

'07  
'08

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## MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

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

**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:

Your newsletter mailing label shows whether or not your dues are paid for this year ('07-08). Thanks to all who have kept their membership current, with special thanks to members who have renewed or joined at the Supporting or Sustaining level. Membership levels appear elsewhere on this page. Those with '06-07 still on your label should send a dues check (payable to the Naturalists' Club) to Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086. Thanks.

*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 2008.

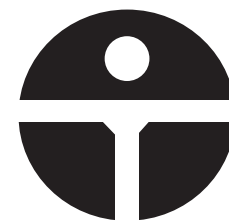
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

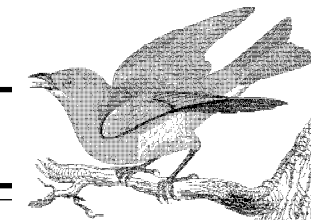


# The NATURALISTS' CLUB Newsletter

Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts  
<http://www.naturalist-club.org/>

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A P R I L - J U N E 2 0 0 8



This spring issue of the Naturalists' Club Newsletter, like the season, is "busting out all over!" and so we've rearranged the usual layout to accommodate such abundance. For starters, turn the page to peruse this quarter's schedule of activities: Beyond the meeting notices and eleven outings led by Naturalists' Club board members, you'll find a number of events being shared with the Club by the Northern Connecticut Land Trust, a recent recipient of a Dorothy Anne Wheat grant; a nighttime astronomy series and an intro to kayaking series, offered by a dynamic new member, Chris Lyons; as well as simple weekday rambles shared by a longtime friend of ours, Colette Potter. The Stanley Park Nature Series rounds out the boon of this season's offerings ~ look for this series write-up on page 11. There are quite a few announcements of interest, not to mention a Naturalist's Corner written by our very own Nancy Condon.

Hope you have plenty of free time this spring to take advantage of the many shared opportunities within. Enjoy!

# A P R I L – J U N E 2 0 0 8 SCHEDULE • OF • ACTIVITIES

## APRIL

- 6 Sunday Take a Walk Through the Universe! *Easthampton*
- 12 Saturday Atlantic Salmon Fry Stocking, *Westfield/Granville*
- 13 Sunday Birding at the Sofinowski Land Preserve, *Southwick*
- 16 Wednesday APRIL MEETING: Prehistoric Inhabitants of the Connecticut Valley
- 17 Thursday Let's Take a Walk, *Agawam*
- 19 Saturday Armored Mud Balls, Fish Ladders, and Habitat Exhibits, *Turners Falls*
- 26 Saturday Sanderson Falls Hike, *Chester*
- 27 Sunday McCann Family Farm and Whitaker Woods, *Somers, CT*
- 27 Sunday Spring Wildflowers – Part 1, *Westfield* (Stanley Park Nature Series)

## MAY

- 3 Saturday Introduction to Birdwatching, *Westfield* (Stanley Park Nature Series)
- 3 Saturday Intro to Kayaking: The What's, Why's & How's of Kayaking for Nature Observation, *Westfield*
- 3 Saturday Birdwatching Trip on the Scantic, *Somersville, CT*
- 4 Sunday The Appalachian Trail, Route 20 to Goose Pond, *Lee*
- 4 Sunday Take a Walk Through the Universe! *Easthampton*
- 10 Saturday A Nature Bus Trip, *Springfield to Concord and Framingham*
- 16 Friday Spring Is Here! *Holyoke*
- 17 Saturday Ribbits, Living, Self-Contained Houses, and Great Views! Frogs, Turtles, and Hiking Mt. Norwottuck, *Amherst*
- 18 Sunday Ed's Wildflower Garden, *Westfield*
- 18 Sunday Spring Wildflowers – Part 2, *Westfield* (Stanley Park Nature Series)
- 21 Wednesday MAY MEETING: Adventures of an Astronomer and Naturalist
- 25 Sunday Enjoying the Birds of Spring, *Westfield* (Stanley Park Nature Series)

## JUNE

- 1 Sunday Ocean Kayaking at the Thimble Islands ~ Shorebird Viewing, *Thimble Islands, CT*
- 7 Saturday Soapstone Mountain to McCann Family Farm, *Somers, CT*
- 8 Sunday Studying Nesting Birds, *Westfield* (Stanley Park Nature Series)
- 8 Sunday On to Connecticut on the Connecticut River, *Enfield to Windsor, CT*
- 8 Sunday Take a Walk Through the Universe! *Easthampton*
- 14 Saturday Grassland Birds at Westover, *Chicopee*
- 15 Sunday McLean Wildlife Refuge, *Granby, CT*
- 19 Thursday Summer! *Ludlow*
- 28 Saturday Quabbin Reservation: Gate 29 ~ Rattlesnake Hill, *Orange*

**Please Note:** You will find write-ups for the Stanley Park Nature Series on page 11.

hundreds of years and have proven their ability to transport people and help them complete water-based tasks all over the world. Flat-water kayaks are also a great way to get outdoors and observe nature, particularly shorebirds, turtles, frogs, and other aquatic and near-shore species. Kayaks are quiet, easy to transport, fairly light and durable, store lots of gear, and are relatively safe and comfortable. To help introduce flat-water kayaking to the club, I will be leading monthly trips starting with an introductory program in May.

I'll present an Introduction to Kayaking program on Saturday, May 3rd, from NOON to 3PM at Westfield State College. This is meant for those new to flat-water kayaking or for those who may own a kayak or have a bit of experience but really need to learn more (*please refer to the program write-up for more details*). If you're interested in participating in any of the upcoming kayaking trips I'll be offering, then you **MUST** either attend this introductory session or provide evidence that you have appropriate flat-water kayaking experience. If you're interested, but just can't make the May 3rd session, please contact me ASAP, and I'll do my best to help you get the training you need. Safety is the prime concern here. Although flat-water kayaking is a fairly safe endeavor, you need to be aware of, and prepared to handle, whatever Mother Nature may throw your way. The enjoyment and safety of the entire paddling group depends on each of us holding up our end of the bargain, so I just have to be sure everyone has the necessary experience.

I'll then be leading an ocean kayaking trip down to the Thimble Islands on Long Island Sound (Stony Creek, CT) on Sunday, June 1st, from 9AM to 7PM (*please refer to the program write-up for more details*). The Thimble Islands are a unique geologic feature this far south, and they harbor quite an array of life. This is always a great trip! Future trips may include paddles at Fishers Island Sound (near Mystic, CT), Narragansett Bay, Boston Harbor Islands, Pawcatuck River (near Westerly, RI), Plum Island, Lake Candlewood (near Danbury, CT), and Lake Champlain, among many other possible locations.

Kayaking is a fantastic way to gain access to a side of nature you rarely get to see directly, and it's great exercise and lots of fun! Hope to see you out on the water!

