



The NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

2014

Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts

April to June Calendar of Events

APRIL

- 5 Saturday WESTFIELD RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION SYMPOSIUM:
The Health of our Watershed: Forests, Wildlife, Water, *Westfield*
- 16 Wednesday APRIL MEETING: Utah Rocks!
- 19 Saturday Natural History by Bike, *Westfield*
- 24 Thursday Rails to Trails Walk, *Southwick*
- 26 Saturday PIONEER VALLEY OUTDOOR FAIR: Various Pioneer Valley clubs
and organizations offering programs, outings, and seminars –
Dinosaurs, Dunes and Drifting Continents, *Holyoke*

MAY

- 3 Saturday Chapel Brook Falls and Hike to the Summit of Pony Mountain,
Ashfield
- 10 Saturday Stanley Park Wildflower Garden Tour, *Westfield*
- 11 Sunday An Update and Ride on the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail,
Westfield
- 18 Sunday Spring Wildflowers, *Westfield*
- 21 Wednesday MAY MEETING: Movie ~ *A FIERCE GREEN FIRE*:
Screening and Discussion
- 22 Thursday Robinson State Park, *Agawam*
- 24 Saturday Hike at High Ledges, *Shelburne*

JUNE

- 7 Saturday Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary, *Wales*
- 7 Saturday Paddling the Middle Charles, *Natick to Newton*
- 8 Sunday Mentioning the Unmentionables: Grasses, Sedges
and Rushes, *Westfield*
- 15 Sunday Hubbard River Gorge, *Granville*
- 19 Thursday Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, *Longmeadow*

Learn to Know, Enjoy, and Keep our Natural World.

Migration Magic

Imagine running flat out at 43 miles per hour, without stopping, for more than seven days. I wouldn't even be able to drive that continuously. But the Bar-tailed Godwit performs an equally incredible feat every September. This shorebird flies from Alaska to New Zealand, over the Pacific Ocean for 7,145 miles in just 9 days, without stopping for food or drink. Amazingly, it even sleeps on the wing by shutting down one half of its brain at a time.

Our feathered friends, whom we love to see flit and fly and tweet and sing, look so delicate. When it comes to long-distance travel though, few organisms can compete with migratory birds for pure endurance.

The 4-ounce Arctic Tern gets the medal for long-distance migration. Traveling from their primary breeding grounds in Greenland and Iceland to the southern tip of Africa, some Arctic Terns travel 44,000 miles in one year.

Since an individual may live to be 30 years old, it could rack up a lifetime total of 1.5 million miles in flight. This is equal to three round trips to the moon.

In addition to endurance, these birds have enviable navigation skills. We know that birds use various references for orienting themselves, including the stars, the sun, magnetic fields, and landmarks.

What about our local birds? Here is just a sampling of a few familiar birds who go on annual journeys to find adequate food for the winter.

American Robins – Robin migration is confusing. Individuals sometimes respond differently to the same conditions. For instance, some robins migrate to the southern US when food sources start to get scarce, while others hang around in the northern US and southern Canada eating fruit for the winter. Scientists have found one interesting pattern amid the many exceptions: In the spring, as average daily temperatures of 36°F advance northward, robins tend to follow. Supposedly, at this chilly temperature the ground is warm enough for worms to become available as a potential food source. So, once temperatures warm to average 36°F, watch for more of a robin showing.

Yellow-rumped warbler – Because this warbler can digest the wax from bayberry, wax myrtles and poison ivy berries, it can overwinter further north than other warblers. While it does overwinter as far south as Central America, sizeable populations can also be found in the southern and eastern U.S. in the winter.

Black-throated green warbler – This warbler, with its distinctive zee-zee-zee-zoo-zee song, overwinters in Central America and northern South America. It will return in May to its coniferous and mixed forest breeding grounds, along with other mixed flocks of warblers.

Black and white warbler – This is our earliest-returning warbler. Some individuals overwinter as far south as northern South America while others stay as far north as northern Florida and Baja California. Our Club's phenology records indicate April 21st as the date of one of the earliest sightings of these warblers in our area.



GREAT BLUE HERON: *Ardea herodias*

Veery – This songbird makes one of the longest migrations of our songbirds, traveling to Brazil for the winter and breeding in the northern U.S. and Canada, down along the Appalachian Mountains to northern Georgia.

Great Blue Heron – We know this wading bird likes frogs and fish and other aquatic meals. As long as open water exists, herons will overwinter throughout much of the U.S. When water freezes over, many individuals head south, as far as Central America. Some hardy individuals may try to stick it out, turning to small mammals like voles to tide themselves over. But come March all will return as the ice melts and fishing waters open up.

