

# The NATURALISTS' CLUB Newsletter

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## OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2008 SCHEDULE • OF • ACTIVITIES

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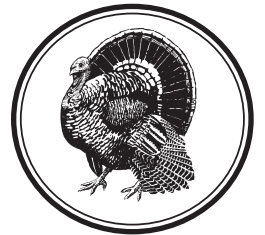
### OCTOBER

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|----|-----------|--|
| 4  | Saturday  | Nature Journaling, <i>Monson, Mass.</i>  |
| 5  | Sunday    | Astronomy Walk Series: The Moon, <i>Easthampton, Mass.</i>   |
| 11 | Saturday  | Benedict Pond, Beartown State Forest, <i>Monterey, Mass.</i>   |
| 15 | Wednesday | OCTOBER BANQUET MEETING: Antarctica and Global Warming, Munich Haus Restaurant, <i>Chicopee, Mass.</i> |
| 18 | Saturday  | Ocean Kayaking Among the Boston Islands: Hingham Harbor & World's End, <i>Hingham, Mass.</i>           |
| 18 | Saturday  | Tekoa Peak Hike, <i>Russell, Mass.</i>   |
| 18 | Saturday  | Nature Reclaims History, <i>Westfield, Mass.</i>   |
| 23 | Thursday  | Canal Walk, <i>Suffield, Conn.</i>   |

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### NOVEMBER

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| 1  | Saturday  | Fall Letterboxing Hike ~ Robert Frost Trail Scramble, <i>Montague, Mass.</i>          |
| 2  | Sunday    | The Keystone Arches of the Westfield River, <i>Chester, Mass.</i>                     |
| 8  | Saturday  | Ocean Kayaking at Westport Harbor & River, Rhode Island Sound, <i>Westport, Mass.</i> |
| 13 | Thursday  | Quabbin Reservation Walk  |
| 15 | Saturday  | Bear Mountain, Massachusetts and Connecticut  |
| 16 | Sunday    | Astronomy Walk Series: Observing Basics, <i>Easthampton, Mass.</i>                    |
| 19 | Wednesday | NOVEMBER MEETING: Reducing Our Carbon Footprint                                       |
| 29 | Saturday  | A Peaked Mountain Hike, <i>Monson, Mass.</i>  |



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### DECEMBER

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| 7  | Sunday    | Annual Late Fall Quabbin Hike, <i>New Salem, Mass.</i>   |
| 7  | Sunday    | Astronomy Walk Series: Comets, Asteroids & Meteor Showers, Oh My!!!, <i>Easthampton, Mass.</i> |
| 11 | Thursday  | Ludlow Reservoir Walk, <i>Ludlow, Mass.</i>  |
| 13 | Saturday  | Nighttime at Noble View, <i>Russell, Mass.</i>   |
| 14 | Sunday    | Snowshoeing Introduction, <i>Holyoke, Mass.</i>  |
| 17 | Wednesday | DECEMBER HOLIDAYS MEETING  |
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# NATURALIST'S CORNER

## ALONG THE WATER'S EDGE ....

Welcome to Autumn 2008 and the many splendid colors nature provides for us during this special time of year! I hope everyone enjoyed their summer and was able to spend at least a small amount of time viewing the natural world around them. I have been very lucky in many ways over the past year. This is especially true for the host of very special nature viewing experiences I've been privileged to witness. It never ceases to amaze me just how much the natural world conceals and how lucky we are when we are able to get a peek into that world, if for even just a minute. I'd like to share a few of my stories with you, and hope they help you recall similar experiences where you were able to witness the splendor of nature firsthand.

I'm going to focus this expression on water-related experiences. Water is the magic wand of life, providing the many things absolutely essential for nature's evolution into the current state we're so lucky to be part of and get to observe each and every day. For us on Earth, water is a pretty common occurrence (especially during the 2008 summer!). However, the other planets and moons of our solar system appear not to have been so lucky with regards to water, and most likely life. The latest NASA mission to Mars, the Phoenix Lander<sup>1</sup>, was designed to do a detailed search of the arctic regions for water and to look for any signs that life may have been present on the Red Planet. The results of this program are still developing, but without a doubt, water is the key to Earth's life, and our dependence on it is without equal.

Back to our beautiful, watery blue-green planet. Many of my water-based nature viewing experiences have been associated with the Sea Kayaking series of trips I lead for the club. These trips have brought me, and those who have undertaken them with me, to some absolutely fabulous areas for nature observation. While paddling along the Connecticut coast on a beautiful sunny day in May, I was blessed to stumble upon horseshoe crabs during their yearly mating rituals<sup>2</sup>. Horseshoe crabs mate in late spring and are generally most active around the time of full moon. I had pulled up on a deserted beach for a quick rest and noticed that the shallows along the beach seemed to have a large number of rocks, covered, then uncovered as small waves drifted ashore. This seemed very odd, since I had been to this beach many times and had never seen these rocks in the past. Upon closer inspection, I saw these were not rocks at all, but buried female horseshoe crabs, most with only a small part of their shells showing. Many of the females had a smaller male attached, and the majesty of life was taking place right before my eyes! Horseshoe crabs are a relic of ages past, having been on earth for at least 500 million years and without substantial changes in well over 400 million years! It's impossible to imagine that amount of time, and it would be simply grand if we could read the diary of the horseshoe crab species so we could get a firsthand view of how our world has changed over the last half billion years. If only that were possible!

