



the Swamp Scene

friends of great swamp national wildlife refuge

ISSUE FORTY TWO

JULY 2013

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FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP DONATE \$42,700 FOR HABITAT & WILDLIFE

For Fiscal Year 2013, the Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge Board has authorized a record \$42,700 for projects which directly support wildlife and habitat improvements at the Refuge.

Summer Intern: For the 10th year in a row, the Friends are funding a summer biological intern. This year's intern is Alyssa Frediani who will be helping with the "head-start" turtle research project as well as a number of other biology-related responsibilities.

Habitat Restoration: After many years of attacking invasive species plants on the Refuge, the Friends are funding a Habitat Restoration Project which includes two habitat management interns, Becca Hiller and Christina Straway, as well as the purchase of native plants and tools. These interns will monitor the plantings that were done this past spring, and develop a detailed plan and native plant list for a future habitat restoration work day.

Impoundment Study: The Friends are also funding a two-year study of the impoundments at the refuge. Under the direction of Wildlife Biologist Dorothy Fecske, two Frostburg State University graduate students, Casey Wagnon and Megan Spindler, will be conducting research. They will look at breeding success for mallards and wood ducks and also study small carnivores and their predation of waterfowl. The scientific data will be used to determine the future restoration and management of these water impoundment areas.

Head-Start: The Friends are delighted to be continuing support for the innovative "head-start" turtle research, being conducted by Dr. Kurt Buhlmann. This is the third year of supporting this research and the results are inspiring! Wood turtle (a state-threatened species) hatchlings, which were captive raised this past winter in Massachusetts, were released last month. This is the second year that head-start hatchlings have been released. The team was so thrilled to find siblings, both hatched in August 2012, that could be compared side-by-side. According to Dr. Buhlmann, "the larger turtle on the left went to Massachusetts and was fed in the greenhouse for nine months. The smaller one on the right was directly released in the habitat when it hatched in late August 2012. It did not have much opportunity to grow and simply hibernated to survive the winter. It is



growing now, but is still a soft pliable snack for predators, while the headstarted turtle has a hard shell." This is ground-breaking research which promises a bright future for threatened and endangered species in New Jersey and elsewhere.

Refuges have a "wildlife first" mission and the Friends are delighted to support these projects. Thank you to all of you for your membership donations, and for all your individual, corporate, and foundation donations—and for shopping in the Friends Nature Shop!

We couldn't do this without you! Thank you!

CALL TO ACTION—SEQUESTRATION IS IMPACTING YOUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

There has been surprisingly little news coverage about the effects of sequestration on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. However, the cuts are real and are being felt throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System and at Great Swamp NWR. Friends President Susan Garretson Friedman addressed sequestration at the recent Volunteer Recognition Event with a call to action for our volunteers and members. Wildlife have no voice—we need to speak for their future. Write, call, or visit your Washington representatives and make your voice heard for the future of wildlife and refuges. More information, talking points, and contact information may be found on the Friends website.

REMARKS BY SUSAN GARRETSON FRIEDMAN, FRIENDS PRESIDENT, VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EVENT, JUNE 8, 2013

Although no one actually thought it would happen, the budget sequestration is now a fact of life for us all, and is affecting many areas of the government and our lives. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has to deduct 5% from every department's budget indiscriminately — just this year, with another 5% in the next fiscal year. While you may not have realized it, it is having a very negative effect on the Refuge, and making it much harder for the staff to do their jobs and for the Friends and volunteers to help them.

Although we are one of the lucky refuges that has not been closed, the sequestration has had a major impact on us. New projects have been put on hold, even if sponsored and funded by the Friends and using volunteer resources. Staff time is still required for oversight of these projects and there are competing priorities for their time. This affects a new trail from the Visitor Center which we were planning to create to signifi-

cantly enhance the visitor experience; the completion of an accessible portion of the Bockoven trail to the vernal pool, along with accompanying interpretive signage; and a significant renovation of the Friends Blind at the Wildlife Observation Center, to list a few. All of these were planned with Friends (your and our) money, and volunteer labor, and will have to be put on indefinite hold. Naturally this is very disappointing for all concerned.

