



# the Swamp Scene

friends of great swamp national wildlife refuge

ISSUE FORTY FIVE  
JULY 2014

## Highlights

Strike Team Success Story	3
Same Nest, Different Eggs	4
Identifying Birds—An Evolution	5
Volunteers Achieve 14, 247.5 Hours for FY2013	6-7
Bill Koch Retires	10

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## THE FRIENDS BUILD A TRAIL

By Rich Dufort, Refuge Volunteer and Friends Board Member

**H**ave you seen the new ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Bockoven Trail that heads out from the Visitor Center by the pavilion? The one that goes out to a vernal pool. Check it out! It is spectacular and already seeing plenty of use.

The Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center opened in 2009. From the beginning, there was a grass trail that went out from the parking lot to the vernal pool near the Passaic River. For two years it was an unofficial trail. Refuge Manager Bill Koch wanted it to be ADA compliant, but permits, funding, and general bureaucracy got in the way. So in 2012, the refuge decided to officially open the trail in its existing

grass and dirt state. But the dream to upgrade it to a hard surface never went away.

For three years, the upgrade project was discussed at the annual Joint Planning Meeting between the Refuge staff and the Friends. But the same issues kept delaying its implementation. Then the sequester hit and there was little money for anything including upgrading the trail.

This year was different. At the September 2013 Joint Planning Meeting, the Friends offered to fully fund the project with your Friends money—donations and memberships. The project became part of the Refuge 2014 plan and the Friends put \$15,000 in their budget. *(continued on page 9)*



### THE TRAIL TAKES SHAPE... PHASE ONE

**Upper Left:** Staff member Dave Miller unrolls black plastic (recycled plastic) on the trail. Volunteers will stake it down (using recycled stakes).

**Upper Right:** The honey-comb, porous plastic comes in huge rolls.



**Bottom Left:** Volunteers stake down the plastic grid, again using recycled stakes.

## IN MEMORIAM: DAVID J. MRACEK



The Friends of Great Swamp and the Refuge lost a wonderful Friend and fellow volunteer earlier this year. Dave Mracek passed away suddenly on February 4, 2014. Dave had been an active volunteer for many years and spent countless hours mowing lawns

and public areas all around the Refuge. He was recently certified to drive the Refuge's large mower and provided valuable assistance to staff helping mow fields this past fall.

He was the regular Thursday volunteer at the Visitor Center where he and co-volunteer Edythe Risberg greeted visitors, welcoming them to this Refuge and helping them enjoy their visit. He was a charter member of the Garden-Keepers and both he and his wife Bridget did more than their share of weeding, planting, pruning, and mulching the gardens. As Rutgers Union County Master Gardeners, they both provided a wealth of expert advice.

Behind the scenes Dave assisted with duck and goose banding, cleaning out wood duck boxes, and a host of other volunteer activities. He was generous with his time and knowledge—always willing to help out whatever the situation or need. He will be missed.

With the donations received in his honor, the Friends will be purchasing a memorial bench to commemorate Dave's dedication and involvement with Great Swamp NWR and the Friends. The bench will be placed at the Visitor Center, one of the many places that benefited from his generous donation of time and expertise, a lasting memorial to an exceptional volunteer and Friend who truly loved this special place.

## FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NWR HOST FIRST FRIENDS PEER-TO-PEER COACHING WORKSHOP

Friends of Great Swamp NWR hosted the nation's first Friends Peer-to-Peer Coaching Workshop, June 27 and 28, 2014. We applied for and received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to organize the two day event, which included networking opportunities along with inspiring and educational presentations for nine Refuge Friends groups from four states (PA, NJ, DE, NY).

Dr. Mamie Parker's keynote address "Radical Collaboration" set the stage for discussions focused on Communications, Partnerships, Volunteers and the new Friends Policy. Presenters included National Friends Coordinator, Joanna

Webb; Kate Toniolo, Visitor Services and Communications Coordinator, Region 5; Joan Patterson Director of Grassroots Outreach for National Wildlife Refuge Association; Karen Leggett, writer/editor for National Wildlife Refuge System; Cheryl Hart, Tualatin River NWR Friends Board President; and Friends and staff from Great Swamp, Forsythe, Wertheim, Cherry Valley and Heinz NWRs.