It's hard not to be drawn to sights and sounds of the shore, which offer a wonderful symphony for all our senses! The roll of the water as it reaches the beach, the sounds of the shore birds as they move in and out behind waves coming ashore, and the fresh sea smells wafted on the cooling breezes ~ all share a place in this tapestry. But the seashore is not the only place where water plays a supreme role in nature. The next stop on my watery excursion involved the loons of Somerset Reservoir. Somerset sits at 2,000 feet, tucked between Mount Snow and Stratton Mountain in southern Vermont and providing some of the most tranquil, picturesque, and untouched waters you'll ever have the privilege to visit. Loons also find the beautiful waters of Somerset very inviting and make this reservoir one of their southernmost breeding and nesting locations in New England. Loons live wide-ranging lives, spending winters along the coastal seaboard, from Virginia southward, and heading to the cool, clear and deep freshwater lakes of the north for breeding during summer months.

The day was simply gorgeous! Our nearby star was shining with all its splendor, billowing fair weather clouds floated across the sky like butterflies moving between the summer flowers, and a light northerly breeze danced across the water. Kayaking on Somerset is always very special because you are so close to nature and get to bathe in all its delights with every stroke of the paddle. As I paddled to the northern reaches of the reservoir, just below the towering spectra of Stratton Mountain, the lone shrill call of the loon broke the mesmerizing peacefulness of the day. The loon call is so distinctive and simply fills your ears with the wonder and inspired presence that defines the natural order. Upon locating the source of this heavenly sound, even more surprises were in order! This was not just a single loon, but a mom taking her two small babies out for a swim! The two babies were less than six inches in length, with brown, tufted feathers covering their bodies and very large, dark-colored eyes. Their young patterning was in sharp contrast to mom's jet-black head, black and white striping across her body, and stunning RED eyes! It was quite an experience to watch mom teaching her young, readying them to take control of their own lives in the coming months. Again, water was the key here. Loons spend the vast majority of their lives in water, and each and every one has to be finely tuned to the water for their survival. What a fantastic planet we live on!

*Continued on page...8*

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see [http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/phoenix/main/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/phoenix/main/index.html).

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horseshoe\\_crab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horseshoe_crab).

## Nature Journaling

Monson, Massachusetts

Saturday, October 4, starting at 10 a.m.

**Leader:** Sonya Vickers (413-566-3406) Please call. You will be contacted if weather cancels.

**Meeting Place:** Parking lot at the mini-mall in Hampden at the crossing of Allen Street and East Longmeadow, Somers and Wilbraham Roads. We will travel to the Nature Conservancy Pond on Butler Road in Monson.

Join us in a close-up investigation of nature through journaling. Anyone can learn more about the natural world if they observe a flower, insect, seed, or leaf for long enough to sketch it. You need no artistic talent, only an ability to see. Bring a journal with blank pages (no lines), a pencil and eraser and perhaps some colored pencils for a final touch. A lightweight lawn chair or stool might make the experience more comfortable.

We will be walking about a quarter of a mile. A digital camera may provide an extended opportunity for observation, allowing you to freeze your subject in motion, so if you have one, bring it along. Field microscopes will be available, enabling you to appreciate the natural world on an entirely different scale from what you see every day.

## Astronomy Walk Series

### The Moon!

Easthampton, Massachusetts

Sunday, October 5, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Walk #7)

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, amateur astronomer (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz, phone 413 562-4740)

**Fee:** \$5 Naturalists' Club members, \$8 others (This fee is to cover use of the auditorium.)

**Meeting Place:** Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon), Main Building

\* Please note the Start Time CHANGE to **6:30 p.m.** for the FALL and WINTER programs!

\*\*Program runs INSIDE and/or OUTSIDE, so weather **DOES NOT CANCEL!**

Come learn about the beauty and wonder of the universe around us! This month, I'm going to turn the focus to our nearest neighbor, THE MOON. We'll look at some theories of how the moon formed, talk a bit about its geology and general structure, and discuss how the moon and earth interact. Observing the moon with eyes and binoculars is also a lot of fun, and we'll discuss the best ways to do this, including what you can see and what those observing targets actually are. If the weather cooperates, we'll get outside and do some moon observing so you can put your newly acquired skills to the test. Bring your imagination and a desire to learn to this fact-filled session about THE MOON. Please dress appropriately and bring binoculars if you have them (several pair will be available if you don't), and be ready to **take a walk through the universe!** Note that you don't have to attend every part of the series, so please come whenever your schedule allows. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Please see page 10 of the Spring 2008 Club Newsletter (also available online) for more information about the 'Astronomy Walk Series.'

## Benedict Pond, Beartown State Forest

Monterey, Massachusetts

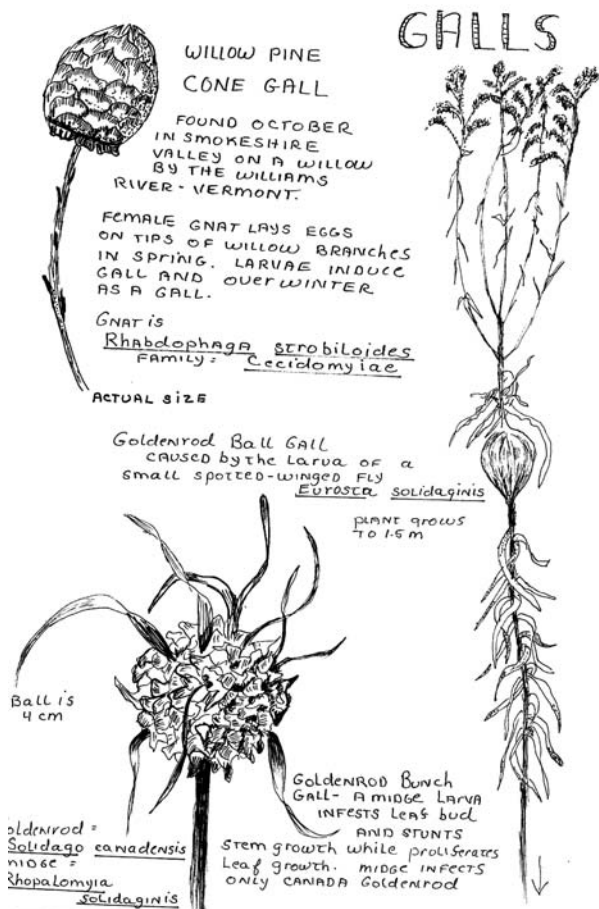
Saturday, October 11, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Leader:** Bill Fontaine

