



The Naturalists' Club
Department of Biology
Westfield State College
Westfield, MA 01086

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THE NATURALISTS' CLUB
N E W S L E T T E R

Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts
www.naturalist-club.org

THE NATURALISTS' CLUB

NEWSLETTER

2010

APRIL to JUNE

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

APRIL

Tuesdays	6+ Astronomy for Kids: Star Lifetime ~ The Wonder of Astronomy! <i>Springfield</i>
Saturday	10 Spring Nature Walk, <i>West Springfield</i>
Sunday	11 Spring Flora, <i>East Granby, Connecticut</i>
Sunday	11 Astronomy Walk Series: Observing Basics, <i>Easthampton</i>
Thursday	15 Sauntering Round the Reservoir, <i>Ludlow</i>
Saturday	17 Vernal Pools, <i>Hampden (Laughing Brook)*</i>
Saturday	17 Astronomy for Kids: Stars, Constellations, & Storytelling ~ The SPRING Sky! <i>Easthampton</i>
Sunday	18 Magnificent Old Growth Forest Hike, <i>Charlemont</i>
Wednesday	21 APRIL MEETING: The Secret Lives of Wildflowers ~ Food, Sex, and History
Saturday	24 Signs of Spring Hike, <i>Huntington</i>

MAY

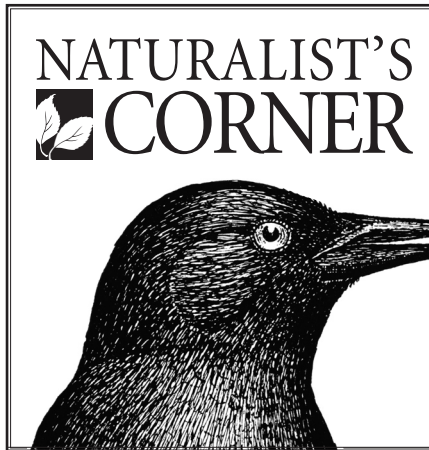
Saturdays	1+ Behavior of Ants ~ Modeling & Building a Robotic Ant Colony! <i>Easthampton</i>
Sunday	2 Intro to Bird Watching, <i>Westfield (Stanley Park)</i>
Saturday	15 Hubbard River Gorge, <i>Granville</i>
Saturday	15 Birds, Glorious Birds! <i>Hampden (Laughing Brook)*</i>
Sunday	16 Enjoy the Birds of Spring, <i>Westfield (Stanley Park)</i>
Sunday	16 Astronomy Walk Series: Solar Eclipses & Sun Viewing, <i>Easthampton</i>
Wednesday	19 MAY MEETING: The Autopoietic Forest
Saturday	22 Hike at High Ledges, <i>Shelburne Falls</i>
Saturday	22 Spring Bird Walk, <i>West Springfield (Rain date May 23)</i>
Saturday	22 Early Morning Bird Walk, <i>Hampden (Laughing Brook)*</i>
Sunday	23 Spring Wildflowers, <i>Westfield (Stanley Park)</i>
Thursday	27 Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, <i>Longmeadow</i>

JUNE

Saturday	5 Forest Park Bioblitz, <i>Springfield</i>
Sunday	6 Quabbin Reservation: Gate 30 ~ Rattlesnake Hill, <i>Orange</i>
Sundays	6+ Introduction to Digital Photography, <i>Hampden (Laughing Brook)*</i>
Sunday	13 Biking and Nature Along the Norwottuck Rail Trail, <i>Northampton</i>
Thursday	17 Riverside Forest, <i>Agawam</i>
Saturday	19 Robinson Park Day, <i>Agawam</i>
Saturday	19 Forest Sensory Exploration, <i>Hampden (Laughing Brook)*</i>
Saturday	26 Canoe Explorations on the Connecticut River, <i>Gill</i>
Saturday	26 Island Hopping, <i>Westfield (Stanley Park)</i>



*Information about nature programs at Laughing Brook is listed separately, on page 9.



