staffed by Friends members, the store has been open every Saturday. Working together with the Refuge Headquarters, which is open on Sundays during Fall migration, we have provided full weekend coverage for Refuge visitors.

More than 100 visitors have stopped by – for Refuge information and maps, to find out who we are, for suggestions on where to walk or bike, to report or inquire about bird and animal sightings... and to buy books and gifts!

The Bookstore stocks field guides and nature books for children and adults, maps and calendars, and the Blue Goose Passport. The Gift Shop features local artists – we have fabulous bird note cards and framed prints, delicate hand carved bird feather pins and earrings, hand painted pottery (mugs, jars, teapots, pitchers) – and of course Judy's famous leaves! We also carry Friends of Great Swamp T-shirts and we've just received a shipment of "T.R." (Teddy) Bears in time for Holiday Shopping!

Profits from the bookstore will fund projects for the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

The Bookstore will remain open on Saturdays until December 16<sup>th</sup> (with the exception of the December 2<sup>nd</sup> deer hunt). Stop by between the hours of 11:00–4:00. We can use additional volunteers to staff the office – even for a couple of hours any Saturday. If you are interested, call Laurel Gould at 908-236-7166. And check out our web site for a closer look – [www.friendsofgreatswamp.org](http://www.friendsofgreatswamp.org).

## FRIENDS BOOKSTORE AND GIFT SHOP

*Visit the Great Swamp for – Nature Hikes – Birding – Walking the Boardwalk – and your holiday shopping !*

### Holiday Gift Ideas

- Field guides and natural history books – for kids and adults (including the new Kaufman field guide and Sibley Guide to Birds)
- Calendars
- T.R. (Teddy) Bear
- Hand-painted pottery (and Judy's famous leaves)
- Bird note cards and framed prints
- Carved "feather" pins
- Endangered Species chocolates and "bug bites" (gourmet chocolates)
- Friends of Great Swamp T-Shirts

...and for the person who has everything –

- Friends of Great Swamp Membership!

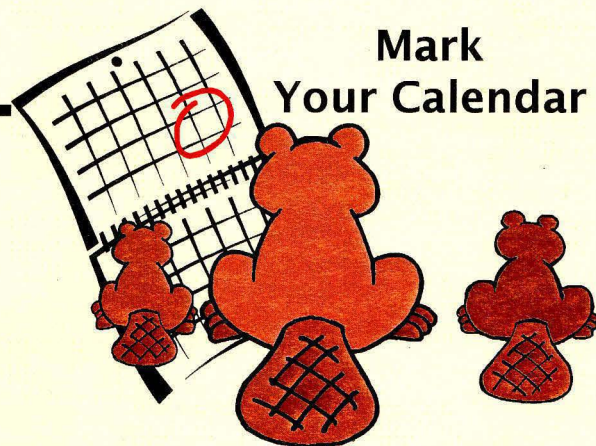


### Bookstore Hours Saturdays 11 – 4

November 11  
November 18  
November 25 (Turkey Walk)  
December 3 (Sunday – Refuge closed to visitors December 2)  
December 9  
December 16



## DATES TO REMEMBER



- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| November 11      | Friends Bookstore and Gift Shop Open — 11:00-4:00.  |
| November 14      | Board Meeting, 7:15 p.m. Friends Office, 148 Pleasant Plains Road.  |
| November 18      | Friends Bookstore and Gift Shop Open — 11:00-4:00.  |
| November 25      | Turkey Walk and Photo Contest Winners, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Friends Office, 148 Pleasant Plains Road.  |
| December 3       | Friends Bookstore and Gift Shop Open — 11:00-4:00. (Sunday)   |
| December 9       | Friends Bookstore and Gift Shop Open — 11:00-4:00.  |
| December 16      | Christmas Bird Census, sponsored by Summit Nature Club, contact Pete Axelrod, (908) 464-3933.<br>Friends Office will be open to serve coffee, hot chocolate to “birders”.<br>Friends Bookstore and Gift Shop Open — 11:00-4:00. |
| December         | Due to Holidays, there will be no December Board Meeting.   |
| January 6, 2001  | Friends Work Crew at Headquarters, 152 Pleasant Plains Road.  |
| January 20, 2001 | Friends Work Crew at Headquarters, 152 Pleasant Plains Road.  |
| January 23, 2001 | Board Meeting, 7:15 p.m., Friends Office, 148 Pleasant Plains Road.   |

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](http://WWW.FRIENDSOFGREATSWAMP.ORG)



## BIRDING AT GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The Birding checklist for the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge lists 222 species of birds that have been identified on the Refuge since 1960. The checklist is available at the Refuge Headquarters or at the Friends of Great Swamp office and Bookstore (open Saturdays). We have been maintaining a log of bird sightings at the Friends office. Here are some of the significant recordings for September and October...



Great blue heron  
Green-backed Heron  
Snow Geese — *large flock flying high overhead on 10/22!*  
Canada Geese  
Wood Duck  
American Black Duck  
Mallard  
Osprey  
Bald Eagle — *Immature*  
Northern Harrier — *hunts over the field outside the Friends office daily!*  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Cooper's Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
American Kestrel — *enjoying lunch in back of the Friends office*  
Merlin  
Ring-necked Pheasant  
Wild Turkey  
Eastern Screech-Owl — *heard on Sunset Walk*  
Belted Kingfisher

Red-headed Woodpecker — *yes he's back – end of the auto tour road*  
Downy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Eastern Phoebe  
Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Eastern Bluebird  
Cedar Waxwing  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Magnolia Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Black-and-white Warbler  
American Redstart  
Savannah Sparrow — *on Sunset Walk*  
White-crowned Sparrow — *immature and adult – outside the Friends office*  
Song Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Eastern Meadowlark

We are planning some bird walks in the coming months. If you are interested in joining us – whether you are a novice or an expert – visit our website for details and dates. We'll be adding the birding checklist to the web site in the near future – at [www.friendsofgreatswamp.org](http://www.friendsofgreatswamp.org). Stop by the Friends office on any Saturday to let us know what you've seen!

### Week-end Office Hours

The Friends office, 148 Pleasant Plains Road, will be open from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on

- Saturdays through the end of November
- The first Sunday in December (December 3)
- Saturdays, December 9 and 16.

Our volunteers welcome visitors and share information about the Swamp. The book and gift store is also stocked with many nature-related items, including feather pins, hand-made pottery, the brand new T.R. Bear, Friends of Great Swamp t-shirts and the latest field guides.

If you haven't been to our office, stop by and say "hello".

### Deer Hunt

The annual deer hunt in Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge will be conducted November 29-30 and December 1-2. During the hunt, the Refuge is open only to persons with permits.

The Friends office will be open on Sunday, December 3, from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Come visit the gift area for holiday shopping.

### Opportunities

Friends members needed to serve on sub-committees for educational outreach, newsletter and special event planning.



# 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  
148 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



QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER

Open  
now!!

*Friends of*  
**Great Swamp**  
National Wildlife Refuge