**Registration:** Call Bill (413-533-2153)

**Meeting Place:** Town parking area behind the Otis Fire Department, at the junction of Rtes. 8 and 23

Beautiful Benedict Pond in Beartown State Forest is undeveloped except for a boat launch and small beach. This area features diverse habitats, including a deciduous forest and a cattail marsh, and is rich in wildlife, particularly birds. On this walk, we'll follow the Pond Loop Trail and a short section of the Appalachian Trail to complete our circuit of the pond. Trail length is about 2.5 miles, over fairly easy grades. For those who are interested, a short, steep half-mile detour leads to the Ledges, with attractive views westward toward Mount Everett and the Catskills beyond. Bring sturdy footwear and something to eat and drink.



## **OCTOBER BANQUET**

### **DINNER AT MUNICH HAUS RESTAURANT**

13 Center Street, Chicopee, Massachusetts

Wednesday, October 15

Social Hour at 6 p.m., Dinner at 7 p.m.

This year the Naturalists' Club has found a new place for our October dinner meeting - the Munich Haus. Excellent German and American cuisine. Join us for a delicious night! Fine food and drink and, most importantly, wonderful friendships. Sonya Vickers will be our evening speaker, and she will present a fascinating program on Antarctica. (See Sonya's program description in this newsletter.)

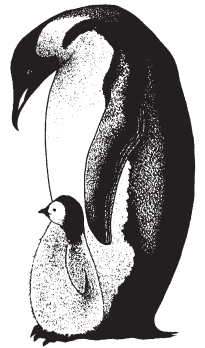
The evening will begin with a social hour (cash bar), including Munich Haus' delicious appetizer station, with an international cheese display, crackers, fresh fruit, and chips and dips. At 7 p.m. our dinner buffet will include a salad station, with two dressings, bread and butter, baked salmon, chicken Française, stuffed roast pork, a vegetarian pasta, oven-roasted potatoes, and a vegetable medley. Our dessert will include assorted German torts and mini pastries. Coffee and tea will be served.

The cost per person for this delicious night is \$25. Please make checks payable to the Naturalists' Club, and mail by October 10 to Dave Gallup, 27 Donamor Lane, East Longmeadow, MA 01028. See driving directions below. For more information contact Dave Gallup (413-525-4697). Hope you can join us! We need 45 people to make this night happen.

## **OCTOBER MEETING** **ANTARCTICA AND GLOBAL WARMING**

**Speaker:** Sonya Vickers

This year Sonya Vickers has made a trip to Antarctica and traveled in the area that has had the most drastic increase in warming of anyplace on earth. She has had the chance to walk among the penguins as they cared for their fuzzy chicks. These penguins just may be the canary in the mine, giving us all a warning of warming events coming to the rest of the planet. Experience the splendor of the frozen continent and see the many icebergs as tall as skyscrapers and larger than city blocks. One would think that icy Antarctica could not support much life, but the small marine organisms are the base of a food chain supporting an incredible diversity of sea birds and many marine mammals.



*Directions to the Munich Haus (413-594-8788): Travel on I-91 to I-391. Take the first exit (Chicopee Center). Turn off ramp onto Center Street, heading inland from the Connecticut River. Go straight through the light. A half mile down on the right is The Munich Haus parking lot, where there is plenty of free parking...See you soon! [www.munichaus.com](http://www.munichaus.com)*

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### **Ocean Kayaking Among the Boston Harbor Islands: Hingham Harbor & World's End**

*Hingham, Massachusetts*

Saturday, October 18, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Sea Kayaker and Naturalist  
(e-mail [Programs@GlassVisions.biz](mailto:Programs@GlassVisions.biz); phone 413-562-4740)

**Registration:** REQUIRED. Please e-mail me to register!

**Meeting Place:** 8 a.m. sharp at Barnes & Noble parking lot in Holyoke. After getting a count of everyone and doing a quick gear check, we'll head out by 8:15 a.m., so don't be late!!!

We'll caravan east along the Mass Pike to our launch site in Hingham, Massachusetts.

October is the best month for ocean kayaking, with cool air, warm water, and beautiful fall foliage! This trip will head to Boston for some paddling among the fabulous Boston Harbor Islands. We'll put in at Hingham Harbor and explore the area, including some of the Boston Harbor Islands (Bumpkin, Grape, and Slate). A few of these islands have some interesting hiking trails, and we'll get a chance to stretch our legs a bit during this trip! We will have lunch on one of these islands and spend a little time talking about the natural history of the area. We'll also paddle along the Weir River and take a peek at the abundant wildlife in the area. World's End is a fascinating reservation along the Weir River and Hingham Harbor, comprised of several islands all connected with over five miles of hiking trails. Wildlife abounds here and there is always something interesting to see! If the paddling weather is bad, we can just spend the day exploring the hiking trails at World's End. This will be a great trip, so please join me!