### **STANLEY PARK NATURE SERIES, Westfield, MA**

All walks will meet at the sign at the entrance to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Sanctuary. Registration is not necessary. Heavy rain cancels. (413-568-9312 [www.stanleypark.org](http://www.stanleypark.org))

### **Spring Wildflowers – Part 1**

Sunday, April 27, from 2 to 4 PM  
Leader: Dave Lovejoy

Late April is an excellent time to observe some of the spring wildflowers, the so-called spring ephemerals which mostly

bloom before the trees leaf out fully, taking advantage thereby of a greater availability of light. This will be a casual walk, suitable for all ages and abilities, and will visit several "hot spots" in the Sanctuary where some species not terribly common in the region will be seen.

### **Introduction to Birdwatching**

Saturday, May 3, from 9 to 11AM  
Leader: Tim Parshall

This walk will be a great way for beginners to start looking for and identifying spring birds returning to the area. We will talk about the most important characteristics of birds to look for so that you can identify them more easily. You will be introduced to the basics of using binoculars effectively. Bring your own pair of binoculars or borrow one from us. Bring a bird identification book if you have one.

Tim is an assistant professor of biology at Westfield State College whose specialties include forest ecology, ecological history, and environmental education.

### **Spring Wildflowers – Part 2**

Sunday, May 18, from 2 to 4PM  
Leader: Dave Lovejoy

Another casual walk, perhaps following the same path used in the April 27 trip, but additional species will surely be blooming so anyone attending both walks will see some new plants this time. Today is "Endangered Species Day," and although we may not actually see any, Dave will talk briefly about the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and listed plant species known to be in Westfield.

### **Enjoying the Birds of Spring**

Sunday May 25, from 9 to 11AM  
Leader: Janice Zepko

This workshop will focus on identifying birds by sight and sound. We will walk through a variety of habitats in the sanctuary during the height of spring migration, stopping to enjoy both resident songbirds and tropical migrants as they feed and sing in the newly budding trees. We may encounter as many as fifty species, including warblers, scarlet tanagers, and Baltimore orioles. Bring a pair of binoculars if you have one.

Janice is active in the Allen Bird Club of Springfield, serving as field trip and publications chair since 1995 and participating in a variety of annual bird censuses.

### **Studying Nesting Birds**

Sunday, June 8, from 9 to 11AM  
Leader: Janice Zepko

This workshop will focus on the breeding behavior of resident birds. We will hear males singing on territory and observe other courtship behavior. We will identify signs of nesting birds and hope to study birds as they build nests and feed young. Bring along a pair of binoculars if you have one.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

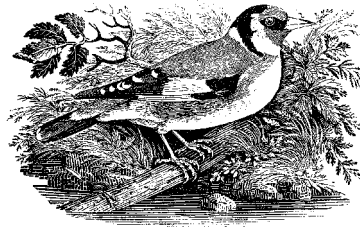
The Naturalists' Club will have a booth at the Think Green: Campus & Community Fair on Westfield State Campus on Tuesday, April 1st. Stop by to see us and the many other exhibits, including alternative vehicles, renewable energy displays, local agriculture, music, food and fun. 11AM - 4PM at Ely Campus Center and outside.

### Westfield River Watershed Association Symposium, Westfield, MA

Saturday, April 5, from 8:30AM to 1PM

Meeting Place: Westfield State College ~ Scanlon Banquet Hall

Since 1985, the Westfield River Watershed Association has been hosting a symposium addressing issues of concern to the Westfield River. The symposium is free and open to the public. It will include discussions by local and regional experts. More details can be found at [www.westfieldriver.org](http://www.westfieldriver.org).



### Astronomy Walk Series

#### Take a Walk Through the Universe! Easthampton, MA

Sunday, April 6, from 7:30 to 10PM (Walk #1)

Leader: Chris Lyons, amateur astronomer (e-mail: [Programs@GlassVisions.biz](mailto:Programs@GlassVisions.biz))

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

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

*Please see the Series Introduction, page 10, for more information.*

### Atlantic Salmon Fry Stocking, Westfield/Granville, MA

Saturday, April 12, from 9AM to 1PM

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

Registration: Please call Tom or Nancy to sign up.

Meeting Place: Westfield State College commuter parking lot, Western Ave.

Join the Westfield River Watershed Association in the annual fry stocking project of Munn Brook in Granville. Grab a bucket, and one of the state's fishery biologists will fill it with hundreds of tiny salmon fry. We'll throw on waders, or wet shoes if cold water doesn't bother you, and walk a section of Munn Brook distributing the fry into appropriate habitat.

Dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. Bring along some water and a snack. Heavy rain cancels.

### Birding at the Sofinowski Land Preserve, Southwick, MA

Sunday, April 13, from 8 to 10AM

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

Registration: Please call Tom or Nancy to sign up.

Meeting Place: Sofinowski Land Preserve, Mort Vining Road, Southwick.

In 2002, the town of Southwick set aside this old farm as part of their open space plan. We'll be exploring the established trails that meander from fields to wetlands to upland forests. The diversity of ecosystems offers a wonderful opportunity for birding, so strap on those binoculars or grab up that spotting scope. We'll travel slowly to observe as many signs of spring as we can.

Dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. Bring along some water and a drink. Heavy rain cancels.

### Grassland Birds at Westover, Chicopee, MA

Saturday, June 14, from 7 to 11AM. (Rain date June 21, same time).

Leaders: Drew Milroy and Dietrich Schlobohm

Meeting Place: Parking lot of the 99 Restaurant in the shopping plaza across from the Mass. Turnpike Exit #5

Registration: Call Dietrich (413-788-4125) to register. Limited to 25 people

Did you know that the largest grassland bird area in New England can be found in our own Springfield area? Join us for an outing to Westover Air force Base in Chicopee. This is a rare opportunity to view grassland birds. The chance of seeing grasshopper sparrows, bobolinks, meadowlarks, upland sandpipers and a host of other birds is quite high.

Our guide for this trip will be Drew Milroy, the Natural and Cultural Resources Manager at the base. Registration is a must and will require a driver's license or social security number one week in advance of our trip. We will meet in the shopping plaza on Memorial Drive across from Mass. Turnpike Exit #5, Chicopee. Gather in the 99 Restaurant parking lot. From there we will carpool a short distance to Westover's main gate for a short security check. The terrain for our bird walk is flat and the pace will be slow. Bring water and a snack. Don't forget your binoculars! I've done this trip several times and have found it incredibly enjoyable.

### McLean Wildlife Refuge, Granby, CT

Sunday, June 15 at 1:30PM

Leader: Dave Lovejoy (413-572-5307)

Meeting Place: Refuge parking lot just off Route 10/202, on the west side of the highway a little south of Granby center.