Due to the sequestration limitations, we are focusing on those activities and projects that are still considered strategic for the Fish & Wildlife Service, such as habitat conservation. The Friends are funding a new habitat restoration initiative, which includes two summer habitat interns, the purchase of native plant stock, and tools and equipment. Last month 20 volunteers from Brother Corporation planted over 100 trees and shrubs as part of this project. The habitat interns will be developing plans for

additional restoration work to take place later this year or next spring. We're also continuing enhancing and expanding the native plant gardens. In addition, the Friends have funded a biological intern and the Mushett Family Foundation is again sponsoring a general intern — these intern positions would not have been filled if not for our, and the foundation's, funding. The groundbreaking "head-start" turtle research will also continue this year, thanks to funding from the Friends.

The Friends have been challenged to brainstorm ways to continue to help the refuge through funding and volunteer resources in this sequestration environment. One way is to get all of our members, and anyone else who is concerned, to contact their members of Congress and tell them how the effect on the refuge and the refuge system is affecting you and that you care about it. Wildlife cannot advocate for itself — that is our job! Thank you.

"HEARTY" THANK YOU TO THE STIRLING HOTEL! *By Kathy Woodward*

Friends and supporters come in a wonderful variety. On the third Wednesday of each month, The Stirling Hotel (Stirling, New Jersey) chooses a local, non-profit organization to receive a portion of their proceeds from Community Night. On Wednesday night, April 17, 2013, The Stirling Hotel designated Friends of Great Swamp NWR as the beneficiary. Refuge staff and many Friends enjoyed a meal together and talked about Great Swamp. When thanked for the generous donation to Friends, the manager of The Stirling Hotel commended the Friends for boosting the number of diners and noted there were "lots of familiar faces"! We thank The Stirling Hotel for their contribution to our cause.

Wow! \$2.2 MILLION—AMOUNT RAISED BY SALES OF SEMIPOSTAL STAMP AS OF MARCH 31, 2013!



Back in January 2012, we announced our support of this new semipostal tiger stamp. We use it on all correspondence including our membership renewal letters. The cost is 11 cents more than the regular first-class rate, but the additional 11 cents directly benefits the Multi-national Species Conservation Funds administered by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These funds are dedicated to saving endangered animals in the wild today—tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, great apes, marine turtles.

This stamp is a wonderful way for all Americans to voluntarily show their support for wildlife conservation. Join the Friends and support wildlife conservation by using this stamp on your letters.

REFUGE UPDATE *by Steve Henry, Deputy Refuge Manager*

ADMINISTRATION/PERSONNEL

► Field season is in full swing and, through the generosity of the Friends and Mushett Family Foundation, the refuge is hosting seven interns this summer. Interns were competitively selected from around the country and include recent graduates and grad students. For 12 weeks, they will be assisting staff with a wide range of projects from wildlife research and habitat restoration to maintenance and visitor services. Welcome aboard!

► Thanks to generous support from the Friends, Dr. Kurt Buhlmann will be back to assist with turtle research again in 2013.

► Jenny Bohrman completed her bat research and outreach contract at the end of May. She did an excellent job running last summer's bat crew and stayed on to analyze data and present results. Jenny made presentations of the refuge's bat research at professional conferences and gave numerous programs to schools and the public. She also filmed a public service announcement on White-nose Syndrome for a local cable channel. Good luck Jenny, you will be missed!

► Brett Gore, a firefighter stationed at Wallkill River NWR, has been coming to the refuge this spring on two-week details to assist with maintenance work. With one maintenance vacancy frozen due to sequestration-related reductions, Brett's assistance is needed to keep up with the tremendous demand for maintenance support.

► Refuge Engineering Equipment Operator Dave Miller was recently recognized for his leadership on the regional Wage Grade Council which organized a very successful workshop at Blackwater NWR for all maintenance staff in the region.

► The refuge's website has been updated using the FWS new standard template. The new design is more user-friendly and ensures consistency across all National Wildlife Refuges.

► In late-May, Regional Refuge Chief Scott Kahan and Deputy Chief Sharon Marino (former Great Swamp Deputy) made a brief visit to meet staff and volunteers and tour the refuge. They were

very impressed by our many projects and events and appreciated our efforts in welcoming them.

PLANNING

► The Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) is still undergoing mandatory solicitor (DOI attorney) review. Recent vacancies have slowed the review process. As always, anyone interested in staying informed should contact refuge headquarters and ask to be added to the mailing list. Current information can also be found from the CCP link on the refuge's website.