Red-tailed Hawk – Red-tails are partial migrants, meaning that some individuals fly south for the winter, while others stay put, feeding on small mammals. Here in western Massachusetts, you can see non-migrating individuals along highways all winter long. Migration is more common among individuals from Canada and other northern areas, who often travel south to the U.S. or to Central America in search of a better prey base.

Red-winged blackbird – This is another short-distance migrant. Individuals from the northern U.S. migrate to the southern US for the winter, traveling perhaps 800 miles from their breeding grounds. Residents of the southern U.S. don't migrate at all. The earliest sighting noted in our phenology records was on February 8th.

There are still mysteries about migration that science has yet to comprehend, and not for lack of trying. Scholars are still unraveling some of the secrets. I think each new revelation about bird migration only adds to the magic of these amazing flyers.

This spring, keep an eye out for these winged migrants. Make them feel welcome with food and water, and mark your phenology chart to record who you see and when. Let these intrepid travelers fill you with their magic as we together welcome spring.

~ Nancy Condon

Westfield River Watershed Association Symposium
The Health of Our Watershed: Forests, Wildlife, Water
Saturday, April 5 at Scanlon Banquet Hall,
Westfield State University, Westfield
For more information, visit westfieldriver.org



The Westfield River Watershed Association's 2014 symposium will focus on watershed health. This year's keynote speaker is Jonathan Thompson, senior ecologist at the Harvard Forest. Other speakers include Tim Bridges of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Leanda Fontaine-Gagnon of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and Elia del Molino of the Berkshire Environmental Action Team.

APRIL MEETING

UTAH ROCKS!

Wednesday, April 16 at 7 p.m.
Springfield Science Museum,
Tolman Auditorium

Presenter: Jack Megas

Join us for a scenic tour of the geological wonders of the national, state, and tribal parklands of southern Utah. Jack Megas has been visiting the back roads and byways of this unique region for 40 years and is glad to share his photos and experiences with you, so that you too might be inspired to visit Utah yourself.

Delicate Arch - Arches National Park, Utah
Source: Wikipedia Commons: Utah Rock Formations



Natural History by Bike, Westfield

Saturday, April 19 at 1 p.m.

Leaders: Diane Genereux, Debbie & Dave Lovejoy
(413-572-5307)

Registration: Not necessary

Meeting Place: Shaker Farms Country Club parking lot,
Shaker Road, Westfield (There are signs in the parking
lot directing you to the trail parking area.)

It is a little early in the season for many plants, but let's get together for a bike ride on the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, heading south from Westfield into Southwick, and perhaps beyond. We'll make occasional stops along the way to see what is in bloom, or to examine other natural history "delights". Perhaps we'll also stop at Red Riding Hood's Basket for something pleasantly refreshing. The distance we ride will depend on the preferences of the group. We will be happy to help with minor bike repairs or adjustments.

Rails to Trails Walk, Southwick

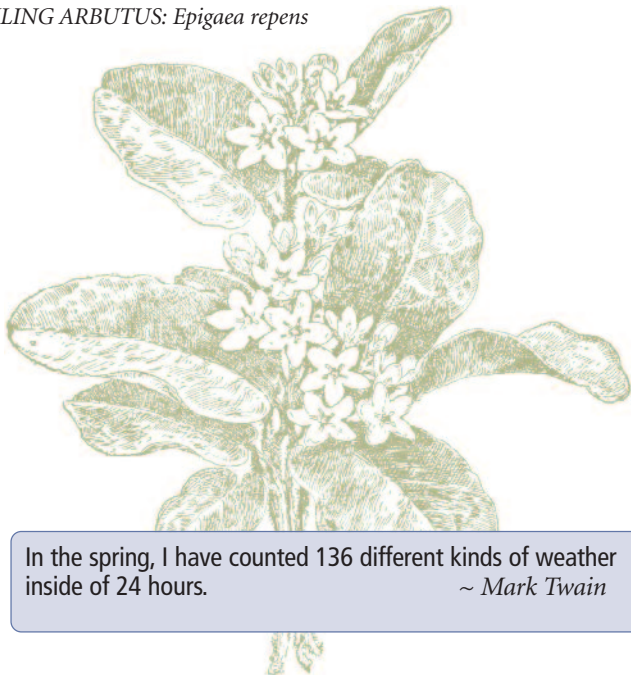
Thursday, April 24 at 9 a.m.

Leader: Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

Meeting Place: Please call Colette for further information.