The weekend included tours of the Refuge boardwalks, Friends' native plant gardens, kid-friendly Nature Detective Trail, and the newly completed handicapped accessible Bockoven Trail.

## QR CODES REDUCE PRINTING COSTS FOR REFUGE

The brochure boxes located at various trailheads at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge now have small signs attached to them with a printed QR code. QR stands for "Quick Response" and this code, when scanned by a visitor's smart phone, links to the Refuge web site page where all of the Refuge brochures and maps can be downloaded for easy reference. Estimates are that more than 60% of mobile phones are "smartphones".

This idea was proposed by Friends of Great Swamp NWR board member Jen Dawson as a way to utilize new technologies and reduce the cost of ordering Refuge brochures.

In order to keep maintenance to a minimum, there is a single web page on the Refuge web site that contains all of the links. This means that even when brochures are revised, the QR code link will remain the same. Brochures are still available for visitors at Refuge Headquarters and the Visitor Center.



## GREAT SWAMP STRIKE TEAM SUCCESS: A STITCH IN TIME

By John Berry, Refuge Volunteer and Friends Board Member

We hike along a stretch of Pleasantville Road, looking for the large, pinnately compound leaves. If there is any doubt about identification, we crush a leaflet, and the telltale odor of burnt nuts (or, depending on whom you ask, rotten peanut butter) gives the plant away. Today the Early Detection and Rapid Response Strike Team is targeting an infestation of *Ailanthus* (also known as tree-of-heaven), a fast-growing and highly invasive tree from China. We finish the job quickly, eradicating perhaps 50 young trees along the road.



Next, we skirt the yard of a supportive homeowner and walk into an area of the Great Swamp that is, well, swampy. Knee-high rubber boots come in handy. Now we're looking for mile-a-minute, a voracious vine from Asia that can grow an astounding six inches a day. To our surprise and relief, we find only a few dozen specimens, which gives us time to walk deeper into the refuge, spread out, and fulfill the other half of the team's mission: early detection. The effort pays off, for we discover several new infestations of mile-a-minute, small patches that are quickly eliminated.



This synopsis of a Strike Team day may appear humdrum, but it signals an important success. Controlling these two invasives has become dramatically easier. The team first targeted *Ailanthus*

a couple of years ago. Hundreds of trees—from seedlings to 50-foot tall adults—had to be killed, and many were buried deep in thickets of thorny brush. It was a long workday, and everybody donated blood and sweat. Last year a follow-up *Ailanthus* workday went more smoothly. And today, it was a breeze.

The mile-a-minute story is similar. We first tackled the infestation last year. Even with a full complement of summer interns and Refuge staff members, it was a hot, frustrating day. For an invasive that can smother a field in a single summer, the vine has a perverse characteristic. It's delicate. You cannot just grab and pull. Instead you must carefully follow the tendrils down through a labyrinth of brush and thorns, clear to the ground, and then tug gently. Evidently our effort paid off, because today we spend more time looking for mile-a-minute than pulling it.

"This is exactly what we hope to accomplish," says Steve Henry, Acting Refuge Manager and leader of the Strike Team.

"The goal is to identify and target emerging invasives before they gain a firm foothold in the Refuge. If we catch an infestation when it is still small and contained, the Strike Team can take care of it. We'll need to keep an eye out for the next few years,

but in sites like today's, we're shifting from control to monitoring."

*Ailanthus* and mile-a-minute are, of course, widespread in New Jersey. Both plants have become permanent parts of the state's landscape. To the casual



John Berry (left) Steve Henry, and volunteer Laurel Gould

observer, keeping such invasives out of the Great Swamp may seem like a quixotic endeavor. But invasives are not benign. *Ailanthus* and mile-a-minute out-compete native plants and, if left unchecked, can take over important habitats. The negative effects ripple through the ecosystem, from degraded native plant communities to declining populations of insects, birds, amphibians, mammals, and reptiles. Take the mile-a-minute infestation. It lies worrisomely close to a wetland of native cattails and tussock sedge. This marsh may be habitat for bog turtles, a federally-listed threatened species and a New Jersey endangered species. Here, then, is what the Strike Team works for—a small but brilliant piece of landscape that could be home to a turtle whose numbers, sadly, are dwindling across its range. And this is why signs of the Strike Team's success are anything but humdrum.

The Strike Team works from 9 A.M. to noon on the first and third Fridays of each month through October. New volunteers are always welcome. We meet at the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center.