This area provides a choice of several loop trails, all on easy terrain, and includes a variety of habitats (wet and dry woods, pond, streamside). We will make a group decision on which trail to select and will focus on the trees, shrubs, and non-woody plants along the walk. Call with questions. Reservations are not necessary. Heavy rain cancels.

### Summer! Ludlow Reservoir, Ludlow, MA

Thursday, June 19, at 8:30AM

Leader: Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

A nice summer morning walk. This is an easy half-day walk. Good to get out! We'll look for birds and enjoy what we can find along the way. Call Colette to register and for more information.

Over the pond and its turtles, the kingfishers are rocketing, diving for minnows. The lily pads are at the surface again, with here and there a green flake of floating duckweed. Low over the water the swallows swoop, taking a toll of early mosquitoes and of shadflies, which are mayflies that do not wait until May to emerge. On a shrub near the stream, one phoebe calls petulantly, incessantly repeating its name. Its mate is renovating a nest under the bridge below the dam. ~ *A World Alive: The Natural Wonders of a New England River Valley*, by Lorus and Margery Milne.

### Quabbin Reservation: Gate 29 – Rattlesnake Hill, Orange, MA

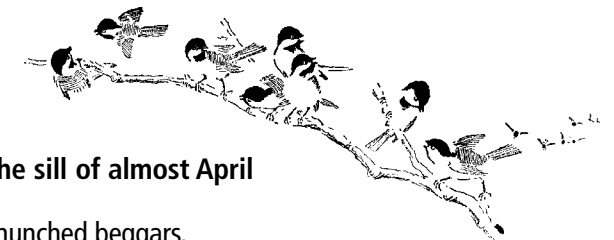
Saturday, June 28, 10AM to 2PM

Leader: Bill Fontaine

Meeting Place: Florence Savings Bank parking lot at the Stop & Shop Plaza on Route 9 in Belchertown.

Registration: Call Bill (413-533-2153)

This walk will take us along a gated, paved road through a variety of habitats on the northern end of Quabbin Reservoir. This area features abandoned fields and orchards and is home to yellow-rumped and Canada warblers, eastern towhees, American kestrels, and red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks. We'll begin with an interpretive walk keyed to numbered posts along the first part of the paved road. Afterward, we'll continue toward the shore of the reservoir, some 2.5 miles away. Wear sturdy footwear and bring along something to drink.



### On the sill of almost April

Like hunched beggars,  
we steal into forty degree woods  
and hover on the sill  
of almost April.

At nine o'clock dark  
we wait,  
hungry like foxes at midnight,  
our animal ears alert.

And then it begins  
the first raucous spring chorus.  
Staccato rhythms dance from the trees,  
seep into our stilled gypsy feet.

The spring peepers are peeping,  
whistling their high pitched notes,  
trilling them into  
our spring starved souls.

Unable to see the half-ounce amphibians  
lurking in trees above vernal pools,  
we, pilgrims, trust these prophets,  
whose swollen vocal sacs summon the season.

Awed,  
we stumble out of woods dark, wishing  
the first trumpeters of spring were  
an everyday occurrence,  
wishing we could carry them with us into  
the rush of the ordinary.

Julie Schlobohm

## APRIL MEETING

### PREHISTORIC INHABITANTS OF THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY

Wednesday, April 16, at 7:30PM

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Speaker: Patrick Getty

The flora and fauna of New England was a very different some 200 million years ago, at the dawn of the age of dinosaurs. The climate was much more tropical, and typical plants included a variety of ferns, horsetails, ginkgoes, and conifers. A large rift valley stretching from Long Island Sound to Northfield, Mass. teemed with early dinosaurs and primitive crocodiles, both of whom left skeletons and footprints for paleontologists to discover. Lakes that filled in the low points of the valley were home to numerous species of heavily scaled fish as well as coelacanths, clams, and insects.

A PowerPoint presentation on paleontology will feature rarely seen images of some of the prehistoric inhabitants of New England, including the bones of a dinosaur found about a mile from the Springfield Science Museum!

Patrick holds a B.S. in Biology and a M.S. in Geology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he studied under two well-known paleontologists. He has conducted extensive fieldwork on dinosaur footprints in the Connecticut River Valley and has published two papers on footprints in peer-reviewed journals. He is currently an adjunct lecturer and is associated with the Center for Integrative Geosciences at the University of Connecticut.

**Intro to Kayaking: The What's, Why's & How's of Kayaking for Nature Observation, Westfield, MA**

Saturday, May 3, from Noon to 3PM

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, sea kayaker and naturalist (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz)

**Meeting Place:** Wilson Hall, Room 241, Westfield State College Biology Department Take main entrance into campus and follow the main road as it bears right. Wilson is the second large brick building on your right (with an attached greenhouse). There's plenty of parking. Room 241 is in the central portion of the building, on the second floor. You can find a campus map at www.wsc.ma.edu.

Have you ever wanted to get into the sport of flat-water kayaking but had no idea where to start? Or do you own a kayak and/or have a bit of experience but really would like to learn more? If so, then this program is for you! I will be covering everything you need to know about flat-water kayaks and the sport in general, including:

- Why kayaks are great boats for general paddling and nature observing
- Boat design information (which features you really need!)
- Boat recommendations and pricing info
- Equipment information (i.e., kayaks, paddles, paddling clothes, dry bags, deck bags, general and safety gear, car racks, etc.)
- All about paddles and paddling techniques
- Safety issues and techniques
- The art of assisted and self-rescues
- Navigation strategies and how to use marine charts
- Finding places to paddle (i.e., rivers, ponds and lakes, ocean)
- Kayak camping information

The first part of the program will be held indoors. However, when we meet, we'll pick a date (before the end of May) to do some on-water paddling on local protected waters to allow people to see some of the presented techniques in action and get some basic paddling experience for themselves! Come join me to find another fabulous way to experience the great outdoors!

*\*Please note that completion of this introductory program (or evidence of experience) is required for anyone wishing to participate in any of the upcoming club kayak trips (i.e., Thimble Islands Paddle on Sunday, June 1). Please review Series Introduction, page 10, for more information on club kayaking activities and necessary experience.*

**Astronomy Walk Series**

**Take a Walk Through the Universe! Easthampton, MA**

Sunday, May 4, from 7:30 to 10PM (Walk #1)

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

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

*\*\*Program runs INSIDE and/or OUTSIDE, so weather DOES NOT CANCEL! Please see the Series Introduction, page 10, for more information.*

**The Appalachian Trail, Route 20 to Goose Pond, Lee, MA**

Sunday, May 4, from 9AM to 3PM

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

**Registration:** Please call Tom or Nancy to sign up.

**Meeting Place:** Route 20, Lee, Mass., where the Appalachian Trail crosses

We'll be hiking south on the Appalachian Trail, from Route 20 to Upper Goose Pond. The round trip distance will be about four miles. We'll start with a meander through a wetland and then cross the Mass Turnpike on a footpath over the traffic. Soon we'll leave the sound of traffic behind us as we climb up and over a small ridge. The forest closes in around us as we make our way to the eastern end of Goose Pond. Along the way we'll look for signs of spring.