ENOUGH WITH THE MURDER OF CROWS

No, I'm not talking about killing crows. Literature is rife with this term for a group of crows. It's no doubt intriguing. The term seems to come from the 15th century Middle English *murthre*, meaning "murder." It has been speculated that the moniker was given as a result of the crow's feeding habit. As scavengers, crows were often quickly present on battlefields, cleaning up after our murderous habits. An alternate theory, with little substantiation, is that flocks of crows have been seen killing sick or injured birds, particularly if those birds are of a different flock. No mention was made of the disposition of sick and injured birds from the home flock.

I began to get curious about crows when I changed my route to work. Now each morning I drive past a rookery of crows along I-291 in Springfield. With the first hints of morning in the sky, hundreds of crows take flight from a small cluster of trees near the St. James exit. Spiraling out over the highway, the sight is thrilling, if not a bit distracting. They soon drift off in various directions.

The term "rookery" may be more appropriate, but certainly not as colorful. First attributed to crows, it has since been expanded to any congregation of birds, even some mammals. I have been to blue heron rookeries on the Yellowstone River. Full of nests, chicks, guano, and squabbling, they are noisy, messy, smelly, disgusting places. Heron rookeries are nesting grounds that are used year after year during breeding season. Crow rookeries, on the other hand, are gathering places during the winter.

Why do the birds gather together at night like this? Some suggest that crows, a very intelligent and social animal, gather to exchange information. During the day, groups of crows fan out in search of food. Some are successful and some are not. It may be that the successful birds share their finds with the others at the rookeries. Evolution suggests that there must be some benefit to the successful bird to make it worth sharing this information. Perhaps keeping the flock well fed through the winter allows for more eyes in the sky when food becomes scarce as winter progresses. What might appear to be altruistic by one bird could pay benefits when the going gets tough.

Why do the birds choose to gather along a major highway? Several theories have been proposed. Some say that rookeries far from food sources offer birds more protection from predators. Predators learn where their prey spends their time. If the crows were to congregate near their food source, where more predators would be, they would be placing themselves at greater risk. By roosting far from natural areas, they are at less risk. Alternatively, the axiom that there is safety in numbers certainly applies. An individual crow is less likely to be killed by a predator if the predator has hundreds of individuals to choose from.

Recent evidence suggests that choosing to roost near a well-lit source reduces predation by owls. Unfortunately for people, crows might be choosing to be near us because we make it easier for them to see their predators coming. Oneida, New York has an organized citizenry to discourage crows from roosting there. Planned noise and lighting displays have had some success in moving the birds along ~ probably to the next town. The Oneida mayor did have to remind some overly enthusiastic citizens that discharging of firearms in town was not allowed. After all a "murder of crows" is just a collective term, by no means an ordinance.

~ Tom Condon ~

Astronomy for Kids: Star Lifetime ~ The Wonder of Astronomy! *Springfield*

Five Classes: Tuesdays, from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m., April 6, April 13 (No Class April 20), April 27, May 4, and May 11
Age Group: After-school children (ages 9-12)

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

Fee: \$64 Springfield Museum School members, \$75 non-members

Registration: REQUIRED.

Please visit www.SpringfieldMuseums.org

or call 413-263-6800, ext. 377

Meeting Place: Springfield Museum School, Museum Quad, Springfield

Stars are *awesome energy factories*, and in this class we'll peek into *how stars work* and *how they live their lives*. Just like humans, stars are born, live their lives, and then die, but they do so on *amazing scales* that are simply fascinating! We'll look at how all this works, and you'll get a chance to do a whole host of activities to help you better understand the lifecycle of stars. Did you know that Black Holes are directly connected with the lifecycle of heavy stars? To help you understand more about these amazing objects, we'll also take a first-hand look at the Science Museum's special Black Hole exhibit. Come join us for an *out-of-this-world time* and learn about what makes stars "tick"!! No experience necessary.

Spring Nature Walk, *West Springfield*

Saturday, April 10, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Leader: Dietrich Schlobohm

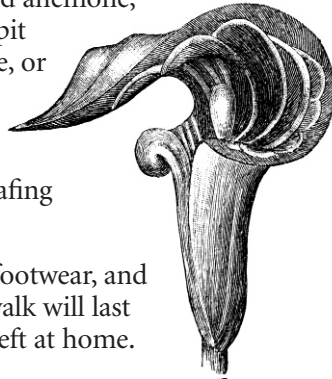
Registration: Please call Dietrich at 413-788-4125

Meeting Place: Bear Hole Watershed in West Springfield, at the intersection of Prospect Ave. and Morgan Road.