## SAME NEST—DIFFERENT EGGS

*Story and Photos by Leo Hollein, Refuge Volunteer*

**T**here are three photos in this article of bird nests that contain the eggs of more than one bird species. In some but not all of these instances this is by design.



The photo (left) is a wood thrush nest that contains four blue wood thrush eggs and one brown-headed cowbird egg. Brown-headed cowbirds are known as brood parasites. They do not make a nest of their own or at-

tempt to raise their young. Cowbirds lay their eggs in the nests of other birds that subsequently may raise the cowbird young. Some but not all host species recognize the foreign egg. They may remove the egg, cover the cowbird egg with nest material or abandon the nest. A cowbird female lays about 3 dozen eggs in a season. It is estimated that only two or three of these eggs on average eventually fledge.

During the breeding season, cowbirds can be seen high in trees viewing their surroundings. They track the movements of other birds to locate nesting sites. Cowbirds have been observed laying their eggs in the nests of over 140 bird species. However, their most popular hosts are smaller birds

including warblers, vireos, flycatchers, sparrows and finches. Cowbird eggs hatch a day or so before the eggs of the host. Their hatchlings grow faster than the host hatchlings.



The photo (left) shows a cowbird fledgling begging for

food from a male common yellowthroat that is a common nesting warbler in the Refuge. Evidently parental instinct overcomes the size discrepancy between these two species. The adult yellowthroat was busy feeding the much larger cowbird fledgling. It is likely that the common yellowthroats raised only this one cowbird who out-competed the smaller common yellowthroat hatchlings for food. This size discrepancy is not as dramatic between wood thrushes and cowbirds. Wood thrushes can raise their own young as well as a cowbird orphan. It is not known if cowbirds raised by a specific bird species are likely to lay eggs in the nest of the species that raised them.

### HOODED MERGANSERS INCREASE THE ODDS OF NESTING SUCCESS

The photo below shows a clutch of wood duck eggs in a nest box. There is one egg that is noticeably different. It is whiter and rounder than the wood duck eggs. It also has a thicker shell. This egg was laid by a hooded merganser, also cavity nesters like the wood ducks. Hooded mergansers feed primarily on fish but also eat other live food such as crustaceans, insects and mollusks. This high calcium diet helps produce their more robust eggs. The clutch of eggs shown was brooded by a wood duck. All of the eggs hatched and all of the young left the nest box. Like the tale of the ugly duckling, the hooded merganser duckling would eventually discover it was not a wood duck.



While hooded mergansers have their own nests, they are known to also lay eggs in another duck's nest in addition to those in their own nest. This provides another chance that some of its eggs will hatch in the event its own nest fails to produce ducklings. Hooded merganser eggs have been found in a number of wood duck nests in the Refuge. Hooded mergansers are less common in the Refuge. Typically only three or four merganser nests are located in a year compared to over 100 wood duck nests.

### SOMETIMES IT'S NOT INTENTIONAL

The photo below presents a tree swallow nest. It contains the typical clutch of six white swallow eggs. Also in the nest is a bluebird egg. There was no plan involved in this multiple species nest. A pair of bluebirds built a nest and started a clutch. For some reason the nest was abandoned. Perhaps it was the death of one of the adult bluebirds. Tree swallows took over the nest. They added some feathers and laid eggs. Evidently they were unable or not interested in removing the abandoned bluebird egg that was no longer viable. The bluebird egg remained in the nest after the tree swallow eggs hatched and fledged.



## IDENTIFYING BIRDS BY SIGHT AND SOUND

By George Helmke, Refuge Volunteer

Identifying birds by sight and sound is the title of the spring exhibit in the Visitor Center Library. A display of books, binoculars, and bird song recordings visually tells the story of the evolution of ways to identify birds.

Frank Chapman, former curator of ornithology at New York's Museum of Natural History, sums up the need for identification in the preface of his 1903 book, *Color Key to North American Birds*. He writes, "To learn to call a bird by its right name is the first step in the study of ornithology." He notes that in earlier years a bird might be shot, then carefully examined to establish its exact identity. By 1903 an interest in bird watching had begun. Chapman notes, "We cannot place a gun in the hands of these thousands of bird-lovers whom we are yearly developing." His book is intended to provide a tool for putting a name to the birds seen in the field. Chapman's book is large and heavy. Chester Reed, the artist illustrating Chapman's book, a few years later published a very useful 3 x 6 inch pocket bird identification book, suitable for carrying into the field.