The wilderness character of the trail is outstanding. Some places are quite rocky, so wear some solid shoes and maybe bring along a hiking staff. Dress for the weather. Bring along some water and a lunch. Heavy rain cancels.

**A Nature Bus Trip, Springfield to Concord and Framingham, MA**

Saturday, May 10, from 8AM to 7:30PM (Rain or Shine)

**Destinations:** Walden Pond State Reservation, Concord, and Garden in the Woods (New England Wild Flower Society), Framingham

**Leaders:** Joan Presz (413-569-6663) and Delores Gentile (413-783-6113)

We will leave Springfield at 8AM, to start the day at Walden Pond. There will be a short talk and tour of the reservation, or people can just enjoy this special place on their own. The afternoon will be spent at Garden in the Woods. Mid-May, if nature is kind to us, is the peak of the season for early wildflowers. We will have a short lunch at the picnic area, then break up into small groups for an hour-long guided tour of gardens and paths where more than 1500 native species and cultivars are grown. Some plants grown here are so rare you're likely to be seeing them for the first time. You can visit the museum store, and there are also plants for sale.

*Special notes: You need to bring your own lunch. Dress for the weather. The bus must be filled by April 24 or the trip will be cancelled. The cost for members of the Naturalists' Club and the Agawam Garden Club is \$39, and \$44 for guests. Call Delores or Joan to register.*

**Spring Is Here! Ashley Ponds, Holyoke, MA**

Friday, May 16, at 9:30AM

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

Put on your walking shoes, grab your bird and flower field guides, and take a walk with the club at Ashley Ponds, Holyoke. It will be a half day, easy walking. May is a beautiful time of the year to get out and about. Call Colette to register and for more information.

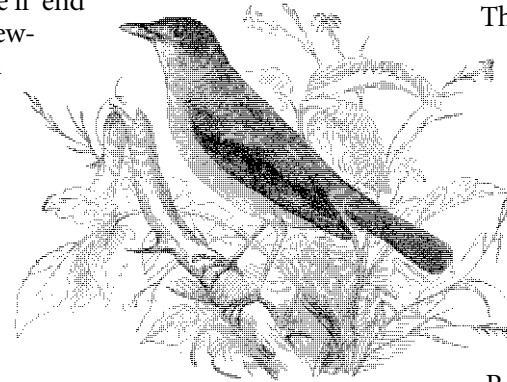
**Ribbits, Self-Contained Houses, and Great Views: Frogs, Turtles, and Hiking Mt. Norwottuck, Amherst, MA**

Saturday, May 17, from 10AM to 4PM

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, "frog enthusiast"/naturalist (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz)

**Meeting Place:** Notch Visitors Center parking lot, Holyoke Range State Park, Route 116, Amherst

Come join me for a delightful hike up to the summit of Mt. Norwottuck (1106 ft.) for lunch and some great views! Hot, dry upper slopes, cool, moist ravines, and mineral-rich ledges produce a combination of microclimates on the mountain that support plant and animal species uncommon in greater Massachusetts. During lunch I'll provide information about our local turtles, frogs, and toads. We'll talk about habitat, daily activities, nesting and concealment, frog calls, and much more! Then we'll venture into the swamps and vernal pools in the lower saddle of the mountain and see what we can find. Hopefully we'll be able to get some views of a few of our resident species in their native habitat ~ no guarantees, however! We'll end the day with a relatively flat few-mile hike back to the Notch Visitors Center. Plan on around five miles of hiking, starting with a moderately strenuous 1.5-mile climb to the summit. Bring your camera, binoculars, and pack a lunch. Heavy rain cancels.



**Ed's Wildflower Garden, Westfield, MA**

Sunday, May 18, from 10AM to Noon

**Leaders:** Linda Leed and Jack Megas

**Meeting Place:** Call Jack (413-782-3962)

The late Edward Piela, of Chicopee, was the "founding Father" of the Naturalists' Club in 1969. A wildflower garden in his memory has been created at Stanley Park, with over thirty species flowering in mid-May. Join us on this identification walk. The park is a great place for a picnic lunch and it also has a "wilder" area along the Little River. Call Jack for meeting place. Hard rain cancels.

**Soapstone Mountain to McCann Family Farm, Somers, CT**

Saturday, June 7, from 9AM to 12 Noon

**Leaders:** Wes Smith, Judith Snyder

**Meeting Place:** Soapstone Mountain parking lot, off Gulf Rd., Somers, CT

**Information:** Judith Snyder (860-749-5411) or e-mail nctia@yahoo.com

This hike will start with a chance to climb the observation tower in the Shenipsit State Forest. On a clear day the view can include Western Mass., Southern Vermont, New York, and Mt. Monadnock, New Hampshire. The hike will continue down the mountain, along trails maintained by CFP, the Town of Somers, and Northern CT Land Trust. Those who do not wish to hike the entire five miles can hike halfway and then be shuttled back to the parking lot. The hike will then continue on to the 272 Whitaker property recently acquired by the NCLT.

Rain or shine. Bring plenty of water, a snack, and wear sturdy shoes. Optional pizza stop afterwards.

In the forest soil along the river the abundant moisture favors the growth of seedling trees. Their summer foliage serves as a curtain, concealing from one another the animals of the woodland and those of the water world. If the green curtain is quietly approached and slowly parted, surprises on both sides can be expected. For a few moments, a great blue heron standing motionless at the edge of the water may remain unaware of any intrusion. A mother wood duck, followed by half a dozen ducklings, is likely to continue tipping head downward, feeding in the shallows on duckweed and various water plants. Her young chase mosquito wrigglers and other small insects. But when the heron squawks in alarm and takes to his broad wings, to flap ponderously upriver, the mother duck at top speed marshals her family out of sight. ~ *A World Alive: The Natural Wonders of a New England River Valley*, by Lorus and Margery Milne.

**MAY MEETING**

**ADVENTURES OF AN ASTRONOMER AND NATURALIST**

Wednesday, May 21, at 7:30PM

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

**Speaker:** Richard Sanderson, interviewed by Jack Megas

Richard Sanderson is the curator of physical science at the Springfield Science Museum and also manages the historic Seymour Planetarium. He has been a member of our club for 35 years, serving on the board of directors, as newsletter editor, as well as a guest speaker and field trip leader for caving, geology, and astronomy. Richard is past president and current secretary-treasurer of the Springfield Stars Club and has traveled around the world to observe five solar eclipses.