The plan is to paddle 8-12 miles at a fairly leisurely pace. This trip will be in fairly protected waters and is appropriate for BEGINNER-INTERMEDIATE paddlers. Depending on interest, we'll end the day with dinner at one of the local seafood houses in Hingham.

Each person must supply his/her own kayak, paddle, and associated gear. If you don't have your own kayak, they can be rented locally and car-topped down to our put-in. If looking to rent, please contact me ASAP, and I'll provide you with contact information for the best local rental outfitters. The trip will run unless there is continuous rain forecasted. As with all paddling trips in my Kayak Series, you MUST have attended my Kayak Intro Course or have met with me to discuss your kayaking experience and received approval for participation.

*Please review the Series Introduction section in the Spring 2008 Club Newsletter (also available online) for more information on my club kayaking activities and necessary experience. If you have ANY questions, please contact me ASAP.*

### **Nature Reclaims History**

*Stanley Park, Westfield, Massachusetts*

Saturday, October 18, from 2 to 4 p.m.

**Leader:** Art O'Leary

**Meeting Place:** At the sign at the entrance to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary in Stanley Park, Westfield. For more information, call the park office (413-568-9312).

Take a walk back in time using a map made in 1850 to locate and identify manmade structures and learn the rich history of industry, home life and the stories behind the names, as we travel old roads, trails and bushwack in the Wildlife Sanctuary. This little known portion of Stanley Park contains the remnants of canals, dams, foundations, a river ford, cellar holes and the second oldest cemetery in Westfield. Nature steadily reclaims these sites with successional growth, deposition and weathering. Locate these disappearing sites in the remote reaches of the Wildlife Sanctuary and learn about the Pirates Den, Mother Walker, Blacksmith Hill, Cold Water Party, the courtship of a poor, ravishing beauty and other tales and verbal histories.

Wear appropriate hiking attire, sturdy boots, and bring water, binoculars/camera. Heavy rain cancels. Note: This is a continuation of a walk Art led Saturday, August 16.

### **Tekoa Peak Hike**

*Russell, Massachusetts*

Saturday, October 18, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon

**Registration:** Please call to register (413-564-0895).

**Meeting Place:** Pull-out along Route 20 on Westfield-Russell town line (east of the Mass Pike Bridge)

As you travel west on the Mass Pike from Westfield toward New York, you pass over the Westfield River. Just west of the river, the Mass Pike enters a narrow, steep pass between two peaks. The peak to the south is called Tekoa Peak. It hosts a Westfield city park, with nice trails to follow. Our hike will start on Route 20, pass under the Mass Pike bridge, and then climb to the peak. At times the climb will be steep, but we'll take our time and stop along the way to watch for birds in the treetops (from above!), see the mushrooms at our feet (it's been a good wet year — do we dare hope it continues?) and catch our breath to enjoy the fall colors.

Dress for the weather. Wear sturdy hiking boots. A hiking stick might be helpful. Bring plenty of water with your lunch. Heavy rain cancels.

### **Canal Walk**

*Suffield, Connecticut*

Thursday, October 23, from 8:30 a.m. to noon

**Leader:** Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

A fall morning walk. Hopefully, the fall colors should be good this year. We will be looking for any sign of nature. This walk was cancelled in July due to rain. We will try again. Call to register.

### **Fall Letterboxing Hike - Robert Frost Trail Scramble,**

*Montague, Massachusetts*

Saturday, November 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons ("The Keeper"), Letterboxer (e-mail Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone 413-562-4740)

**Meeting Place:** 9:30 a.m. at Elwell State Park on Damon Road in Northampton. From Springfield, take Rt. 91 North to Exit 19 (Rt. 9). From exit ramp, go straight through lights, onto Damon Rd. Meet in the parking area on the immediate right.

You might be asking, "What the heck is letterboxing?" Well, come on this hike, and that question will be answered! Letterboxing is basically an outdoor (non-GPS) hunt for stamps hidden in natural locations all around us. You'll get to enjoy the outdoors, commune with nature a bit, and find a few letterboxes, all on a great fall hike!

We'll meet at the Elwell State Park parking area on Damon Road in Northampton. I'll provide a brief 15-minute introduction to letterboxing (handout will be provided), and then we'll carpool out to the Robert Frost Trail in Montague for our hike. Plan on 5-8 miles of moderate hiking (not appropriate for small children), with a nice lunch break. Bring a small pad (bound 3"x5" cards work well), a pen, and a small rubber stamp of your liking if you have one available (not required). Best to carry all of this in a zip-lock bag to help keep it dry and together in your pack. Bring your day pack, camera, binoculars, water, snacks, and lunch. Dress appropriately for a moderate cool-weather fall hike (i.e., good hiking shoes and layered non-cotton clothing). Please e-mail me if you have any questions. Heavy rain cancels.

### **The Keystone Arches of the Westfield River**

*Chester, Massachusetts*

Sunday, November 2, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon

**Registration:** Please call to register (413-564-0895).

**Meeting Place:** Chester Elementary School, Middlefield Road, Chester

Back at the turn of the century ~ the 20th, not the 21st ~ a railroad track was laid through the rugged country of western Massachusetts. Engineers struggled, tackling such a steep and treacherous terrain. George Washington Whistler solved the problem with a series of spectacular keystone arched bridges. Join us as we follow the path to these hidden marvels along the Westfield River. We'll walk past, over, and around these bridges and along the way enjoy the sights and sounds of the woods that now envelop the structures of man. The trail is never very steep but is often wet, so come prepared: Wear sturdy hiking boots. A hiking stick might be helpful. And bring plenty of water with your lunch. Dress for the weather and, remember, heavy rain cancels. The bridges might be able to handle it, but we can come back another day.