The Visitor Center exhibit displays eight books to illustrate the evolution of field guides for identification. Two of these are by Roger Tory Peterson, his first and fourth editions. Although he died 18 years ago, his newest and sixth edition has been published.

The recent trend in identification books is to show many pictures of each species—male, female, juvenile, bird in flight and others. In some volumes up to 11 illustrations of a single species are used. Another trend is toward the use of

photographs instead of an artist's renditions of each bird. Identification guides by Sibley, Kaufman and Stokes are also shown in the display.

Binoculars, a vital aid to bird identification, are important to the exhibit. They include a Galilean Field Glass of the 1870s and three prism binoculars. Two of these are of the well known Porro Prism design: a very early 1907 Zeiss/Bausch & Lomb model and a Quick Focus model from 1975. Also shown is the currently favored Roof Prism binocular.

Although bird calls and songs have long been known and appreciated, their recording and reproduction awaited the development of suitable means of preserving them. For general use, recordings of the 78 RPM type were followed by the so called LP record, the video cassette recording, the cassette recording and the currently popular CD, the compact disc. Also exhibited is the current *Birdsong Identifier*, a high tech device employing solid state electronics and using a variety of cards each featuring 10 bird calls and a card for frog calls. An earlier 1975 Microsonics device, which is a miniature record player, came with a variety of cards, each with a picture of a single species and a miniature phonograph record attached. It worked, but failed to achieve widespread use.



George Helmke pointing out the evolution of binoculars to volunteer Greg Henderson

An important and the most recent step in the evolution of means for identifying birds is not included in this exhibit. It is the Smart Phone! It is a most remarkable device, with Apps, or applications, enabling the phone to act not only as a telephone but as a camera, compass, and information source, among a great many other things. Notably, one of these is as a replacement for the bird identification book! Apps featuring the same illustrations as the well known identification books are available. Can one guess what the bird identification future will hold? Will it be a smart binocular, employing image recognition that will audibly announce the species of the bird in the field of view?

*Editor's note: The Friends would like to thank George for this fascinating exhibit. George has donated most of the books and all of the fixtures which he crafted. He is now working on a Junior Refuge Manager display!*

## MOTHER'S DAY AT GREAT SWAMP by Judy Schmidt, Refuge Volunteer, Photo by Ashleigh Scully

Let's do something for Mother's Day! How about a walk at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge? That's what 510 visitors did on Sunday, May 11 and what a show Mother Nature put on.

The Wildlife Observation Center was a busy place. There were 76 different species spotted. Painted, spotted, and snapping turtles. Bull, green, and gray tree frogs and tadpoles. Northern water and ribbon snakes—and dragonflies. The bird sightings covered everything from a bald eagle flying over the

parking lot to a hummingbird. There were 10 different warblers, scarlet tanagers, and Baltimore orioles. The fox kits came out and put on a show. Twenty children started their Junior Refuge Manager program.

*Thank you Mother Nature for a great day!*



## CELEBRATING 14, 247.5 HOURS DONATED TO GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE FOR FY2013

The 28th annual Volunteer and Friends Recognition Event was held on Saturday, June 7, 2014 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. Some 100 volunteers, staff, and guests enjoyed a buffet dinner and an awards ceremony.

Acting Refuge Manager Steve Henry and retired Refuge Manager Bill Koch presented certificates and milestone awards to the volunteers. Friends President Susan Garretson Friedman presented Bill Koch with a Life Membership in the Friends of Great Swamp NWR, thanking him for all of his support and encouragement over the years.

In his welcoming remarks, Steve Henry congratulated the Friends on their accomplishments and dedicated service.