BUDGET

► The sequestration that took effect in early March has resulted in a 6.8% budget reduction for Fiscal Year 2013. Projections are for an additional 5-10% reduction in FY14. So far furloughs have been avoided although about a dozen vacancies in the northeast region, including one at Great Swamp, have been frozen to make up for the budget shortfall. If budgets are cut again next year, additional positions will likely be frozen.

INFRASTRUCTURE

► The refuge has received \$1.3M in supplemental emergency appropriations to repair damage caused by Hurricane Sandy and build resilience against future storms. Damaged roofs, siding, gutters, trim, etc. will be repaired on buildings and quarters. Emergency power systems will be upgraded and solar panels will be installed at headquarters and the pole barn behind the visitor center. We are also exploring the possibility of running a gas line to the visitor center to replace the current heating oil tanks that could not be filled in the days following Sandy. Projects should be finalized and work begun soon.

► In late-April, after much planning and delay, the tenant house and barn, just north of the visitor center, were demolished. Over a ton of scrap metal was salvaged for recycling. The site was reseeded with native vegetation thanks to volunteer help.

► The refuge continues to work with Federal Highways on plans to resurface Pleasant Plains Road from Great Brook

Bridge to the cul-de-sac and ease the curve at Marsden's Corner. We're also working with regional engineers and contractors to develop a plan for rehabilitating or replacing the bridge to ensure it meets expectations for future traffic needs and uses (busses, heavy and emergency equipment, etc.).

► Staff and volunteers have been busy renovating the restrooms at the Wildlife Observation Center. Sinks, faucets, and counters were rehabbed or replaced, toilet flush mechanisms were also replaced, rotted exterior wing walls were rebuilt, and an Eagle Scout painted the exterior of the building. In the months to come, light fixtures and mirrors will be replaced, deodorizers installed, and the interior repainted.

► NJDOT recently installed refuge signs at exit 40 on I-78. In anticipation, staff previously put up signs to guide traffic from the highway to the refuge. We're excited about the possibility of attracting additional visitors from this busy interstate.

► All trails in the Wilderness Area have been cleared of storm blowdown though a few sections still need attention. In the meantime, blocked sections have been temporarily rerouted.

PUBLIC USE

► In April, the refuge hosted a tour for Congressman Frelinghuysen's Youth Advisory Council (YAC). This is the fourth consecutive year the YAC has visited Great Swamp.

► The refuge also hosted a special wildlife training event for NJ DEP personnel.

► The annual World Series of Birding event was held on May 11. Twelve teams registered to participate on the refuge this year.

► Several other special events were held in the past few months including: Raptor Day, International Migratory Bird Day, and Endangered Species Day when the second batch of headstarted wood turtles was returned to the refuge after being captive reared over the winter.

► Visitor Services staff continue to expand our urban outreach efforts, recently hosting school groups from Newark and Morristown. *(continued on page 10)*

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS—A HARBINGER OF SPRING

Photos and Story by Leo Hollein



The red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) is a candidate for the most populous land bird in North America. Its range includes all of the United States and Canada, except for the northern-most locations.

The red-winged blackbird is a very common breeding bird in the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and is abundant during the breeding season from March through July. Its population in August starts to decline.

Red-winged blackbirds, along with cowbirds and grackles, are often caught in the mourning dove traps in July as they seek an easy meal of millet bait. The trapped blackbirds are released in another part of the refuge, miles from the trap, in the hope they will not return. By August, few if any blackbirds are trapped as most have departed the swamp.

Red-winged blackbirds are uncommon during the winter months especially if it is a severe winter. After the breeding season, they join large flocks of blackbirds that include grackles and cowbirds. These flocks are seen in farm lands and suburbs.

In early March, red-winged blackbird males begin establishing breeding territory by displaying their namesake red wing patch while singing vigorously—a distinctive “conk-la-ree”, a classic sound

of wetlands. A displaying male spreads its tail, drops its wings and fluffs its wing color patches. It can also cover or hide its wing patches. The male also has a yellowish patch below and adjacent to the red patch. The displaying male red-winged blackbird is considered a harbinger of spring.

Red-winged blackbirds nest primarily in wetlands. Their nests are usually in small bushes in or near water. Locating them requires searching in thickly vegetated, muddy, and watery environs. The siltation and accompanying vegetative growth over the last several decades in the various pools in the refuge has increased their breeding sites. Red-winged blackbirds have also been observed nesting in brushy fields in the swamp but at much lower densities than in the wetlands.