### **Ocean Kayaking at Westport Harbor & River**

*Rhode Island Sound, Westport, Massachusetts*

Saturday, November 8, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Sea Kayaker and Naturalist (e-mail Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone 413-562-4740)

**Registration:** REQUIRED. Please e-mail me to register!

**Meeting Place:** 8 a.m. sharp at Barnes & Noble parking lot in Holyoke. After getting a count of everyone and doing a quick gear check, we'll head out by 8:15 a.m., so don't be late!!! We'll caravan east along the Mass Pike to our launch site in Westport, Massachusetts.

This will be the last trip of the 2008 season and should be one of the best paddles of the year! Westport Harbor is a beautiful area right along the Mass./Rhode Island border. The harbor and associated east and west branch rivers are very well protected, with shallow water that stays warm right through November. Wildlife abounds in this area, especially late-season birdlife, and there are a score of islands and marshy areas to explore. Hopefully we'll still have at least a hint of fall color to feast our eyes upon! We'll stop for lunch at Horseneck Beach, with great views out into Rhode Island Sound. This truly is one of the very special places to paddle in all of Massachusetts, so I hope you'll join me!

The plan is to paddle 12-16 miles at a fairly leisurely pace. This trip will be the longest one of the season, to help tide everyone over the winter until our paddles can hit the water

again in the spring! Although the area is well-protected and fairly safe, the distance will be long, so this will be appropriate for INTERMEDIATE paddlers. If you have any questions about your ability to do this trip, please contact me ASAP.

Each person must supply his/her own kayak, paddle, and associated gear. If you don't have your own kayak, they can be rented locally and car-topped down to our put-in. If looking to rent, please contact me ASAP and I'll provide you with contact information for the best local rental outfitters. The trip will run unless there is continuous rain forecasted. As with all paddling trips in my Kayak Series, you MUST have attended my Kayak Intro Course or have met with me to discuss your kayaking experience and received approval for participation.

*Please review the Series Introduction section in the Spring 2008 Club Newsletter (also available online) for more information on my club kayaking activities and necessary experience. If you have ANY questions, please contact me ASAP*

### **Quabbin Reservation Walk**

Thursday, November 13, from 9 a.m. to noon

**Leader:** Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

Ready to get out of the house and stretch your legs? A nice nature walk at Quabbin will do the trick. Call for meeting place and to register.

### **Bear Mountain**

*Massachusetts and Connecticut*

Saturday, November 15, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Leader:** Bill Fontaine

**Registration:** Call Bill (413-533-2153)

**Meeting Place:** Friendly's parking lot, Great Barrington, Mass., on Route 7 just north of the Route 23 intersection. The South Taconic Range, where Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York adjoin, has been described as one of the most beautiful and ecologically significant regions in the Northeast. The Nature Conservancy has called it one of the nation's "Last Great Places." It has not always been so. In the 18th century the South Taconic region was home to several ironworks that manufactured cannon and other munitions for the War of Independence and, later, the Civil War. Then, the forested hills were all but denuded of trees to produce the charcoal needed to fuel iron furnaces. Today, the forests and the wildlife they support have returned, offering naturalists and hikers some of the finest and most remote outdoor experiences to be had in southern New England.

On this hike, we'll walk one of those old charcoal roads, to intersect the Appalachian Trail, as we explore Bear Mountain in Mt. Riga State Park, Connecticut. Bear Mountain offers panoramic views of the South Taconic region from a stone monument mistakenly commemorating its summit as the

highest point in Connecticut. This strenuous 4-mile loop hike is well worth the effort, particularly if you have not yet visited this remarkable area. We'll take our time and proceed at an unhurried and leisurely pace, so times are only approximate. Bring sturdy shoes, plenty of water, and a lunch.

### **Astronomy Walk Series**

#### **Observing Basics**

*Easthampton, Massachusetts*

Sunday, November 16, from 6:30\* to 9 p.m. (Walk #8)

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Amateur Astronomer (e-mail Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone 413-562-4740)

**Fee:** \$5 Naturalists' Club members, \$8 others (This fee is to cover use of the auditorium.)

**Meeting Place:** Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon), Main Building

\* Please note the Start Time CHANGE to **6:30 p.m.** for the FALL and WINTER programs!

\*\*Program runs INSIDE and/or OUTSIDE, so weather **DOES NOT CANCEL!**

Come learn about the beauty and wonder of the universe around us! This month I'll do a review of many of the observing topic details we've discussed in the past programs. The focus here will be to provide a solid review for the regular series attendees and a great launching point for new people ready to add astronomical viewing to their "bag of tricks!" I guarantee that this will be fun and educational for everyone, so please plan on joining us. Please dress appropriately and bring binoculars if you have them (several pair will be available if you don't), and be ready to **take a walk through the universe!** Note that you don't have to attend every part of the series, so please come whenever your schedule allows. Please e-mail me if you have any questions.

*Please see page 10 of the Spring 2008 Club Newsletter (also available online) for more information about the 'Astronomy Walk Series.'*

### **A Peaked Mountain Hike**

*Monson, Massachusetts*

Saturday, November 29, starting at 9 a.m.