*"Great Swamp Refuge is far more than it ever could have been because of you. We, as a staff and Service, appreciate all that you do. As does the public who express it in many ways, and the wildlife, who can't express yet benefit every day from your hard work and dedication. I look forward to the 16th year of the Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge ... as we work together to take Great Swamp to the next level and make it the very best refuge in the entire National Wildlife Refuge System. Thank you."*



Last year, the Friends presented a new Volunteer Honor Board to the Refuge to recognize volunteers who have achieved 1,000 or more hours. A "blue goose" is engraved on the individual volunteer's brass plate for each 1,000 hour milestone. Pictured above are some of the 29 volunteers whose names appear on the 1,000 Hour Volunteer Honor Board. (Photo by Larry West)

### NOTABLE VOLUNTEER MILESTONES

**100 HOUR CLUB:** Joe Balwierczak, John Berry, Judi DiMaio, Mary Beth Hansbury, Helen Hoffman, Bonnie Kushnerick, Chris Petrillo, Larry West, Walter Willwerth

**250 HOURS:** Joann Apgar, John Breault, Paul Ford, Bridget Mracek, Chris Stadtmueller, Esther Warner

**500 HOURS:** Paul Fenske, Neil Klingenburg, Elaine Seckler, Carl Woodward, Alyssa Frediani, Melissa Gallo, Rebecca Hiller, Nathan Schwartz, Megan Spindler, Christina Straway, Casey Wagnon

**1,000 HOURS:** Dennis Branden, Randi Emmer, Pat Garvin, George Helmke, Edythe Risberg, Chuck Whitmore

**1,500 HOURS:** David Mracek, Deb Scala, John Wilmot

**2,000 HOURS:** Karen English

**3,500 HOURS:** Lou Pisane

**4,000 HOURS:** Leo Hollein

**5,000 HOURS:** Kathy Woodward

**6,000 HOURS:** Judy Schmidt

**8,000 HOURS:** Laurel Gould

# REFUGE VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS DONATE 14,247.5 HOURS IN FISCAL YEAR 2013

*Listed below are the active volunteers with the total number of hours contributed since becoming a volunteer (through March 31, 2014)*

Patrick Ambrosio (1)  
George Apgar (31.5)  
Joann Apgar (261)  
Fabian Aquino (2)  
Pete Axelrod (396.5)  
Mike Balog (8)  
Joseph Balwierczak (113.5)  
Sara Battaglia (3)  
Elisa Garieri Battaglia (3)  
Caroline Beardsley (3)  
John Berry (132)  
Moira Blake (41)  
Betsy Boles (470.5)  
Jennifer Books (3)  
Judy Books (3)  
Dan Boston (81)  
Lois Boston (83)  
Martin Botti (6)  
Dennis Branden (1,004.5)  
Eloise Branden (353.5)  
John Breault (316)  
Maggie Brucker (10)  
Bridget Burns (2.5)  
Ann Campbell (60)  
Stephanie Carr (6)  
Linda Carrington (9)  
Terry Carruthers (150)  
Teri Catalano (489.5)  
Janis Cole (191.5)  
Sue Collins (29)  
Lora Cooper (64.5)  
Jen Dawson (247.5)  
Lee Delitzscher (129.5)  
Danny Dente (54.5)  
Janene DePalo (68.5)  
Jim Detizio (1,227.5)  
David Dietz (85.5)  
Judi DiMaio (107)  
Rich Dufort (739)  
Sarah Dunham (3)  
May Duttonhoeffer (6)  
Tyler Eccles (6.5)  
Georgia Eisenhart (233.5)  
Randi Emmer (1,302)  
Karen English (2,154)

Nancy Felicito (995)  
Paul Fenske (557)  
Andrew Ferreira (1,063.5)  
Andreana Field (3.5)  
Marie Field (3.5)  
Don Florio (29)  
Paul Ford (294)  
Alyssa Frediani (500)  
Charlie Friedman (49.5)

Jordan Henry (8)  
Justin Henry (14.5)  
Mayra Henry (8.5)  
Jack Higgins (1,744)  
Maryann Higgins (99)  
Rebecca Hiller (500)  
Helen Hoffman (146.5)  
Bob Hofmann (343)  
Leo Hollein (4,160)  
Sue Kander (18.5)  
Brian Katz (10)