As tools for ecology and conservation, linear greenways and trails help preserve important natural landscapes, provide needed links between fragmented habitats, and offer tremendous opportunities for protecting plant and animal species. Join us for a spring walk, and remember to bring your binoculars. Dress for the weather. Bad weather cancels.

TRAILING ARBUTUS: *Epigaea repens*



In the spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours.
~ Mark Twain

Pioneer Valley Outdoor Fair, Holyoke

Saturday, April 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Meeting Place: Holyoke Community College,
Kittredge Center

For more information: www.valleyplanning.com

The Naturalists' Club and the Environmental Science Department of Holyoke Community College are sponsoring the second annual Pioneer Valley Outdoor Fair. Outdoor clubs and organizations from throughout the Valley will converge at HCC to showcase what they do, and to offer hikes and programs. Bring your neighbors and your friends and family for a day full of outdoor adventure. Visit the booths to learn about opportunities for enjoying the outdoors in the region. Then attend a trip with one or more of the organizations: Go birding with the Allen Bird Club, take a hike with the Wilbraham Hiking Club, or bring the kids to "Noticing Nature," a trip to be led by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. See the huge and beautiful mineral display by the Connecticut Valley Rock and Mineral Club or go on a "Stories of the Land" hike with our own Kevin Kopchynski. There will be many, many more outings, too! Over 30 groups will be in attendance, and events for kids and adults will occur all day long.

One of the many programs of the Pioneer Valley Outdoor Fair

Dinosaurs, Dunes and Drifting Continents, Holyoke

Saturday, April 26 from 10 a.m. to noon

Leaders: Richard Little and Steve Winters

Meeting Place: Kittredge Center on Holyoke Community College Campus (follow signs to the PVOF)

Come discover the amazing geological history of the Connecticut River Valley, from dinosaur inhabitants to the ancient Lake Hitchcock and more. First, join geologist Richard Little as he paints a picture of the ancient history of our Valley as far back as 600 million years. His humorous presentation will be topped off with a chance to touch armored mud balls that he discovered right here along the Connecticut River. Immediately following the program, Steve Winters, an assistant professor of Earth Science at Holyoke Community College, will guide us through an easy hour-long walk back into the Mesozoic Era, when basaltic lavas covered the HCC campus and dinosaurs roamed Western Massachusetts. All geologic features will be easily visible from the Campus Loop Road. This two-hour adventure will have you completely enraptured by the dynamic history of the ground right beneath your feet.

Chapel Brook Falls and Hike to the Summit of Pony Mountain, *Ashfield*

Saturday, May 3 at 10 a.m.

Leaders: Dave & Suzy Gallup

Registration: Call us if you are coming. (413-525-4697)

Meeting Place: Table and Vine parking lot, Route 5, West Springfield

Chapel Brook Falls is a special place displaying the rugged beauty of ridges and forest. Some old growth trees dot the landscape and wildflowers cover the forest floor. Streams nearby surge and trickle with the seasons, except when spectacular Chapel Falls are in full roar...and they will be roaring this spring! After we explore the Falls, we will hike the summit trail to the top of Pony Mountain. It is a short and exhilarating hike to the top. The panoramic views of the highland forest and the foothills of the Berkshires are well worth the hike. All this in another Trustees of Reservations property! Don't forget to bring snacks or lunch and a camera. Rain cancels.

Stanley Park Wildflower Garden Tour, *Westfield*

Saturday, May 10 from 10 a.m. to noon

Leaders: Nancy & Tom Condon

Registration: Call Nancy or Tom (413-564-0895)

Meeting Place: Stanley Park at the Rose Garden parking lot, main entrance off Western Avenue.

Ready to reacquaint yourself with wildflowers this year? There is a lovely collection of nearly 200 species of wildflowers and ferns in Stanley Park. The Edward F. Piela Wildflower Garden was established and named for our Club's first president. Each species is labeled along paths that wind through a beautiful wooded area. This leisurely walk is level and easy for all abilities. Bring a lunch and drink – we'll picnic together after the walk.

An Update and Ride on the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, *Westfield*

Sunday, May 11 from 10 a.m. to early afternoon

Leader: Diane Genereux

Registration: Please call Diane to register (413-388-2830)

Meeting Place: Shaker Farms Country Club parking lot, Shaker Road, Westfield (There are signs in the parking lot directing you to the trail parking area.)