The red-winged blackbird constructs a tightly woven nest usually of straw. The photo at right shows a red-winged nest containing a typical clutch of four eggs. The eggs are pale blue and marked with brown spots and splotches.

The much less conspicuous looking female red-winged blackbird has a brown back, streaked breast and dark eye stripe, looking more like a large, dark sparrow. She does all the brooding of eggs and young hatchlings while the male guards his territory

from a visible perch. He calls frequently as do males from adjacent territories.

Both adults feed their young, shown below. Most song bird hatchlings have pink skin. Red-winged blackbird young have a distinctive orange tinge. Red-winged blackbirds can raise two or three clutches per season.

Regarded as an agricultural pest, permission may be obtained to control their numbers if they are harming crops. But here in the swamp, their early arrival and tumbling song are happy indications of the return of spring.



KITS AND KIDS... SPRING AT THE WILDLIFE OBSERVATION CENTER

By Judy Schmidt, Fox Kit Photos by Barbara Frankenfield, Junior Refuge Manager photo (not posed!) by Ernie Mazzarisi



On March 30, volunteers began Spring Migration Staffing at the Wildlife Observation Center—and what a sprint it has been! Again this year, there was a fox den under the welcome shed, and the fox kits kept everyone entertained as they played and posed for pictures.

Spring is a great time for aspiring Junior Refuge Managers to get started on their Activity Book and earn their badge. Volunteers are on hand to assist and answer questions.

The Junior Refuge Manager touch table got the attention of all ages as they examined everything and asked questions.



The snapping turtle skull got the most wrong guesses. (Is it a raccoon? Fox? Bat?) The vole and the warbler nest got touched the most. The cicadas have been a big hit as everyone has a story to tell about them.

The enthusiasm of the adults as they asked questions has inspired 151 children to start the Junior Refuge Manager program to learn more about nature. This spring we also had three teen volunteers staffing the touch table, selling books and working on the boardwalk to help identify wildlife. They have done a great job of interacting with children, getting them on the path to becoming Junior Refuge Managers.

Fall Migration Staffing at the Wildlife Observation Center begins August 24. We can always use more volunteers! It's fun, easy, you learn a lot and meet the nicest people. Send an e-mail (volunteers@friendsofgreatswamp.org) or stop by the Visitor Center and let us know if you are interested.

CELEBRATING 14,284.5 HOURS DONATED TO GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE FOR FY2012

The twenty-seventh annual Volunteer and Friends Recognition Event was held on Saturday, June 8, 2103 to recognize and celebrate the exceptional contribution of volunteers and Friends to Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. This year the event was again held in the Richard J. Guadagno Pavilion at the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center. Some 100 volunteers, staff, and guests enjoyed a buffet dinner and an awards ceremony recognizing and thanking all volunteers. *Photos by Larry West*



Above: 500 Hours (L to R) Nick Scobel, Candy Paska, Pat Garvin, Steve Gruber, Ruth Morgan

Below—1,500 Hours (L to R) Karen English, Jack Higgins, Nancy Schenck



Above: 250 Hours (L to R) Pat Garvin, Elaine Taub, Elaine Seckler, Marge Remeika, Mary Jane Walsh

Below—(L to R) Leo Hollein, Laurel Gould, Laura Nally, Susan Garretson Friedman, Lou Pisane, Kathy Woodward



NOTABLE VOLUNTEER MILESTONES AS OF MARCH 31, 2013

100 HOUR CLUB

Janis Cole, Lee Delitzscher, Pat Garvin, Miles Luo, Gail Petrillo, Elaine Seckler, Mary Sanko

250 HOUR PIN

Betsy Boles, Jackie Dearborn, Pat Garvin, Abby Gelb, Jack Masson, Marge Remeika, Joe Scala, Evie Schmuck, Elaine Seckler, Elaine Taub, Mary Jane Walsh, Sarah Webster

500 HOUR PIN, PLAQUE & 500 HOUR HONOR BOARD

Rich Dufort, Pat Garvin, Steve Gruber, Ruth Morgan, Candace Paska, Evie Schmuck, Nick Scobel, Ruth Zippler

1,000 PIN & BLUE GOOSE HONOR BOARD

Jim Detizio, Andrew Ferreira, David Mracek

1,500 HOUR PIN: Karen English, Jack Higgins, Nancy Schenck

2,000 HOUR PIN & BLUE GOOSE HONOR BOARD:

Susan Garretson Friedman

2,500 HOUR PIN: Laura Nally

3,000 HOUR PIN & BLUE GOOSE HONOR BOARD:

Lou Pisane, Laura Nally

3,500 HOUR PIN: Leo Hollein

4,000 HOUR PIN & BLUE GOOSE HONOR BOARD: Kathy Woodward

6,000 HOUR PIN & BLUE GOOSE HONOR BOARD: Laurel Gould

REFUGE VOLUNTEERS DONATE 14, 284.5 HOUR FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

Listed below are the active volunteers with the total number of hours contributed since becoming a volunteer (through March 31, 2013)

Garry Annibal (21)	Charlie Friedman (43.5)
Jose Antonio (42)	Susan Garretson
George Apgar (31.5)	Friedman (2,004.5)
Joann Apgar (230.5)	Sue Gallup (7)
Carly Aulicky (31.5)	Pat Garvin (534)
Pete Axelrod (384.5)	Abby Gelb (480)
Joseph Balwierczak (41)	Jane George (114.5)
Ben Barkley (4)	Nicole Gerard (716)
Belinda Beethan (3)	Ellen Goldberg (88.5)
John Berry (25.5)	Lynda Goldschein (8)
Moirra Blake (34.5)	Charles Gould (187)
Betsy Boles (368)	Laurel Gould (6,996.5)
Dan Boston (37)	Steve Gruber (546)
Lois Boston (39)	Mary Beth Hansbury (98.5)
Martin Bottiery (3)	Anne Hebenstreit (143.5)
Dennis Branden (985.5)	George Helmke (947)
Eloise Branden (342.5)	Greg Henderson (186)
Ann Breault (8)	Jordan Henry (2.5)
John Breault (248.5)	Justin Henry (9)
Ann Campbell (60)	Jack Higgins (1,605)
Pat Carruthers (12)	Maryann Higgins (94.5)
Teri Catalano (482.5)	Helen Hoffman (23.5)
George Cevera (693.5)	Bob Hofmann (281.5)
Janis Cole (147)	Leo Hollein (3,722)
Sue Collins (26)	Alan Joss (3.5)
Lora Cooper (61)	Carolyn Kahn (20.5)
Jen Dawson (234.5)	Beverly Karcher (7)
Jackie Dearborn (480)	Jane Kendall (1,298.5)
Lee Delitzscher (114.5)	Missy Klingenburg (78.5)
Danny Dente (7.5)	Neil Klingenburg (499.5)
Andrew Desko (8.5)	Ryan Koch (59.5)
Heather Desko (505)	Bonnie Kushnerick (97.5)
Jim Detizio (1,160)	Lorrie Lane (195)
David Dietz (80)	Simon Lane (8)
Carl Dinger (22)	Bonnie Langdon (1.5)
Caleigh Dinger (22)	Blaire Langston (13)
Mike Duffy (12.5)	Douglas Lawless (8.5)
Rich Dufort (655)	Robert Lin (27)
Srabasti Dutta (3)	Daria Lisco (27)
Tyler Eccles (3)	Randy Little (21)
Roger Edwards (315.5)	Ruth Lloyd (702)
Katherine Ehringer (6)	Ray Lord (196)
Georgia Eisenhart (211.5)	Jessica Lukaszek (6)
Randi Emmer (924)	Miles Luo (220)
Julianna England (6)	Joan Maleski (14)
Karen English (1,847)	Jack Masson (330)
Nancy Felicito (911.5)	Ernie Mazzarisi (1.5)
Paul Fenske (403)	
Andrew Ferreira (1,063.5)	
Don Florio (10.5)	
Paul Ford (213)	