Robert Lin (38)  
Daria Lisco (27)  
Randy Little (21)  
Ruth Lloyd (791)  
Ray Lord (206)  
Joan Maleski (14)  
Jim Marquis (22)  
Ernie Mazzarisi (19.5)  
Denise Meyer (1)  
Betty Mills (14)  
Ruth Morgan (651)  
Evelyn Morton (24)  
Bridget Mracek (252)  
David Mracek (1,618.5)  
Fiona Mulvey (6)  
Jim Mulvey (39)  
Wendi Mulvey (21)  
Jennifer Muriello (6.5)  
Olivia Muriello (3)  
Robert Muriello (6.5)  
Joe Nally (230.5)  
Laura Nally (3,298)  
Susan Nanney (12)  
Chris Nugent (1.5)  
Amanda O'Connor (6)  
Arlene O'Connor (6)  
John O'Connor (9)  
Kristen Oplinger (9)  
Brian Osborn (93.5)  
Claudia Osborn (167.5)  
Peter Osborn (159)  
Tom Ostrand (156)  
Candace Paska (592.5)  
Brad Payeur (7)  
Joyce Payeur (40.5)  
Jennifer Percival (1)  
Michaela Pesce (6)  
Chris Petrillo (100)  
Gail Petrillo (119.5)  
Louis Pisane (3,609.5)  
Gail Rapaport (573)  
Marjorie Remeika (493)  
Dot Reutlinger (37.5)  
Shirley Richardson (180.5)  
Edythe Risberg (1,136)  
Carolyn Rubinfeld (39.5)  
Mary Sanko (116)

Deb Scala (1,625.5)  
Joe Scala (366)  
Nancy Schenck (1,883.5)  
Alex Schmidt (57)  
Judy Schmidt (6,289.5)  
Mary Ann Schmit (43)  
Bill Schoenebaum (29.5)  
Nathan Schwartz (500)  
Elaine Seckler (648)  
Andre Shalit (12)  
Donna Sharpe (29.5)  
Gina Smith (134)  
Dorothy Smullen (2,918.5)  
George Solovay (1,399.5)  
Megan Spindler (500)  
Janet Stadelmeier (80)  
Chris Stadtmueller (275.5)  
Matt Steffens (164.5)  
Christine Stepnowski (35.5)  
Kent Stevens (64)  
Christina Straway (600)  
Ed Sullivan (56.5)  
Elaine Taub (385.5)  
Albert Topdjian (3)  
Matt Trenk (3)  
Casey Wagnon (500)  
Mary Jane Walsh (304.5)  
Kevin Ward (81.5)  
Matthew Ward (16)  
Olivia Ward (3)  
Esther Warner (347)  
Larry West (155.5)  
Elaine Weyuker (127)  
Barbara Whitmore (82)  
Chuck Whitmore (1,009.5)  
Kathleen Willwerth (54)  
Walter Willwerth (133)  
John Wilmot (1,505)  
Carl Woodward (518.5)  
Kathy Woodward (5,132)  
Ruth Zippler (669.5)



100 Hour Club (l to r) Larry West, Helen Hoffman, Mary Beth Hansbury, Judi DiMaio, John Berry, Walter Willwerth (Photo by Carl Woodward)

Susan Garretson Friedman (2,217.5)  
Jason Furda (3)  
Lucas Furda (3)  
Sharon Furda (3)  
Thomas Furda (3)  
Melissa Gallo (500)  
Pat Garvin (1,001)  
Nicole Gerard (716)  
Lynda Goldschein (16)  
Louis Gorst (6)  
Charles Gould (215)  
Laurel Gould (8,148.5)  
Ellen Greenhorn (28.5)  
Steve Gruber (591)  
Mary Beth Hansbury (128.5)  
Anne Hebenstreit (167)  
George Helmke (1,000.5)  
Greg Henderson (238)

James Keane (5.5)  
Jane Kendall (1,304)  
Amy Ketelsen (10.5)  
Sandy Ketelsen (10.5)  
Missy Klingenburg (80.5)  
Neil Klingenburg (581)  
Mary Ann Kluiber (29)  
Shmuel Korengut (47.5)  
Alice Koster (2)  
Melene Kubat (3)  
Peter Kubat (6)  
Zaven Kubat (6)  
Terry Kulmane (3)  
Bonnie Kushnerick (103.5)  
Andy Lamy (10)  
Lorrie Lane (226.5)  
Bonnie Langdon (19.5)  
Schwinne Lee (1)

*"Volunteers don't get paid—not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless." —Sherry Anderson*

## BROTHER CORPORATION INTERNATIONAL—ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL REFUGE WORK DAY

By Elaine Seckler, *Refuge Volunteer and Friends Board Member*

Twenty-six volunteers. 80 hours at three Refuge locations.  
A loud Hooray and a sincere Thank You  
to  
Brother International Corporation.