Richard's friend of 25 years, Jack Megas, will interview him. Your active participation is welcome! We are also celebrating the publication of Richard's first book, *The Illustrated Timeline of the Universe*, which will be available for signing.

**Ocean Kayaking at the Thimble Islands ~ Shorebird**

**Viewing,** Long Island Sound, Stony Creek, CT

Sunday, June 1, from 9AM to 7PM

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

**Meeting Place:** 9AM sharp at Springfield Basketball Hall of Fame parking lot (near Uno's Pizzeria). After getting a count of everyone and doing a quick gear check, we'll head out by 9:15AM, so don't be late!!! We'll caravan down to the public dock in Stony Creek, CT, our launch site.

Join me for a delightful paddle within the large group of granite islands (365 at last count!) just offshore in Stony Creek, CT (1.5-hour drive from Springfield)! We will enjoy some great paddling, talk about the history of the area (both geologic and human), and will be discussing shorebird species and doing some observing. Shorebirds are plentiful on the many uninhabited islands, and the nearby Stewart McKinney National Wildlife Refuge helps to ensure even greater bird populations in this area. Plan on 5-10 miles of paddling at a medium pace with several re-group stops if/when paddlers get separated. Please dress appropriately, pack your camera and binoculars, and bring a lunch. We'll have a lunch stop on one of the small islands or on a local beach.

The trip will run unless there is continuous rain or high winds forecasted.

*Please review Series Introduction, page 10, for more information on club kayaking activities and necessary experience.*

Each person going on this trip must supply his/her own kayak, paddle, and associated gear. If you don't have your own, kayaks can be rented locally and car-topped down to Stony Creek for the day's paddle. If looking to rent, please contact me ASAP, and I will provide you with contact information for the best local rental outfitters.

**Soapstone Mountain to McCann Family Farm, Somers, CT**

Saturday, June 7, from 9AM to 12 Noon

**Leaders:** Wes Smith, Judith Snyder

**Meeting Place:** Soapstone Mountain parking lot, off Gulf Rd., Somers, CT

**Information:** Judith Snyder (860-749-5411) or e-mail nctia@yahoo.com

This hike will start with a chance to climb the observation tower in the Shenipsit State Forest. On a clear day the view can include Western Mass., Southern Vermont, New York, and Mt. Monadnock, New Hampshire. The hike will continue down the mountain, along trails maintained by CFFPA, the Town of Somers, and Northern CT Land Trust. Those who do not wish to hike the entire five miles can hike halfway and then be shuttled back to the parking lot. The hike will then continue on to the 272 Whitaker property recently acquired by the NCLT.

Rain or shine. Bring plenty of water, a snack, and wear sturdy shoes. Optional pizza stop afterwards.

**On to Connecticut on the Connecticut River, Enfield to Windsor, CT**

Sunday, June 8, from 9AM to 3PM

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

**Registration:** Please call Tom or Nancy to sign up.

**Meeting Place:** Dunkin' Donuts in Enfield, Connecticut

Have you ever wanted to paddle over a dam? Of course not, no one does, and we're in luck: The old Enfield Dam has been removed, opening a wonderful section of the Connecticut River to paddlers. The breeched dam can be paddled, but requires a bit of confidence in your ability to keep your canoe straight. So if you feel confident, sign right up. If you are not quite sure, give us a call and we can talk.

Along the way from Enfield to Windsor, we'll experience stretches of minor whitewater, so we'll spend a bit of time early in the trip learning to read the river and steer our canoes through a rock garden of rapids. The scenery in this ten-mile section varies from farmland to echoes of the Industrial Revolution.

To sign up, you don't need to own your own canoe or kayak. You can rent one from us. We'll provide lifejackets and paddles and a small dry bag for electronics. Bring along a lunch, some water, and shoes you don't mind getting wet.

**Astronomy Walk Series**

**Take a Walk Through the Universe! Easthampton, MA**

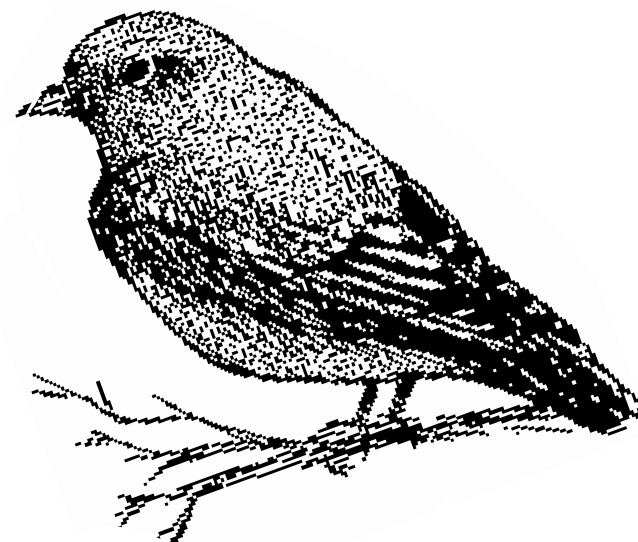
Sunday, June 8, from 7:30 to 10PM (Walk #3)

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

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

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

*Please see the Series Introduction, page 10, for more information.*



**Let's Take a Walk,**

Robinson State Park, Agawam, MA

Thursday, April 17, at 9:30AM

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

Time to get out and look for signs of spring ~ early flowers, birds, whatever we can find! A great day for a walk. Call Colette to register and for information. This walk will be a half day. Easy walking.

**Armored Mud Balls, Fish Ladders, and Habitat Exhibits, Turners Falls, MA**

Saturday, April 19, from 9AM to 1PM

**Leader:** Leo Riendeau (413-739-5546)

**Meeting Places:** At 9AM at Table & Vine (f/k/a Town & Country) liquor store parking lot on Route 5 in West Springfield. At 10AM at the Greenfield Tourist Information Center (behind Applebee's) on the Mohawk Trail/Route 2A East, just off the Greenfield rotary on Route 91.

Today we travel to the village of Turners Falls in the town of Montague, Mass., and park at the site where Professor Richard Little discovered the armored mud balls. From here we take a short walk to the fish ladder at the Turners Fall Dam. Although the ladder is not operational at this time, we can view its structure and see how the anadromous fish (shad and occasional salmon) make their way over the dam.

Another very short walk, and we arrive at the Great Falls Discovery Center, located within a complex of old mill buildings and including open-habitat exhibits and fish tanks. The exhibits highlight various habitats found in the Connecticut River Watershed and give a perspective on today's view of threats to those habitats and what we can do to safeguard them. After our visit to the center we can take a walking tour along the rail trail that runs from Turners Falls to Deerfield, through downtown Turners Falls, and see the viewable wildlife areas along the canal.