100 Hours (L to R) Pat Garvin, Lee Delitzscher, Janis Cole, Gail Petrillo, Elaine Seckler

Tom McFadden (20.5)	Edythe Risberg (970)	Kent Stevens (37)
Karen Miller (4)	Carolyn Rubinfeld (22.5)	Roger Story (111.5)
Betty Mills (10)	Mary Sanko (110)	Ed Sullivan (18)
Mary Moore (4.5)	Deb Scala (1,482.5)	Elaine Taub (305)
Ruth Morgan (503)	Joe Scala (309)	Connor Thompson (3)
Evelyn Morton (10)	Nancy Schenck (1,617.5)	Emily Thornton (12.5)
Bridget Mracek (241.5)	Alex Schmidt (12)	Matt Trenk (3)
David Mracek (1,195.5)	Judy Schmidt (5,941.5)	Anjanette Vaidya (3)
Fiona Mulvey (5)	Mary Ann Schmit (40)	Vitina Varone (43.5)
Jim Mulvey (8)	Evie Schmuck (606)	Mary Jane Walsh (275.5)
Wendi Mulvey (9)	Bill Schoenebaum (29.5)	Kevin Ward (50)
Jennifer Muriello (3.5)	Nick Scobel (972)	Matthew Ward (12.5)
Robert Muriello (3.5)	Ginnie Scott (13.5)	Esther Warner (245)
Joe Nally (226.5)	Elaine Seckler (347)	Sarah Webster (480)
Laura Nally (3,058.5)	Andre Shalit (6)	A J Weisgerber (12)
Kevin Naranjo (17)	Kyle Shalit (9)	Anne Weisgerber (12)
John O'Connor (6)	Valeria Shalit (3)	David Welch (50)
Brian Osborn (80.5)	Donna Sharpe (24.5)	Larry West (15)
Claudia Osborn (154.5)	Sebastien Sicard (12.5)	Elaine Weyuker (116)
Peter Osborn (149.5)	Gina Smith (119)	Barbara Whitmore (73)
Tom Ostrand (152.5)	Dorothy Smullen (2,702)	Chuck Whitmore (997.5)
Albert Park (26.5)	Mike Snyder (16)	Kathleen Willwerth (5.5)
Candace Paska (552.5)	George Solovay (1,236)	Walter Willwerth (21)
Joyce Payeur (27.5)	George Spiliotis (41)	John Wilmot (1,305)
Chris Petrillo (97)	Janet Stadelmeier (69)	Jeff Wilson (6)
Gail Petrillo (106.5)	Chris Stadtmueller (244)	Barbara Wingel (422)
Craig Pfalzgraf (9.5)	Matt Steffens (158.5)	Carl Woodward (465.5)
Louis Pisane (3,152)	Connor Steigerwald (4)	Kathy Woodward (4,426)
Gail Rapaport (527)	Christine Stepnowski (35.5)	Bernie Yaged (3)
Tiffini Ravitch (9)		Ruth Zippler (622.5)
Marge Remeika (315.5)		
Dot Reutlinger (35.5)		
Shirley Richardson (180.5)		

WEATHER IMPACTS ATLANTIC WHITE CEDAR

Story and photo by Leo Hollein

The reintroduction of Atlantic white cedars to the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge began in the summer of 2007. The Atlantic white cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*) is native to the Great Swamp but had previously been extirpated by logging. Atlantic white cedars have soft, flat, fern like leaves that white-tailed deer relish. Therefore, protective cages were placed around the cedars to deter the deer.

The cedars suffered, as did many trees, from the impact of Hurricane Sandy in the fall of 2012 although they were not uprooted or broken like many large trees in New Jersey. Atlantic white cedars are

flexible; they bend but do not break. However, the wooden stakes supporting green plastic cages around many cedars broke in the high winds. The cages no longer provided a protective zone around the cedars. Deer took advantage of the accessibility and feasted on this windfall. The Friends and the refuge funded the purchase of metal posts and fencing to replace 40 of the damaged plastic cages. Volunteers have already installed the new metal cages. Those cedars that were previously protected by metal posts and fencing survived the hurricane without damage.



Damaged cage and browsed cedar

This spring a few large cedars, some exceeding 10 feet in height, turned brown and died. Samples of the dead

trees were sent to the Rutgers agricultural experts for a diagnosis. The good news was that the deaths were not due to disease, but the actual reason for their demise is not known. The bark of the dead cedars was missing in areas, especially around their trunks. There was also browning of some limbs on other cedars. This was apparently weather related. Evidently the winter left the ground frozen and dry. There was little snow and lots of wind. When the ground thawed, the roots of the cedars required water that was not available. This stressed the cedars and caused some limbs to turn brown. These cedars are still alive and, hopefully, will manage to survive.

FRIENDS FUND LOCAL GIRL SCOUT'S BAT PROJECT

By Elaine Seckler, Photos by Dorothy Smullen

Jessica Lukaszek of Millington, New Jersey has achieved the Gold Award, the highest level of achievement in the Girl Scouts.