For more specific directions call Dietrich or use MapQuest.

Winter has slowly receded, and the human community is getting excited about the signs and sounds of early spring. Nature is moving through its never-ending cycle. Bear Hole is alive with the calls and songs of returning robins and red-winged blackbirds, as well as a chorus of peepers and wood frogs. Skunk cabbage, bluets, wood anemone, trout lily, trillium, jack-in-the-pulpit and a host of other wildflowers are, or will be, making their appearance shortly. Celebrate the arrival of spring by observing and enjoying the debut of new birds, flowers, leafing trees, insects and wildlife.

Dress for the weather, wear good footwear, and bring some food and water. The walk will last about two hours. Pets should be left at home. Heavy rain will cancel.



Jack-in-the-Pulpit

Astronomy Walk Series: Observing Basics, *Easthampton*

Sunday, April 11, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Leader: Chris Lyons, Astronomy Educator

(e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

Fee: \$5 Naturalists' Club members, \$8 others. (*Fee covers auditorium use.*)

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

Would you like to learn more about *stars*, *constellations*, and the *night sky*? If so, please join astronomy educator Chris Lyons for a detailed review of the important things you need to know to get started. We'll review some of the main constellations, look at sky navigation techniques, review star charts (*i.e., maps of the sky!*) and computer-based charting programs, as well as tackling binocular basics and taking a peek at some of the astronomical targets available to you. If you've been thinking about getting involved in the series, this is a perfect time to start! If you are a loyal follower, don't worry, this session will help fine-tune your observing arsenal and I guarantee there will be something new to learn!

This is a fun active-learning indoor/outdoor program for adults (16 and up), with a presentation given in the Arcadia auditorium each month, followed by outside sky observing with eyes and binoculars (*weather permitting*). No need to attend all sessions; topics are continually reviewed to help keep everyone up to speed, so please join us whenever you are available. Please dress appropriately, bring binoculars if you have them (several pair will be available if you don't), and be ready to **take a walk through the universe!** Please contact me if you have any questions.

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

Spring Flora, *East Granby, Connecticut*

Sunday, April 11, at 2 p.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy (413-572-5307)

Heavy rain cancels. Registration not necessary

This walk at the Newgate Cooperative Wildlife Management Area will be along a bike path that follows an old RR line, so walking will be level and should provide easy access to several different habitats. This area is located on Route 20 (Turkey Hills Road) 0.2 miles east of the town line between East Granby and Granby (about a mile east of Granby center and Route 10/202). There is a parking lot (and a sign) on the north side of the road. The walk will focus on the plants, but bring your expertise in other areas of natural or local history.

Quotations throughout this issue were found in *The National Parks, America's Best Idea, an Illustrated History*, by Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns.

Sauntering Round the Reservoir, Ludlow

Thursday, April 15, at 9:00 a.m.

Leader: Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

Place: Ludlow Reservoir

Take a pathway round the reservoir, a scenic, flat course along the water's edge, at a leisurely pace and in the best of company. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Call to register and for meeting place. Bad weather cancels.

Astronomy for Kids: Stars, Constellations, & Storytelling ~ The SPRING Sky! Easthampton

Saturday, April 17, from 1 to 3 p.m.

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

Fee: \$2 Mass Audubon members, \$3 non-members.

(This is a Mass Audubon program.)

Registration: REQUIRED.

Please visit www.massaudubon.org or call 413-584-3009.

Meeting Place: Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon) Main Building, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton.

Children are so attuned to the world around us, and whenever they look to the stars their hearts and minds are filled with *wonder and amazement!* Join astronomy educator Chris Lyons (from the Springfield Science Museum) for a fun-filled look at the beauty and grandeur of the SPRING night sky. We'll talk about stars and constellations, from a kid's perspective, and look at some of the many stories our ancestors applied to the "dots in the sky." This will be a fun program, educational for both kids and parents! Open to families with children 12 and under.