Saturday, April 19, 2014 was another perfect day for Brother International Corporation to participate, for the third year in a row, in a volunteer work day at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. As in past years, Brother International employees, friends and family members joined Friends volunteers to support the Refuge. Work was completed at the Visitor Center and at the Overlook. Before projects were assigned, the President of Brother presented a generous donation to the Friends. Then the work began!

This year the projects included planting of many indigenous shrubs at the Overlook, part of an initiative to attract more birds. Volunteers also worked at sprucing up the kiosk with a fresh coat of stain, which was greatly needed. At the Visitor Center, again this year, native trees and shrubs were planted along the Nature Detective Trail and wood chips were spread along the path. Three of the native trees were donated to the Refuge by Brother.

Another task that day was mulching the Visitor Center front gardens. Brother volunteers and Friends volunteers worked hard, yet fun was also prevalent. The Friends were once again very impressed by the high energy and spirit of cooperation of the Brother volunteers. Again this year, hard work produced hearty appetites and the hot dog barbecue lunch, and blue goose cookies, were absolutely enjoyed by all!

The coordination and cooperation between Brother International, the Friends, and the Fish & Wildlife Service contributed to the grand success of the event. Lauren Dudling, the Brother coordinator, indicated positive comments have been expressed by many of the volunteers about the worthwhile day they spent on the refuge.

Special thanks to the Friends volunteers & Refuge staff who contributed many hours that day and before: Ruth Lloyd, Bridget Mracek, Laurel Gould, Kathy Woodward, Dorothy Fecske and Elaine Seckler. A thank you to Jonathan Rosenberg and David Sagan for help with pre-planning. An event such as this would be impossible without the terrific partnering and help from each person!

## THIS STAMP IS NOT JUST FOR HUNTERS—THIS STAMP IS FOR YOU!



Last year, the Friends of Great Swamp sold 48 Federal Duck Stamps—a new record for us. However, there are some 150,000 visitors to the Refuge every year—and many of them are frequent, repeat visitors. Unlike many national wildlife refuges, there is no fee to visit Great Swamp, but what an incredible gesture of

support if even 1% of those visitors purchased a Federal Duck Stamp.

Duck stamps are not just for hunters. Everyone who enjoys birding, hiking, photography—or just finding peace and renewal at a national wildlife refuge should be supporting this incredible program. This is the most successful conservation program in history. The program began in 1934 as a way to fund the ongoing purchase of wetlands for national

wildlife refuges. Since its inception, the program has generated \$800 million to purchase 6 million acres for national wildlife refuges, including 2,808 acres at Great Swamp, 31% of the total refuge.



"Your Duck Stamp Dollars At Work!" - Sign at GSNWR

By law, 98 cents out of every dollar of revenue is used to purchase or lease wetlands. If you want to help, this

is one of the best investments in the future that you can make.

Federal Duck Stamps sell for \$15 and are available at the Friends Nature Shop and also at Refuge Headquarters. In addition to the investment in wetlands conservation, the current Federal Duck Stamp serves as an entry pass to national wildlife refuges across the country.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.fws.gov/duckstamps/](http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/)  
[www.friendsofthestamp.org](http://www.friendsofthestamp.org)  
(Friends of the Migratory Duck Stamp)

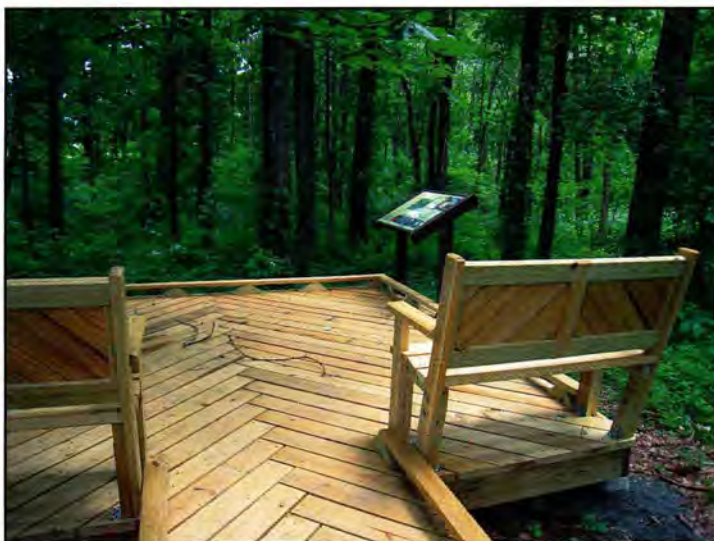
# THE FRIENDS BUILD A TRAIL

*Continued from page 1*



## PHASE TWO ... BASF employees enjoying a fun day at the Refuge!

- The stone dust is moved by wheelbarrow to sites along the trail.
- Volunteers use rakes to spread the stone dust into and on top of the honey-comb pavers.
- Thank you BASF!