**Leader:** Dave Gallup (413-525-4697)

**Meeting Place:** Burlington Coat Factory at the shopping mall at Allen and Cooley Streets, Springfield

Join us and walk off those calories from that Thanksgiving dinner! We will start by hiking around a lovely pond with plenty of beaver activity. We will continue the hike to the summit of Peaked Mountain, with its incredible vistas of the valley below. You may remember that the Naturalists' Club supported The Trustees of Reservations some years back in the purchase of the tract of land encompassing Peaked Mountain, with all its incredible vistas. At the summit you can see Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire! This is a moderately strenuous hike. Bring a lunch and plenty of water. Wear sturdy hiking shoes, and don't forget your binoculars!

### **Annual Late Fall Quabbin Hike,**

*New Salem, Massachusetts*

Sunday, December 7, starting at 9:30 a.m.

**Leaders:** Dave and Suzy Gallup (413-525-4697)

**Meeting Place:** Crystal Springs Mall, Routes 9 and 202, Belchertown

It's that time of the year again, folks! Our destination is Gate 15, which takes us on a wonderful loop hike with great views of the northern section of the Quabbin. Lots of stonewalls and farm sites. We might see eagles and perhaps hear loons. We have seen moose tracks on the sandy beaches. It's a great hike and one of the most beautiful areas to explore. Bring your lunch, hot drinks, and binoculars. Please dress appropriately for the weather. If you arrive early at the meeting place, you can enjoy a hearty breakfast at Hawley's Restaurant. See you there!

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## **NOVEMBER MEETING**

### **REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT**

Wednesday, November 19, at 7:30 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Speaker: Stephen B. Russell

Steve Russell is the fleet superintendent for the city of Keene, New Hampshire. If it rolls in the city of Keene, Steve is responsible for keeping it rolling, and on his watch Keene's diesel-powered police, fire, rescue, public works, water, wastewater, and recycling center vehicles have been successfully transitioned into running on biodiesel.

Steve's PowerPoint presentation will give us an overview of how individuals and organizations can reduce their carbon footprint. He will bring the group up to speed on the emergence of alternative fuels ~ electric, natural gas, and hydrogen ~ as the new ways to power our vehicles in the future and will share his insightful consideration of alternative and transportation hybrids and shed light on the latest fuel for fuel debate.



### **Astronomy Walk Series**

#### **Comets, Asteroids & Meteor Showers, Oh My!!!**

*Easthampton, Massachusetts*

Sunday, December 7 from 6:30\* to 9 p.m. (Walk #8)

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Amateur Astronomer (e-mail Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone 413-562-4740)

**Fee:** \$5 Naturalists' Club members, \$8 others (This fee is to cover use of the auditorium.)

**Meeting Place:** Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon), Main Building

\* Please note the Start Time CHANGE to **6:30 p.m.** for the FALL and WINTER programs!

\*\*Program runs INSIDE and/or OUTSIDE, so weather **DOES NOT CANCEL!**

Come learn about the beauty and wonder of the universe around us! Have Comets, Asteroids, and Meteor Showers ever piqued your interest? Well, this month I'll be covering everything you need to know about them and how to enjoy their majesty to the fullest while they're around. November gives us the Taurid meteor shower (peaks Nov. 4/5) and the Leonids shower (peaks Nov. 17/18), and December brings us one of the best showers, with the Geminids (peaks Dec. 13/14). There is also another small shower right before Christmas, the Ursids (peaks Dec. 22/23), to help put great streaks of light on all your presents! We'll also peek into how some of our ancestors viewed cometary visits and meteor showers and what these events meant to them. Come learn all about these wanderers and how best to enjoy them. I guarantee that this will be fun and educational for everyone, so please plan on joining us! Please dress appropriately and bring binoculars if you have them (several pair will be available if you don't), and be ready to **take a walk through the universe!** Note that you don't have to attend every part of the series, so please come whenever your schedule allows. Please e-mail me if you have any questions.

*Please see page 10 of the Spring 2008 Club Newsletter (also available online) for more information about the 'Astronomy Walk Series.'*

### **Ludlow Reservoir Walk,**

*Ludlow, Massachusetts*

Thursday, December 11, from 9 a.m. to noon

**Leader:** Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

Happy Holidays! Take a breather before all the holiday get-togethers, by taking a cold, brisk morning walk, looking for signs of nature along the way. Call to register.

### **Nighttime at Noble View**

*Russell, Massachusetts*

Saturday, December 13,

from 7 to 9 p.m.

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon

**Registration:** Please call to register (413-564-0895).

**Meeting Place:** Noble View parking area, South Quarter Road, Russell.

Heavy rain or heavy snow cancels; light snow would be a delight.

Winter is nearly upon us: sunset is about 4:30 p.m. Join us for a pleasant, leisurely nighttime walk along the road to the Appalachian Mountain Club's Noble View cabin. Along the way, we will call for owls. Great horned owls nest in late January and begin calling to one another as early as October, so hopefully we'll receive answers to our owl calls. We'll be alert, too, for other nighttime creatures, like porcupine or flying squirrels. At our destination will be the strikingly familiar view down into Westfield and beyond. We'll enjoy a little stargazing (if weather permits) and some hot chocolate and goodies at the picnic table. Bring along a mug and flashlight and dress for the weather. Although this hike is free, a donation to help preserve this beautiful piece of Appalachian Mountain Club property is suggested.