Bicycling is a great way to explore the outdoors! Cities and towns around the world are investing in infrastructure to promote bicycling as a healthy and sustainable form of transportation. Today, bikers in Westfield can enter the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail (CGRT) at Shaker Farms and then ride south, mostly on trails, all the way to Long Island Sound. By November 2014, the CGRT will extend north to the Big Y on West Silver Street, increasing

opportunities for local residents to run errands by bike. Join us for a brief update on bike initiatives in Westfield and neighboring areas, and then for a ride toward the Connecticut border. If you'd like to have help with minor repairs – adjusting brakes, fixing flat tires, etc. – please plan to arrive one half hour early. The pace and distance of our ride will be determined by the preferences of participants. Beginning riders are especially encouraged to attend!

Spring Wildflowers, *Westfield*

Sunday, May 18 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy (413-572-5307)

Registration: Not necessary

Meeting Place: Upper entrance to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Sanctuary in Stanley Park, Westfield. Enter the Park across from the WSU Woodward Center and watch for the Sanctuary sign on the right.

This casual walk through several of the habitats in the Sanctuary along the Little River will focus on wildflowers, many of which will be in full bloom around this time. Both native and naturalized species will be observed; there's the possibility of seeing about 30 species. A field guide may be helpful to have along but is certainly not necessary. This walk is part of the Stanley Park Nature Workshops series. For information on other events in this series, please see announcements at end of this newsletter, or visit the Stanley Park website at stanleypark.org.

Robinson State Park, *Agawam*

Thursday, May 22 at 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

Meeting Place: Call Colette for more information.

Spend a morning mid-May with this outgoing group of folks who've kept their eyes on local nature spots over the years. Why not follow along with them, down foot-friendly trails within the 800 acres of this riverfront park, a true retreat from urban surroundings. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Call Colette to register, and for information about meeting place. Bad weather cancels.



VIOLET: *Viola*

MAY MEETING

A FIERCE GREEN FIRE: SCREENING AND DISCUSSION

Wednesday, May 21 at 7 p.m.
Springfield Science Museum, Tolman Auditorium,
Discussion Moderator: Dietrich Schlobohm

A FIERCE GREEN FIRE is a provocative new film that seeks to capture the struggles of various environmental groups as they attempt to save lives and our beautiful planet. The film is divided into 5 sections: conservation, pollution, alternative environmental strategies, global problems, and climate change. We will only be able to view two of these parts due to time constraints. After each segment there will be time for questions and comments. Introducing the film and moderating the discussion will be Dietrich Schlobohm, who taught American environmental history at Springfield College for over 30 years.



A FIERCE GREEN FIRE

Inspired by the book of the same name by Philip Shabecoff and informed by advisors including the biologist E.O. Wilson, *A FIERCE GREEN FIRE* chronicles the largest movement of the 20th century and one of the keys to the 21st. It brings together all the major parts of environmentalism and connects them.

Spanning 50 years of grassroots and global activism, this Sundance documentary brings to light the vital stories of the environmental movement where people fought – and succeeded – against enormous odds. From halting dams in the Grand Canyon to fighting toxic waste at Love Canal, from Greenpeace to Chico Mendes, from climate change to the promise of transforming our civilization, *A FIERCE GREEN FIRE* is “nothing less than the history of environmentalism itself”. (*Los Angeles Times*)

Adapted from the Academy Award-nominated director of *BERKELEY IN THE SIXTIES*, and narrated by Robert Redford, Meryl Streep, Ashley Judd, Van Jones and Isabel Allende.

Hike at High Ledges, Shelburne

Saturday, May 24, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon
Leader: Dave Gallup
Registration: Please call Dave if you plan to join us (413-525-4697)
Meeting Place: Table and Vine parking lot, Route 5, West Springfield

Enjoy the beauty of the forest and its wildflowers, including the rare yellow lady's slipper, on this moderate two-mile hike. One special treat to look forward to: the breathtaking view from High Ledges, overlooking Shelburne Falls and the valley below. After the hike we will visit the town of Shelburne Falls, a picturesque New England town known for its “Bridge of Flowers”. Perhaps you’ll choose to spend the afternoon exploring the town’s unique shops and beautiful waterfalls. Wear sturdy footwear and bring a lunch. Rain cancels.



YELLOW LADY'S SLIPPER: *Cypripedium parviflorum*

Science has never drummed up quite as effective a tranquilizing agent as a sunny spring day.
~ W. Earl Hall

Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary, Wales

Saturday, June 7 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Leaders: Jen Ohop and Leslie Duthie
Registration: Please call the Sanctuary (413-267-9654)
Meeting Place: Norcross Main Administration Building, 30 Peck Road, Wales

Leslie Duthie, horticulturalist, and Jen Ohop, staff naturalist at Norcross, will lead a walk in the gardens and trails at the Sanctuary. Recently, the Norcross Sanctuary signed up for life membership with the Naturalists’ Club and is interested in increased interaction between their group and ours. Today will be a great opportunity for Club members to learn what there is to appreciate at the Norcross facility!