## PHASE THREE ...

Talented volunteers build a platform and benches overlooking the vernal pool.

They installed the Vernal Pool Interpretive Sign also funded by the Friends.

This spring, the three phase trail construction project was completed well within budget. Most of the labor was provided by Friends volunteers and a BASF corporate volunteer work day with Refuge staff direction and assistance.

Phase one was done at a Friends volunteer work day. First, we put down a double layer of black plastic. The plastic keeps the vegetation from growing through the trail surface. On top of that, we staked down a layer of three inch honey comb plastic. The curves were a little tricky but the volunteers figured it out.

Phase two was done by a team from BASF. With refuge help spotting some of the stone dust, volunteers spread approximately thirty-sevens tons of the stone dust in and on top of the plastic to a depth of two inches.

Phase three was the platform. The trail runs about one thousand feet out to a vernal pool. We wanted a platform so visitors could see the pool from the trail. Enter George Solovay and his team of skilled carpenters, who put together a magnificent platform complete with benches. You really need to see it in person to appreciate it.

The trail is already getting a workout. No surprise, lots of strollers, but there is nothing wrong with that. At least one handicapped visitor from Utah was seen going out to the platform in a wheel chair. She marveled at what we had done and said in her travels across the country, such trails were rare. And the platform is fast becoming a spot for visitors to sit, relax, and contemplate our beautiful Refuge away from the crowds.

So if you have not yet seen it, make sure you check out what your donations and volunteer efforts can accomplish.

## GREAT SWAMP REFUGE MANAGER BILL KOCH RETIRES

On May 31, Great Swamp staff, former colleagues, family and Friends celebrated Bill Koch, whose career with the National Wildlife Refuge System spanned 43 years, 34 of them at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. He leaves a lasting legacy for the Refuge and for the Friends.

With a degree in wildlife management from the University of Maine, Bill started his career at Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge gathering information on birdlife, vegetation, and public use of the area. When this seasonal position ended, he volunteered at Great Swamp NWR until December 1971 when he was hired to conduct the Refuge's deer research program. In June 1972, this temporary position at Great Swamp became permanent.

In 1974, Bill moved to northeastern Massachusetts as the Deputy Refuge Manager of Parker River NWR, then in April 1977 to the New York Finger Lakes as Deputy Refuge Manager at Montezuma NWR, and, in January 1979 to Maryland's Eastern Shore as Deputy Refuge Manager at Blackwater NWR.

In 1984, he returned to Great Swamp NWR as Refuge Manager, planning on a five-year assignment. However, five years became 30 as Bill immersed himself in Great Swamp's Master Planning efforts, management programs, land acquisition, habitat restoration, and the many challenges on-refuge and throughout the watershed. He developed strong and lasting relationships with partners and dealt with contaminant issues and Superfund sites, winning a Department of the Interior Environmental Achievement Award for remediation efforts.

With his enthusiastic commitment and support, the Friends of Great Swamp NWR was formed in 1999 and only six years later, the group was honored as "2006 Friends Group of the Year." A much needed and long desired visitor center was completed by acquiring an existing farm with the help of many partners. The Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center officially opened in 2009. This year, the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan was completed—a 15-year plan for the future of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

Fortunately, the Friends and the Refuge have not seen the last of Bill. Although officially retired, Bill has already started volunteering and intends to continue his support and commitment to Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.



Bill Koch (center) and family. (Photo by Mayra Henry)



Refuge staff present Bill with a framed original photo.  
(Photo by Mayra Henry)



Bill unwraps a pair of wood duck carvings, a retirement gift from Friends of Great Swamp NWR (Photo by Carl Woodward)

## 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](http://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*  
*National Wildlife Refuge*

## **THE SWAMP SCENE JULY 2014**

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.