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## **ALONG THE WATER'S EDGE ....Continued from page...2**

I hope these stories help you appreciate the amazing natural world around us! In closing, I'd like to move us back to the beauty of autumn with the following quote from one of our most gifted naturalist writers, Edwin Way Teale, written from his home, Trail Wood, in Hampton, Connecticut:

*The sequence of the falling of the leaves is like the sequence of the blooming of the wild flowers. It repeats itself each year. The time of its leaf-fall is a characteristic of the tree. At Trail Wood we see first of all the downward drift of those elongated leaves with delicate tints of YELLOW and SALMON and PURPLE that begin descending from the white ash trees in the last of the September days. They come down in slow swirls or sudden leaf showers. They are followed, as the weeks move into October, by the descent of the CRIMSON of the red maples, the GOLD of the hickories, the WINE RED of the tupelos, and the PALE YELLOW of the aspens. Taken from A Walk Through the Year, September 28.*

Till we meet again. ~Chris Lyons~



### **Snowshoeing Introduction**

*Holyoke, Massachusetts*

Sunday, December 14, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (later if we can snowshoe!)

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Snowshoer and Naturalist  
(e-mail Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone 413-562-4740)

**Registration:** REQUIRED. Please e-mail me to register!

**Meeting Place:** 11 a.m. at the Barnes & Noble Coffee Shop in Holyoke (7 Holyoke Street, on the access road to the Holyoke Mall).

Snowshoeing is a fabulous and inexpensive way to enjoy the outdoors during the winter. The snowy winter scenes are heavenly, and snowshoes allow you to get super exercise while providing views of the natural world that most folks never even knew existed. There is not really a lot of technique involved with snowshoeing: If you can walk, you can snowshoe!

We'll meet in the coffee shop and I'll provide an overview of all the things you need to know to get started with snowshoeing, including gear options, techniques, packing, safety, and trip planning (handout will be available). I'll provide lots of information about the best local places to snowshoe and also give some hints about a few of the very special places to visit in New England. My plan is to lead snowshoeing trips for the club starting in January, and this will be a great opportunity to finalize your wish list for Santa's visit in a few weeks!

If Mother Nature graces us with an early snowfall, I may lead a short snowshoeing adventure in the afternoon if possible. So please bring your gear if you have it available (i.e., snowshoes, poles, pack, layered clothing, winter hiking boots, water, and snacks, etc.). Snowshoeing is a great way to enjoy the beauty and wonder of the natural world in winter, so please plan on attending! If you have ANY questions, please contact me ASAP.



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### **DECEMBER HOLIDAYS MEETING**

Wednesday, December 17, at 7:30 p.m.  
Springfield Science Museum, Tolman Auditorium

**Presenters:** You!

**M.C.:** Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

Our annual holiday meeting is an opportunity for you to share your most memorable and interesting nature and travel experiences with other club members. Have you visited someplace you would recommend to others? Do you have photos of Naturalists' Club events from this past year? We want to hear from you. Show us some of the highlights by way of slides, PowerPoint, or a photo album. Presentations can be no longer than 10 minutes in length. Or bring artifacts or natural treasures to show off in the nature displays. Please bring along a holiday dessert to share with the group after the presentations. Come, let's celebrate together. Call Nancy, please, to get on the roster for presentations.

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## Great Smoky Mountains Naturalists Club Wildflower Pilgrimage ~Coming Up!

April 18-25, 2009

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon

**Registration:** Call Nancy or Tom (413-564-0895). We will need you to send a deposit to secure your reservation so we can proceed with arrangements.

**Cost:** Approximately \$900, including airfare from Hartford, lodging, local transportation and program.

Back due to popular demand and because the Smokies are just a great place to be in the spring, the Naturalists' Club Wildflower Pilgrimage will once again take place. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a world-renowned preserve of wildflower diversity. There are over 1,500 species of flowering plants there, unrivaled for any temperate zone preserve of its size or larger in the world. Our trip is scheduled for the height of wildflower season.

Plans include hiking the best wildflower trails in the park, visiting the upper elevation spruce-fir forest, listening to Appalachian music and storytelling, touring historic Cades Cove, and much more. Emphasis is on learning about the wildlife, wildflowers and wonders of the southern Appalachians. Besides Tom and Nancy, we will have guest specialists share their expertise. It will be an active and full week.

Nancy is former Adult Program Director at Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, the Smokies' environmental education center. She led wildflower classes and hikes for Tremont guests throughout the Smokies. She worked with botanists in the park on rare and endangered plants and pollination studies. Tom is a former National Park Service Ranger based in Cades Cove. For years he developed and conducted talks and hikes and evening presentations for park visitors. He also was instrumental in developing the Parks as Classrooms coursework for schoolchildren. He has co-authored two books about the park, *Hiking Trails of the Smokies* and *Wildflowers of the Smokies*. For seven years the park was their backyard.