Paddling the Middle Charles River, Natick to Newton

Saturday, June 7 from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Leaders: Nancy & Tom Condon

Registration: Call Nancy or Tom to sign-up (413-564-0895)

Meeting Place: Bowling Alley at Mass Pike Entrance off I-291

Come join us on the second of our expeditions down the Charles River in eastern Massachusetts. We'll be paddling two sections, covering about 14 miles of gently flowing water. The first section is known as the Bays Region and is filled with numerous backwater areas to explore for interesting plants and birds. We'll put in at the DCR's Elm Bank property and meander down 7 miles to The Trustees of Reservations' Charles River Peninsula. We'll then skip a 1.3-mile section of whitewater and put back into the Charles just below Route 128 (aka I-95). From here we will need to make a decision. Today the Charles runs for about 5 miles through a pretty heavily developed part of Dedham. In the 1600s the local farmers, perhaps anticipating our dilemma, dug the Long Ditch that cuts off this portion and dumps us back into a more remote and scenic part of the Charles. Our dilemma will be to decide whether to use the Long Ditch or to follow the Charles River's original course. Whichever way we go, we'll paddle through Cow Island Pond and the marshes of Cutler Park before taking out at Nahanton Park in Newton. Remember to dress for the weather, bring along a lunch and plenty of water, and don't forget those binoculars. Our venture crew has canoes and gear you may rent for \$10 a seat, so give us a call even if you don't have a boat to paddle.

Mentioning the Unmentionables: Grasses, Sedges, and Rushes, Westfield

Sunday, June 8 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy (413-572-5307)

Registration: Not necessary.

Meeting Place: Upper entrance to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Sanctuary in Stanley Park, Westfield. Enter the Park across from the WSU Woodward Center and watch for the Sanctuary sign on the right.

Natural history hikes to look at plants usually focus on wildflowers or trees and shrubs. Although we will do some of that, this walk will also be a beginner's guide to some of the often-ignored groups such as grasses, sedges, rushes, and a few other plants not in bloom. Bringing along a hand lens will be helpful but not essential. This walk is part of the Stanley Park Nature Workshops series. For information on other events in this series, additional announcements can be found on page 8 of this newsletter, or visit the Stanley Park website at stanleypark.org.

Hubbard River Gorge, Granville

Sunday, June 15 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leader: Bill Fontaine

Registration: Call Bill (413-533-2153)

Meeting Place: Dunkin' Donuts parking lot, Southwick, Route 10/202.

On this walk/hike, we'll explore the Hubbard River Gorge in Granville State Forest, formerly the hunting and fishing grounds of the Tunxis Native Americans. In 1749 the first white settler in the area, Samuel Hubbard, made his home along the banks of the river that now bears his name. This pristine, high-quality waterway is home to one of Massachusetts' native fish species, the brook trout. The river begins its journey to the sea in the hills surrounding Cobble Mountain, then drops 450 feet over some 2.5 miles as it makes its way to Barkhamsted Reservoir in Connecticut. For much of its course the river flows through Granville State Forest, an underappreciated jewel among Western Massachusetts state forests. We'll begin our walk along a gated forest road and then follow the river south toward Connecticut. When we've had our fill, we'll go back the way we came. Dress appropriately and wear sturdy footwear.



BROOK TROUT: *Salvelinus fontinalis*

Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after. ~ Henry David Thoreau

Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, Longmeadow

Thursday, June 19 at 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Colette Potter

Registration: Call Colette for meeting place (413-786-1805)

Start off this first full day of summer right, by sauntering through Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge, a setting favored by birds and birders alike. This sanctuary along the eastern bank of the Connecticut River also shelters the largest and highest-quality expanse of floodplain forest known in Massachusetts. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Bad weather cancels.

EVENTS sponsored by other organizations

Laughing Brook, April to June 2014

These programs at Laughing Brook require registration with Mass Audubon (800-710-4550) and, in most cases, a registration fee. For more information, call Kevin Kopchynski (413-267-4757), or visit the Mass Audubon website at www.massaudubon.org. Laughing Brook is located on Main Street in Hampden.