**Sanderson Falls Hike, Chester, MA**

Saturday, April 26 at 10AM

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

**Place:** Westfield State College commuter parking lot

Join us for a hike to one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Western Massachusetts ~ Sanderson Falls, located in Chester State Forest in the foothills of the Berkshires. As we hike to the falls, we should see a number of spring wildflowers.

This hike is about two miles along a dirt road, through an oak and hemlock forest. Bring a lunch to enjoy near the crystal pool at the foot of this magnificent waterfall. Hardy climbers can explore the forest and see another waterfall seldom ever seen! Sturdy hiking boots are recommended. Heavy rain cancels.

**McCann Family Farm and Whitaker Woods, Somers, CT**

Sunday, April 27, from 9AM to 12 Noon

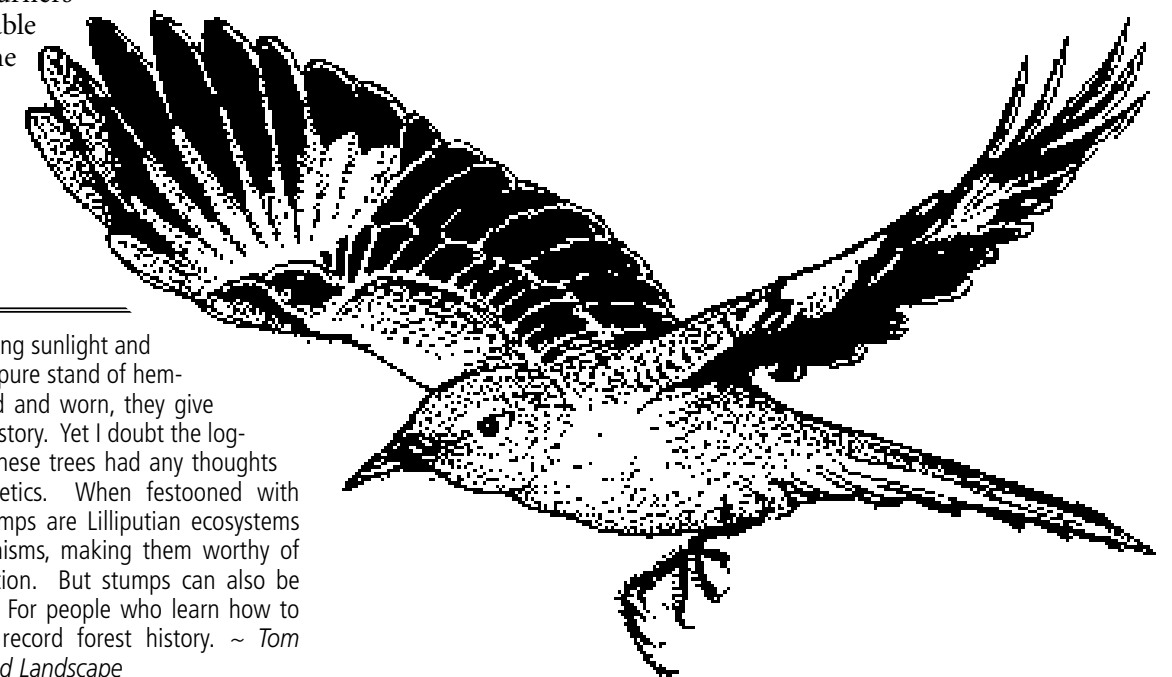
**Leaders:** Wes Smith, Judith Snyder

**Meeting Place:** Somers Town Hall parking lot ~ center of Somers on Route 190

**Registration:** Judith Snyder (860-749-5411)

McCann Family Farm and Whitakers' Woods are two unique pieces of property totaling over 350 acres in the center of Somers. Both properties have an abundance of flora and fauna, a large variety of trees, vernal pools, delightful brooks and unique stonewalls, all of which make homes for an abundance of wildlife.

We will hike at a leisurely pace to give everyone time to absorb this wonderland of preserved open space ~ it is nature at its best! Rolling terrain with a few uphill climbs. Layered clothing and sturdy boots are recommended. Bring snacks and drinks. This is a special invitation to the Naturalist Club members from the Northern CT Land Trust.



The stumps . . . flecked by spring sunlight and in contrast to the even-aged, pure stand of hemlock, are striking. Weathered and worn, they give distinction to the forest understory. Yet I doubt the loggers responsible for cutting these trees had any thoughts of future forest floor aesthetics. When festooned with lichens, moss, and fungi, stumps are Lilliputian ecosystems inhabited by countless organisms, making them worthy of close inspection and admiration. But stumps can also be appreciated in another way: For people who learn how to read them, they accurately record forest history. ~ Tom Wessels, *Reading the Forested Landscape*

**ASTRONOMY WALK, KAYAKING and STANLEY PARK**

**SERIES**

**ASTRONOMY WALK SERIES:**

**Take a Walk Through the Universe!**

Walk #1: Sunday, April 6, 7:30 to 10PM

Walk #2: Sunday, May 4, 7:30 to 10PM

Walk #3: Sunday, June 8, 7:30 to 10PM

Leader: Chris Lyons, Amateur Astronomer

(e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz)

Meeting Place: Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton, MA

Welcome to the new monthly *Take a Walk Through the Universe!* Astronomy Walk Series! Each program will cover several key topics in astronomy, teach you about the constellations and how to navigate the sky, and also get you out under the stars to observe many wonderful celestial objects! These programs are designed for the aspiring amateur, but will also be of interest to people with all levels of astronomical experience. The prime tools used for observing the marvels of our universe will be your eyes and, most importantly, your imagination! The program is open to ALL, and I'll guarantee that everyone will come away learning something new each month. We'll begin on Sunday, April 6th, from 7:30-10:00PM at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton, Mass. (88 Combs Court). The programs will run throughout the year, generally early each month, when the moon is new and the skies are dark.

Arcadia is easy to get to, just 20 minutes from downtown Springfield and slightly over 5 minutes from Northampton and Easthampton centers. It's located at 88 Combs Court, just off East Street, which runs between Route 5 and Route 141 in Easthampton (look for Arcadia signs). Arcadia offers both an indoor auditorium, where I'll present material, and easy access to large open fields for physical observing. Weather problems are the biggest detriment to outdoor-only astronomy programs in New England, and thankfully, we'll be able to run each month *regardless of weather!* This will also help us to keep the start times consistent all year.