She attained the Gold Award for her project on the disastrous White Nose Syndrome disease in bats. Her project brought awareness of the devastation that the fungal disease is causing in the bat populations of New Jersey and the Northeast.

The Friends of the Great Swamp NWR funded Jessica's project and her advisor was Dave Sagan, Visitor Services Specialist at the Refuge.



Jessica displays her Save the Bats! Educational Poster

The Gold Award symbolizes a special commitment in the areas of leadership, community service, career planning and personal development. It requires over 65 hours of dedication. During the project, Jessica created a web site, community outreach programs, and built bat boxes.

The Elks of Stirling awarded Jessica \$250 for her devotion to excellence. Jessica then generously donated her award to Friends.



Friends Board Member Elaine Seckler accepts donation from Jessica

The Friends applaud Jessica for her dedication to nature. We thank her for her interest in helping the bat populations, and for her donation to our organization.

TWENTY BROTHER EMPLOYEES, 80 VOLUNTEER HOURS, AND 100 PLANTS LATER

By Elaine Seckler, Photos by Kristen Duda



Saturday, April 20, 2013 was a perfect day for employees from Brother International Corporation to participate in their second annual volunteer work day at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. As they did in 2012, Brother International employees, friends and family members turned out for a volunteer workday at the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center. This year the attention focused on the Nature Detective Trail with the planting of many native trees and shrubs—along with removal of many invasive plants. Over 100 native shrubs and saplings were planted! It was a physically challenging workout for the twenty volunteers! Be sure to visit the Nature Detective Trail the next time you are at the Visitor Center.

The Brother employees, along with Friends volunteers, put in a lot of hard work, yet there was fun, laughter, and camaraderie! Friends volunteers were very impressed by the spirit and high energy of the Brother volunteers, as well as the care they took to make sure the plantings were done correctly. Again this year, hard work produced hearty appetites—and the hot dog barbecue lunch was appreciated by all!

Pre-planning is important for any event but one of this magnitude requires a great deal of planning. Prior to the event, the trail was marked with flags to indicate where each sapling or bush was to be planted. Special attention was

given to the varied needs of each tree or bush. And, as you can imagine, in some areas along the trail it is not an easy task to dig a hole!

The coordination and cooperation among Brother International, Friends, and US Fish & Wildlife Service contributed to the grand success of the event. Kristen Duda, the Brother coordinator, indicated there have been very positive comments from their volunteers about the rewarding day.

Special thanks to the Friends volunteers who contributed many hours too: Ruth Lloyd, Steve Gruber, Laurel Gould, Rich Dufort, Laura Nally, Karen English, Dorothy Smullen, Kathy Woodward, Judy Schmidt and Elaine Seckler. A big thank you to Refuge staff members Dorothy Fecske, Jonathan Rosenberg and David Sagan for all their help and participation.



Brother work day employees take a much deserved break on the Nature Detective Trail bench—which was donated by Brother International Corporation following last year's work day. Thank you Brother International!

MORE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AT GREAT SWAMP NWR

By Judy Schmidt

The Friends of Great Swamp are very passionate about the habitat on the refuge. Therefore they spend time and funding to keep our refuge the wonderful place it is for wildlife.

On March 21, eight volunteers worked at the Wildlife Observation Center cutting brush near the boardwalk trail. This is the second year for this project and it will be an ongoing effort. Volunteers with high waders went into the water—which is



Bockoven Trail (left to right) Dorothy Fecske, Kathy Woodward, Danny Dente, Judy Schmidt, Rich Dufort

much deeper than it looks—to do the cutting of bushes, while others dragged the limbs and branches away. This is done to create more open water for the frogs, snakes and turtles—and, of course, this clearing will also improve viewing for the visitors.

On March 22, under the leadership of Wildlife Biologist Dorothy Fecske, six volunteers worked at the Visitor Center to reintroduce native shrubs. The planting focused on a wet area along the Bockoven trail. The group did slip plantings of red osier, grey, and silky dogwoods and elderberry cuttings. In all, 165 cuttings were planted. Just as the group was finishing up, two bluebirds stopped by to perch on the new plantings. If you care as much as we do and have the time, please join us as we do these projects. Come to a scheduled work day (see the Calendar of Events on the Friends web site), stop by the Visitor Center and leave your name, or e-mail [volunteers@friendsofgreatswamp.org.]