Sunday, April 6 from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Woodcocks at Laughing Brook

You are invited to Laughing Brook to see a special dance: the dance of the American Woodcock! The woodcock is an inland relative of snipes and other water birds. Each spring, the male woodcock establishes his territory, performing an amazing dance to attract a mate. We'll listen for woodcocks and watch for them in the fields until dark.

Saturday, April 19 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Third Saturday Nature Series: Vernal Pools

As breeding grounds for many state-listed amphibian species, vernal pools are unique and critical habitats. April is the best, and often only, time to see animals such as spotted salamanders and wood frogs. Join Naturalist Kevin Kopchynski to explore a vernal pool, looking for egg masses, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates. Learn why it's so crucial to protect these small bodies of water and what you can do to help ensure their protection.

Sundays, April 27 and May 4 from 1 to 4 p.m.

Intro to Digital Nature Photography

Learn the basics of nature photography. We will discuss best practices for capturing an image, understanding exposure and focus, and using both manual and automatic exposure settings. Both digital and film users can benefit from this instruction, though our discussion of equipment will concentrate on digital photography and the special opportunities and challenges it offers. After the first session, participants will be encouraged to take photos for review at the second session.

Saturday, May 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Turtle and Field Day

Come visit Laughing Brook and learn about turtles, pond critters and more. Enjoy the trails with a natural history walk. Christine Palmer Lowrance, author of *Nature's Ambassador: The Legacy of Thornton W. Burgess*, will be at the event to sign books and talk about the acclaimed naturalist and artist who delighted so many with his books. Bring a picnic lunch if you choose!

Saturday, June 21 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Pond and Stream

We will use dip nets to explore the life forms found in the pond and stream at Laughing Brook. Many familiar and not so familiar creatures may be found.

Stanley Park, May to June 2014

These events start from the upper entrance to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Sanctuary in Stanley Park, Westfield. Enter the Park across from the Westfield State University Woodward Center and watch for the Sanctuary sign on the right. For more information, visit stanleypark.org.

Saturday, May 3, from 8 to 10 a.m.

Finding Birds in the Woods

Leader: Kathy Conway

Email: kmconway@cns.umass.edu

There's no better time to get out in the field to enjoy birds than an early morning in May. It is spring migration season and the birds are singing. The natural world is coming alive, and spring wildflowers are beginning to flower. Come and enjoy a walk in the woods! We'll spend time identifying birds by sight and sound. And we won't be opposed to looking down to see what spring ephemerals are in bloom. All skill levels are welcome. Bring a pair of binoculars if you have one.

Saturday, May 3, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Sensing Nature

Leader: Art O'Leary

Saturday, May 10, from 8 to 10 a.m.

Enjoying the Birds of Spring

Leader: John Hutchison

Email: jayhut@aol.com

This workshop will focus on identifying birds by sight and sound. We will walk through a variety of habitats in the sanctuary near the height of spring migration, stopping to enjoy both resident songbirds and tropical migrants as they feed and sing. We may encounter as many as fifty different species, including Scarlet Tanagers, Baltimore Orioles, and several species of warbler. We may even tempt a Barred Owl to vocalize, or to come into view. Bring binoculars if you have a pair.

Sunday, May 18, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Spring Wildflowers

Leader: Dave Lovejoy

This casual walk through several of the habitats in the Sanctuary will focus on wildflowers. Please see page 5 for additional information.

Sunday, June 8, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Mentioning the Unmentionables: Grasses, Sedges, and Rushes

Leader: Dave Lovejoy

Consider this walk a beginner's guide to some of the often-ignored groups such as grasses, sedges, and rushes. Please see page 7 for additional information.

Sunday, June 15, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Father's Day Hike

Leader: Art O'Leary

The Miracle of Spring

One has to live in the north all winter to appreciate the coming of spring. Without knowing the long white months, the deep snows and storms with their bitter cold, the longing, hoping, and waiting for the first warm zephyrs from the south, one cannot begin to understand the miracle – for a miracle it is, the grandest and most exciting in nature.

Toward the end of March, when warm breezes begin to blow, I stand unbelievably, breathing them in, senses open, my entire being hungry and perceptive, pores absorbing every nuance, nerve ends reveling in every hint of change. Words cannot explain or describe the experience of standing in simple adoration, marveling at the aliveness of a drop of water hanging from the end of a spruce tip, at the first sight of living brown earth and open water in a creek. Birches are touched swiftly with the first of the warming colors, and horizons are softened by subtle shades different from the stark whiteness of winter.