We'll start in the auditorium, where we'll discuss each month's astronomical topics and I'll introduce the programs' constellations and observing targets that we'll be tackling later. I promise this will **not** be a dry scientific presentation! The idea is to get everyone involved in learning about the sky and constellations, and I'll help you to enhance your imagination, which is a key component for successful astronomical observing. We'll talk about the large set of myths and legends our ancestors applied to the skies, which provides a fascinating look on human history! We'll play some games to reinforce everything presented and have some fun in the process! If the skies are clear, you can plan on half the program being inside, and the other half being outside. When weather is good, we'll take a short walk to the open fields of Arcadia and begin our physical observing. There will be two constellations

presented each month, and I'll show you where they're located and how to navigate the sky to find them. We'll also look at some of the interesting celestial observing targets (i.e., double stars, galaxies, star clusters, nebulae, planets, etc.) available in each constellation. Your eyes and imagination will be the primary tools used for viewing, but we'll augment that with binoculars, and in some cases with spotting scopes and telescopes.

Let's talk a bit about why this is called a Series. One of the main hurdles when learning about astronomy is that there is *just so much information to learn and comprehend*. Trying to get your arms around it all at once, in a couple of hours, is just **not** possible! By splitting the presented information into a larger series of programs, this allows new ideas to be given slowly and reinforced each month, which will greatly help your ability to understand and retain the material. This makes it a bit more difficult for me since I'll need to present information at various levels to keep everyone interested and learning, but I'm up to the challenge!

This series is going to be educational and, most importantly, fun, so I hope you come along for the ride! Just bring your eyes, mind, and imagination, and be ready to *take a walk through the universe!* Bring binoculars if you have them, but if not, several pairs will be available. When weather is good, please dress appropriately for wandering around the fields of Arcadia in the evening (pay special attention to your footwear) and consider bringing a light folding chair (or backpacking chair) and/or blankets for observing. Please contact me at Programs@GlassVisions.biz if you have any questions. Hope to see you at Arcadia!

**KAYAKING FOR NATURE OBSERVATION SERIES:**

**Introduction**

SATURDAY, May 3, from NOON-3PM,

plus, later, a local on-water paddling day

**Thimble Islands Paddle**

SUNDAY, June 1, from 9AM-7PM

*Monthly kayaking events to continue, starting in July '08.*

Leader: Chris Lyons, Sea Kayaker and Naturalist

(e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz)

When most people think of kayaks, they think of fast-moving rivers and whitewater. Although that type of kayaking can be fun, it's more a high-activity sport than an easily controllable mode of water transportation. The other major type of kayak is called a flat-water boat. This is a fairly broad category and includes river kayaks, sit-on-tops, and sea kayaks. These have been around for

**NATURALIST'S CORNER**

**FLOWERING DOGWOOD - A SIGN OF SPRING**

The time has come when, walking through the woods, you may happen upon one of my favorite signs of spring – the flowering dogwood in blossom. *Cornus florida* can really make you take notice April or May when it blooms.

Flowering dogwood is a small tree, growing in the understory, usually only 10 feet and seldom reaching to 40 feet high. It is one of the few trees whose leaves grow opposite to one another. Look at a leaf. The veins are curved, roughly following the shape of the leaf. Check out the distinctive bark. It is split into many small, squarish scales, giving it the appearance of corn flakes. What makes this tree so striking in the woods and the reason it is so popular around homes is its beautiful blossoms. What you think might be four large petals are actually modified leaves called bracts. These large white, sometimes pink, bracts attract pollinators to the tight cluster of tiny greenish flowers at their base.

Every culture and religion has legends and folklore surrounding much of their native flora. There is a particularly beautiful Christian legend surrounding this tree that relates several of its parts to the crucifixion of Jesus, which goes as follows: At one time, in the Middle East, the dogwood tree stood tall and strong. It was chosen to be made into a cross for Jesus. The dogwood was distressed at this, so Jesus promised the dogwood tree that from then on, its limbs would be slender and twisted and it would never again grow large enough to serve such a purpose. As a reminder, the blossoms are surrounded by four “petals,” in the shape of a cross. Each “petal” bears a rust-stained notch, signifying wounds from the nails, and spiky pistils of the flowers centered at the base of the bracts are the thorny crown.



The wood of flowering dogwood is hard, close-grained, and doesn't splinter very easily. It was therefore the wood of choice for loom shuttlecocks, handles, gristmill cogs, bob-bins and mallets, and is still used today for golf club heads. The trunk bark was reportedly powdered and made into a kind of toothpaste and could also be made into a black ink when mixed with iron sulfate. Bark from the root could be made into a scarlet dye. During the Civil War, the Confederate army used a tonic made from the bark of flowering dogwood as a substitute for the difficult to obtain quinine to treat malaria. A healthy dogwood tree can produce up to 20 pounds of fruit. These bitter red berries are not good for people to eat, but skunks, deer, rabbits, squirrels and up to 50 species of birds eat a combination of berries and twigs. This beautiful little tree, voted “America's best-loved flowering tree” by *Horticulture* magazine, ranges from southern Maine clear down to Florida and west to East Texas. Hopefully, you will still be able to see this little beauty on some of your woodland forays this spring, but an introduced disease ~ dogwood anthracnose ~ is threatening the health of dogwood trees throughout the entire range. This disease also affects the Pacific dogwood, native to the western states. The origin of *Discula destructiva*, the fungus that causes the disease, is still a mystery as it has not been found on any dogwood species outside of the US. Trees in shady, moist locations are more susceptible to this fungus than are healthy trees in direct sunlight. Look for leaves with splotches tan or brown in the center, surrounded by a purple or red ring. The tree may have cankers, or bumps, on twigs or stems. Maybe the tree's lower branches are dead already. All these are symptoms of the disease, and many dogwoods die within 1-3 years as a result. Scientists are still working on overcoming it, and hope lies in small number of disease-resistant individuals found in Maryland. There are a number of resistant varieties of dogwoods available on the market if you wish to have one in your yard. The Kousa Dogwood, *Cornus kousa*, is resistant, and crosses of it with flowering dogwood hold promise as well. If you already have a flowering dogwood in your yard, keep it healthy and don't let it get stressed due to lack of water or overwatering. Make sure air is able to circulate around it easily and the trunk does not get injured and subject to infection.

Next time you are enjoying a hike in the spring, look for this wonderful little tree so steeped in legend, mystery, and beauty.

\*~Nancy Condon~\*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Wildlife Rescue Opportunity.** Due to the cancellation of our February meeting, our speaker, Dee Howe, from Urban Wildlife was not able to extend an important invitation to you. Spring is a very busy time for Dee and her volunteers at the wildlife rehabilitation centers. Many animal babies are brought in and need frequent feeding and tending. If you are interested in volunteering even a small bit of time caring for the animals that are brought in, Dee would be extremely happy to hear from you. Please contact her at 781-1505 or dee1@davenportandco.com. She is located at 146 Bowdoin Street in Springfield. It is bound to be a very rewarding and memorable experience.