REFUGE UPDATE *(continued from page 3)*

HABITAT MANAGEMENT

► We recently finalized a plan for managing wildlife habitat along Spectra Energy's gas pipeline rights-of-way that cross the refuge. This will streamline Spectra's maintenance operations and lead to improved habitat for a number of rare species.

► Invasives species control work will ramp up significantly this summer with the hiring of two "habitat restoration" interns. Rebecca Hiller and Christina Straway will focus on controlling invasives and restoring treated sites. They'll work closely with the existing Friends volunteer invasives group and the refuge's Invasive Species Strike Team. They'll also help build the refuge's fledgling herbarium and revive the greenhouse.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT

► Thanks to volunteer Randy Little for conducting the refuge's woodcock surveys in 2013. Insufficient staffing had put this long-running monitoring effort in jeopardy.

► A bald eagle pair returned to work on a nest on the refuge for the second straight year. Unfortunately, they have not nested yet, but it is not uncommon for eagles to "check out" an area for a few years before deciding to use it. We're optimistic we'll have our first

ever bald eagle chicks in the not too distant future.

► Staff and volunteers completed another year of vernal pool monitoring this spring. A total of 74 pools were checked and egg masses were above average.

► Bat research will continue during the summer of 2013 with the focus shifting to acoustic monitoring instead of mist netting. Melissa Gallo, a grad student from William Paterson University, will continue the work started last summer by Jenny Bohman. She will also monitor 20 recently installed bat boxes. The refuge is experimenting with boxes as a conservation tool to boost bat populations devastated by White-nose Syndrome.



2013-14 FEDERAL DUCK STAMP GOES ON SALE JUNE 28—PUT YOUR STAMP ON CONSERVATION!

By Laurel Gould

It's been called the most successful conservation program in history. Take a look at the statistics.

- Since its inception in 1934, more than 6 million acres of land have been purchased with Duck Stamp funds.
- Ninety-eight cents out of every dollar generated by the sale of stamps goes directly to purchase or lease wetlands.
- In New Jersey, over 50,000 acres have been purchased or leased with Duck Stamp funds—that's 67% of the total refuge acreage in our state.
- Nearly 3,000 acres (out of 7,768) at Great Swamp NWR were purchased with Duck Stamp funds.

Initially created as a federal license required for hunting migratory waterfowl, the stamp today is also purchased by those who enjoy and value waterfowl, wildlife refuges, and natural landscapes.

The Federal Duck Stamp is still sold for just \$15.00. The current stamp serves as an entry pass at any national wildlife refuge that charges an entry fee.



Wait a minute... there is no entry fee at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge! You may visit as often as you want—without charge—freely enjoying the benefits of this program.

So...

Even though you don't need a duck stamp to visit and enjoy Great Swamp NWR, consider purchasing one anyway—to ensure the future of wetlands and waterfowl. By buying and displaying a Stamp, you will show that you appreciate the importance of long-term habitat protection for all wildlife—and that you care!

The 2013-14 Federal Duck Stamp, with the winning design of a common goldeneye by wildlife artist Robert Steiner, goes on sale June 28. Buy your Duck Stamp at the Visitor Center or at Refuge Headquarters. Stamps are also available at many post offices. For a lot more information about the Federal Duck Stamp program, check out the official web site.

[www.fws.gov/duckstamps]

Don't wait! Do your part today!

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

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

☐ **EASTERN BLUEBIRD—\$15-\$49**

☐ **PAINTED TURTLE—\$50-\$99**

☐ **RIVER OTTER—\$100-\$249**

☐ **MONARCH BUTTERFLY—\$250-\$499**

☐ **WOOD DUCK—\$500 +**

☐ **New Member?**

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

You may also join online at www.friendsofgreatswamp.org

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 ...

**Become a Friend Today—or,
Give a gift membership to a friend.**

Thank you



Memberships help support the projects and programs at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

Membership Benefits

- The Swamp Scene Newsletter.
- A 10% discount in Friends Nature Shop .
- Notifications of upcoming events.
- Satisfaction in knowing you are helping protect wildlife and wild places while safeguarding a national treasure for future generations.

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 NWR
241 Pleasant Plains Road
Basking Ridge NJ 07920



THE SWAMP SCENE JULY 2013

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.