A few weeks later, when the snow is nearly gone and the sun has had its way, we must climb the highest hill and see the sweep of the land to get the full impact of what is happening. Now there are broad brushstrokes of Nile green with washes of silver gray over the aspen-covered hills and a rosiness where maples are bursting into flower. From thousands of square miles of balsam, spruce, and pine, new smells fill the air: waves of clean resin, the rich odor of thawing earth and of the mold of damp leaves.

Come down now into the valleys, find a little creek tumbling over the rocks, see its white lacework as it foams over ledges with mosses, lichens, and ferns springing almost full-grown beside it. This is no time to dawdle and wait. Plants must grow fast lest summer and fall catch them without flowers or buds. There will be no second chance.

The creek widens and slows through a beaver pond, and I hear its trickle through the interlaced branches of the dam at its lower end. The placid water is sky-blue, bordered by pussy willows, by clusters of dogwood with blazing red stems, and by alder golden with pollen. Frogs are laying eggs; glutinous masses of them float in the shallows. Birds are establishing nesting sites around the pond. A pair of red-winged blackbirds carols from the cattails, the male flaunting its crimson epaulets for all to see. A tiny pert marsh wren is singing its heart out from a thicket of dwarf birch. Swallows resplendent in their purple iridescence and creamy white soar over the water, catching the first insects. The swamp belongs to them. Life is awakening; movement and change are in the air.

As I peer into a shallow bay of the pool, my face close to the surface, for a moment I see nothing but the reflections of clouds, but as my eyes become accustomed to the water and its brown leaf-strewn bottom, I see many things: a mosquito larva jerking and wriggling to the surface for air, a caddis

worm climbing sedately up a stem with its back-borne camouflage of tiny bits of grass and grains of sand, a diving beetle with a tail-held silver bubble, a newly hatched tadpole scurrying over the mud.

That little backwater, with its reflection of sky, its greening grass, horsetails and ferns all but bursting out of the newly warmed muck, and the lush leaves of cowslips, is loveliness itself. It is far more than this, however, for within it is the very spirit of spring, evidence of nature's fecundity and her ability to produce endlessly wherever there are water, food, and returning warmth. Here is the story of resurrection.

As I sit beside the pool, I hear the drumming of a grouse. The sound seems to come from everywhere, a strange drumroll that engulfs all other sounds, starting with a slow, rather muffled beat, working up to a crescendo that fills the air with heady and resonant booming... In that throbbing accolade to spring is proof it has survived. The bird is not far away, and I can picture it strutting up and down a log, spreading its gorgeous fantail in all its russet glory, dragging its stiff wingtips, rearing back as far as it dares before starting the dignified beating that may bring some demure and fluttering female, or possibly an owl or a prowling fox. No other sound in the north catches so effectively the very essence of spring, of flowing water in the creeks, of placid ponds bursting with life, of budding trees and flowers and the softness spreading over the once-frozen land.

Perhaps more important than anything else is the consciousness of flowing water. To one who has seen only ice, water frozen into rigidity, for half a year, the actual awareness of movement and all it implies, compounded with its music as it cascades over rocks or trickles through a beaver dam, is a miracle indeed, and a priceless privilege in today's busy world.

~ Sigurd F. Olson, *The Hidden Forest, Revised*.

Sigurd F. Olson was born in Chicago in 1899. Among Olson's many occupations were biology instructor, college dean, and wilderness guide and author, consultant on wilderness preservation to the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, the U.S. National Park Service, and president of both the Wilderness Society and the National Parks Association. Sigurd Olson died while snowshoeing near his home in Ely, Minnesota.

Just a reminder . . . Please be mindful of the environment. If possible, please carpool to your destination and share costs with your driver. Thank you. ~ Naturalists' Club Board of Directors



LETTERS *of* THANKS for contributions made through the Phyllis Wheat Smith and Dorothy Ann Wheat Naturalists' Funds

*From Barbara Erickson, President & CEO
of The Trustees of Reservations*

On behalf of the volunteers and staff of The Trustees of Reservations, it is my pleasure to thank you for your wonderful grant of \$1,000 received on September 26, 2013 through the Phyllis Wheat Smith Naturalists' Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. I understand this gift is designated for Peaked Mountain. We are deeply grateful for your generous support of our work ... It's thanks to the generosity of people like you that The Trustees are able to accomplish so much each year. In the past few months alone, we have welcomed campers to our 110th reservation at Dunes' Edge Campground in Provincetown; shared our first harvest from our new community-supported agriculture program at Moose Hill Farm in Sharon; and introduced thousands of people to the joys of the outdoors through our children's camps, guided tours, special events, and more.