**2009 Trip to the Galapagos and Peru.** Did you hear about last summer's trip to the Galapagos? Well, we will have a repeat performance in July 2009! These volcanic islands are 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador and home to plants and animals that are found nowhere else in the world. It is a naturalist's delight. This year we will be extending the trip on to Peru, where we can see the magnificent Andes and the incredible huge stonework of the Incas. The height of the trip includes an adventure to Machu Picchu. Please contact Sonya Vickers at sevickers@charter.net for more information. Prices are on hold till at least May 18. Just a few spaces left!



**Stump Sprouts Weekend,** West Hawley, MA  
Friday, September 5, through Sunday, September 7  
Time Span: From Friday evening dinner through a Sunday luncheon

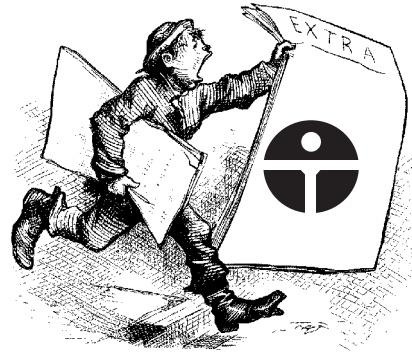
**Leaders:** Dietrich and Julie Schlobohm (788-4125)  
**Registration:** All-inclusive cost for two nights lodging and six meals is \$129 per person. Make check payable to The Naturalists Club and send to Dietrich Schlobohm, 52 Poplar Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089.

Indicate in your registration your roommate preference. Reservations and a 50% deposit must be received no later than June 1. This trip will be cancelled if 18 people are not paid by that date. Call Dietrich or Julie for more information.

High on the side of a mountain with a magnificent view, Stump Sprouts ski lodge provides a beautiful setting for walking, hiking, or relaxing in solitude. A 90-minute drive from Springfield, the property consists of a 450-acre tract surrounded by Dubuque, Savoy, and Mohawk State Forests.

Guests need to bring their own bedding, towels, and toiletries; bathrooms are shared. Our hosts will provide superb family-style garden-fresh meals, complete with homemade breads, and cookies. There is usually a choice of regular or meatless entrees. Bring along binoculars, good footwear, curiosity and a sense of adventure.  
Limit: 20 people

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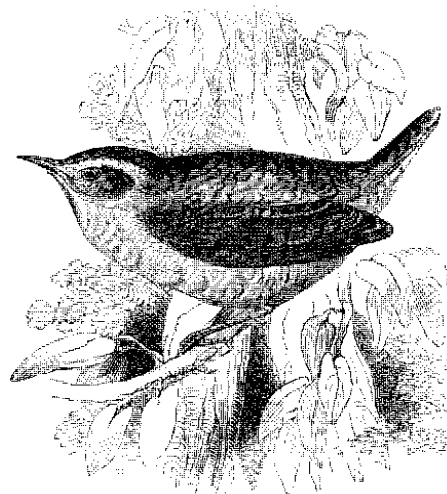


## NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Elections for officers and board members will be held at the May meeting. Prior to the May meeting, club members may contact anyone on the Nominating Committee to make additional nominations. Members of the committee are Colette Potter (786-1805), Linda Leed (783-0666), and Joan Presz (569-6663). The following (incumbents) are running for office:

President ~ Dave Gallup  
Vice President ~ Nancy Condon  
Treasurer ~ Dave Lovejoy  
Corresponding Secretary ~ Suzanne Gallup  
Recording Secretary ~ Sonya Vickers  
Directors ~ Tom Condon, Bill Fontaine, Jack Megas, Dietrich Schlobohm

Nominations may also be made from the floor at the May meeting.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### DOROTHY ANNE WHEAT NATURALISTS' FUND

*Grants are being made from the Dorothy Anne Wheat Naturalists' Fund, whose objectives are to support land acquisition, habitat preservation, wildlife preservation and rehabilitation, and to promote environmental education and an awareness of the natural world. Recent grants include:*

**Deerfield Chapter of Trout Unlimited.** About twenty years ago a Greenfield teacher approached Micky Novak at the state fish hatchery. This teacher wanted to give his students the opportunity to participate in real science. Micky and the teacher created the foundations for what would become the Atlantic Salmon Egg Rearing Program. Thirty-two schools now participate in this program. Children in the schools are provided between 200 and 300 salmon eggs in February. In specially chilled tanks, the students raise and monitor the salmon from hatching to fry. Later, in April or May, the students will take these fry to a local stream and release the fish back into the Connecticut River Watershed. It is hoped that these students will become vested in protecting the health of the river and restoring the Atlantic Salmon to Western Massachusetts. The Deerfield Chapter of Trout Unlimited has spearheaded this project. The Springfield Naturalist Club has donated \$1000 to assist this group in the continuation and growth of this project.

**Scantic River Watershed Association.** Named for the Scantuck Indians, the Scantic River watershed drains some 90,000 acres in Connecticut and Massachusetts. It is fed by several small tributaries, of which many are considered Class A water quality (suitable for drinking). The Scantic River Watershed Association was originally started in 1972 by a group of concerned citizens to preserve and protect the natural resources of the river and surrounding watershed. In the recent past, they have procured 47 acres in Somers, CT, transformed into the Scantic Riparian Area by many hours of volunteer time. A recent River Walk Survey found many sections of the Scantic blocked by fallen trees and debris, making it difficult to navigate by canoe and kayak. Scantic River Watershed Association volunteers have worked on clearing these areas to create a "canoe trail" along the riverway. The Naturalists' Club recently donated \$1000 to the Scantic River Watershed Association. Look through event listings in this newsletter for a number of happenings sponsored by the SWRA and shared with the Naturalists' Club. For more information on the watershed association look online at [www.ScanticRiverWatershed.org](http://www.ScanticRiverWatershed.org) or write to SRWA, Box 303, Somers, CT 06071.

**Massachusetts Bird of Prey Rehab. Facility.** A letter to club members from Tom:

Dear Club Members

Thank you so much for your generous donation. With over sixty Raptors to house and feed, you can be assured that your donation will be put to very good use. This has been a very busy year, with many Raptors rescued, rehabilitated, and most released back to the wild: 24 Barred Owls, 19 Red-tailed Hawks, 10 Great Horned Owls, 4 Kestrels, 1 Merlin, 7 Cooper's Hawks, 7 Screech Owls, 2 Red-shouldered Hawks, 6 Broad-winged Hawks, 1 Peregrine Falcon, and 2 Bald Eagles. The Captive Breeding Project has been a success, with 2 Bald Eagles, 4 Barn Owls, 3 Kestrels, and 1 Screech Owl born. All were fledged and released back to the wild. I strongly believe that Environmental Education is very important. In 2007 I visited 131 Schools and Civic Groups, lecturing and showing raptors to hundreds of students and adults. A new addition to my team is a beautiful Snowy Owl. As always, I would like to sincerely thank the Naturalists' Club for the many years of support to this project.

Sincerely, Thomas Ricardi.

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