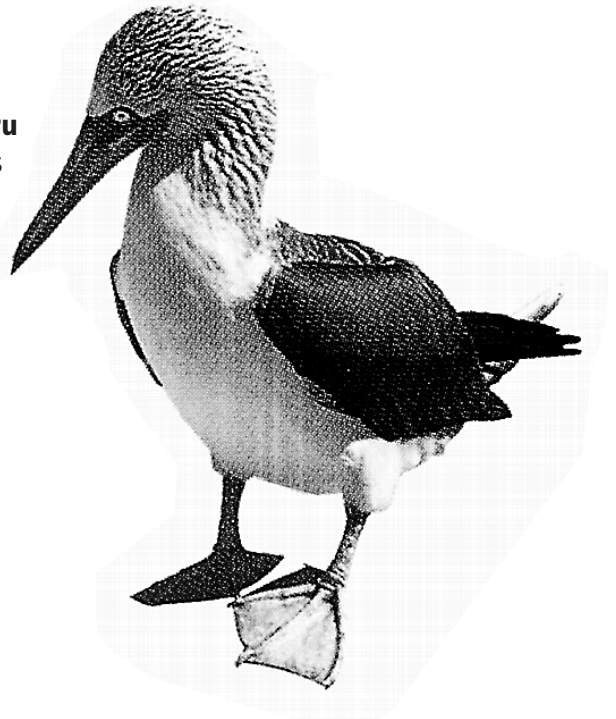
Your fee will cover transportation (airfare from Hartford to Knoxville, Tennessee); van rental and gas; lodging in cabins; program fee for guest presenters, and your own wildflower guide, personally signed by the author! Fee is based on 12 participants. Please call early to register so we can secure the best airfare rates. Come on along!

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### 2009 Trip to the Galapagos and Peru

The tour led by Sonya Vickers to the Galapagos and optional extension to Peru is now full, but there is a waiting list. Contact her at 413-566-3406 if you are interested.



#### Announcement

The February 2009 Naturalists' Club meeting at the Springfield Science Museum will be shifted from the third Wednesday of the month (the 18th) to the fourth (the 25th), as the Science Museum will be hosting a special program for kids at Tolman Auditorium during school vacation week.

**The NATURALISTS' CLUB**  
**2008–2009**

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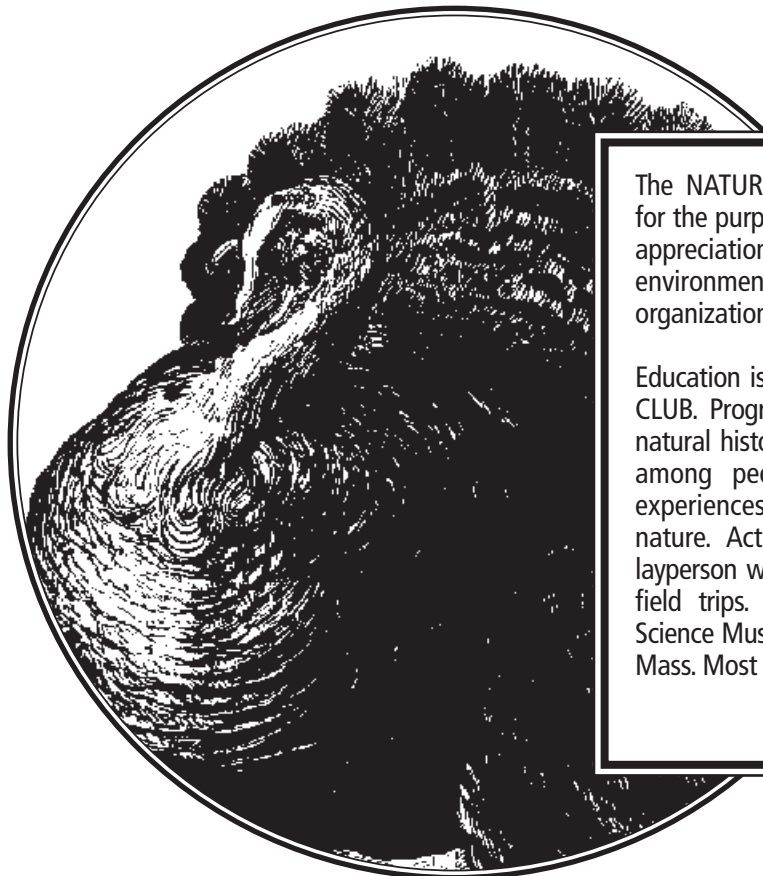
Loren Hoffman  
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With today's excessive gasoline prices, please be mindful of the environment, trip leaders, and drivers. If possible, please:

- carpool to destinations
- share costs with your driver

~ Thank you

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*Naturalists' Club Board of Directors*



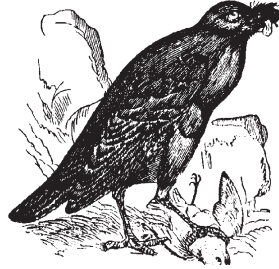
The NATURALISTS' CLUB was founded in 1969 for the purpose of actively promoting knowledge, appreciation, and preservation of our natural environment. It is an all-volunteer non-profit organization.

Education is a main focus of The NATURALISTS' - CLUB. Programming, with an emphasis on local natural history, is designed to create camaraderie among people of diverse interests through experiences deepening their appreciation of nature. Activities are geared to acquaint the layperson with the natural world, mostly through field trips. Monthly meetings are held at the Science Museum at the Quadrangle in Springfield, Mass. Most field trips and programs are free.



## FROM THE TREASURER:

The fall of the year is the traditional time to renew membership in the Club. Those of you with an "08-09" on your newsletter mailing label are paid up for the coming year. Otherwise, your dues are owed for the year starting September 2008. You may renew by sending a check (payable to The Naturalists' Club) to Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State College, Westfield MA 01086 or by giving the check to Dave at the next monthly meeting. Membership levels are indicated elsewhere on this page.



## MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

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\$15 per year for Individual or Family Membership  
\$25 per year for Supporting Membership  
\$50 per year for Sustaining Membership  
\$300 for Lifetime Membership

*Please note: Dave Lovejoy maintains the Naturalists' Club mailing list. Direct special requests or changes to him.*



## Become a Club Member or Renew Your Membership for 2009.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Requests for programs/trips \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please send information per the above to Club Treasurer Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086*