*From Tom Ricardi of The Massachusetts
Bird of Prey Rehabilitation Facility*

Thank you for your donation to my raptor project, it means so much to know that you selected me for this donation. It has been a very busy year, with many new problems, to name a few: West Nile virus, cell tower collisions, landfill burns, as well as the normal starvation and automobile collisions. To date, seventy birds were rescued, including two Black Vultures, the first that I have ever seen. Also four Bald Eagles, two hit by automobile, one hit by lightning, and a nestling found floating on the Connecticut River; of these, two have been released and the other two are still recovering. Once again, I want to thank you for all of your help through the years.

*From Nora Ann Frank, Vice President for
Philanthropy at Mass Audubon*

On behalf of Mass Audubon, I would like to offer my thanks to all of you for recommending a generous grant of \$1,000 through the Phyllis Wheat Smith Naturalists' Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. This wonderful gift supports our Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary's third grade education programs for children in Holyoke. Thanks to this grant, 53 students are learning more about what plants and animals can be found in their city, and the habitats that support them. The students and their teachers have been very receptive to this program and may even set up a birding club at their school. This is the first of what we hope are many more programs in collaboration with the Holyoke Public Schools as we reestablish connections within the school system. We are very grateful to you for your role in awarding this gift, and for your support of our mission to protect the nature of Massachusetts.

... when the sun shines hot and the
wind blows cold: when it is summer
in the light, and winter in the shade.

~ Charles Dickens

THANK YOU, Colette Potter!

Surely you all know Colette. After each meeting we all go to her table for dessert. She has managed that table for many years and has always added her special touch. Every holiday she brings a little something extra by decorating our dessert table. Colette is retiring from that duty at the end of the season in May. We will miss her. The desserts will still be there, but Colette's special touch won't. Now we need someone to carry on that tradition. So if you would like to help, please let Colette know at a meeting. We will welcome you and welcome what you bring to the dessert-table setup.

Thank you, Colette for all you have given the Naturalists' Club through the years, and are still giving with your wonderful walks through the seasons.

CONCORD GRAPE: *Vitis labrusca*

A variety of grape having purple-black fruit with bluish bloom, used for making jelly, juice, and wine. [After Concord, Massachusetts].

The sun, with all those planets revolving around it and dependent on it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do.

~ Galileo

our 45th Birthday
is coming soon!



Would you believe that in 1969, Ed Piela and friends sat down and created our Club?

LOOKING FORWARD to upcoming events

Stump Sprouts Weekend, West Hawley

From dinnertime Friday, September 5, through Sunday luncheon, September 7

Leaders: Dietrich and Julie Schlobohm (413-788-4125)
Registration: All-inclusive cost for two nights' lodging and six meals is \$159 per person. Make check payable to The Naturalists' Club and send to Dietrich Schlobohm, 52 Poplar Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089. Indicate your roommate preference. Reservations and a 50% deposit must be received no later than June 1. This event will be cancelled if fewer than 15 people have paid by that date. Call Dietrich or Julie for more information.

High on the side of a mountain, with a grand view, Stump Sprouts ski lodge provides a unique setting to walk, hike, or relax in solitude. A 90-minute drive from Springfield, the property consists of a 450-acre tract surrounded by state forests. Guests bring their own bedding, towels, and toiletries; bathrooms are shared. Our hosts provide family-style garden-fresh meals, complete with homemade breads, and usually a choice of meatless entrees. Bring along binoculars, good footwear, curiosity, and a sense of wonder. Limit: 20 people.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE & ELECTIONS

Elections are held at the May meeting. Anytime prior to that meeting, members may contact the Nominating Committee to make additional nominations. Committee members are

Karen Daniels (413-786-8228),
Delores Gentile (413-783-6113),
Colette Potter (413-786-1805).

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 and Dietrich Schlobohm

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

THE NATURALISTS' CLUB 2013 - 2014

FROM THE TREASURER

Members with a "13-14" (or later) on their newsletter mailing label are paid up for (at least) the current year. Otherwise, unless you remit dues for the current year, this is the last issue you will receive and in April you will be sent a final reminder to continue your membership.

Please save us the time and expense of mailing these April reminders by sending your check now, payable to The Naturalists' Club and mailed to: Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State University, Westfield MA 01086, or by giving the check to Dave at the next monthly meeting.

Note: If your address and email information have not changed, the form below need not be completed. We would, however, like to have your email address if you haven't sent it previously. Thanks.

Please note: Please direct changes or inquiries to Dave Lovejoy, who maintains the Naturalists' Club mailing list.



TRILLIUM:
Trillium cernuum

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

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW

Name

Address

Phone Number

Email

Requests for programs/trips

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



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.

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