Magnificent Old Growth Forest Hike, Charlemont

Sunday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Leader: Bob Leverett

Contact: Call Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

Meeting Place: Mohawk Trail State Forest Headquarters, 175 Mohawk Trail/Route 2

As a follow-up to the March meeting, Bob Leverett will take us to investigate the old growth forests of Mohawk Trail State Forest and adjacent Monroe State Forest. Here we will investigate composition, acreage, ages, and future of these forests. We'll learn a bit of the history behind this original Native American path called the Mohawk Trail, its colonial aftermath, on up to today, and the role of Mohawk Trail State Forest within the context of Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation's forests and parks.

Our hike will involve learning about the special ecology of old growth forests, the plant and animal species that thrive here and why. We'll even learn how these big trees are measured, with a re-measurement of the Jake Swamp tree. Bob will share the capabilities of these trees, including carbon sequestration, maximum growth potential, and results of the research being done by Eastern Native Tree Society and Friends of Mohawk Trail State Forest. Our trip won't be complete without visiting the Jani shrine, which is the only forest in Massachusetts named for a woman.

Come prepared to hike 3.5 to 4.5 miles, some of which will be off-trail. As usual, wear sturdy hiking shoes, bring plenty of water and a lunch. For directions, visit <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/western/mhkw.htm>.

APRIL MEETING

THE SECRET LIVES OF WILDFLOWERS ~ FOOD, SEX, AND HISTORY

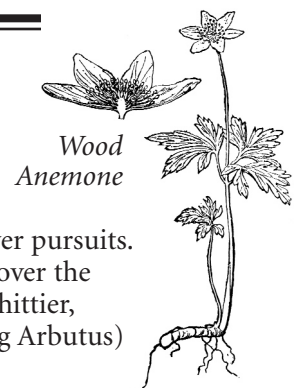
Wednesday, April 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Presenters: Tom and Nancy Condon

Is just knowing a wildflower's name enough for you? If not, come learn the fun stuff about wildflower pursuits. What flower did the ancient Romans believe springs up where Venus' tears hit the earth as she cried over the death of her beloved Adonis? (Wood Anemone) Which flower, according to poet John Greenleaf Whittier, gave the Pilgrims encouragement that they too can make it in this new land? (Mayflower, aka Trailing Arbutus) What flower holds promise in curing certain types of cancers? (Mayapple)

Join Nancy and Tom as they explore fascinating pollination strategies, medicinal uses, name derivations and other fun stuff about wildflowers. The program will consist of a quiz (with prizes) and the use of their multimedia video, *Spring Wildflowers of the Southeast NaturePod*.

Nancy grew up in an outdoorsy family. Her interest in wildflowers was piqued by her mother, who named every flower seen on a hike. It was up to Nancy to determine if it was a real or made-up name. Before long, naming wasn't enough, and pollination strategies and other fascinating things about wildflowers became a passion. Tom has been leading wildflower explorations for more than three decades. He is the co-author of *Wildflowers of the Smokies*. Tom is on the board of directors and Nancy is vice president of the Naturalists' Club.



The mountains have a character all their own . . . From almost any summit . . . one looks out upon a sea of flowing curves and dome-shaped eminences undulating . . . unto the horizon. The dreamy blue haze . . . that ever hovers over the mountains . . . softens all outlines, lends a mirage-like effect of great distance to objects that are but a few miles off, while those farther removed grow more and more intangible until finally the sky-line blends with the sky itself.

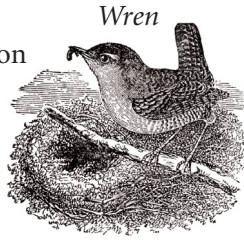
~ Horace Kephart

Signs of Spring Hike, *Huntington*

Saturday, April 24, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Where: Knightville Dam

Registration: Call Tom or Nancy Condon (413-564-0895) to register.



Meeting at the Knightville Dam parking area, we'll explore this US Army Corp of Engineers flood mitigation dam. Then we'll carpool to a natural area above the dam where we'll embark on a walk beside the East Branch of the Westfield River. Hiking along this wide trail along the river, we'll look for spring wildflowers, nesting birds, and other signs of spring.

The hike will be about four miles total, yo-yo style (up and back). The trail is wide and flat, so relatively easy hiking. Bring appropriate hiking gear and dress for the weather. Bring water and a lunch as we'll be stopping by the river to picnic.

Behavior of Ants ~ Modeling & Building a Robotic Ant Colony! *Easthampton*

Four Saturdays, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., May 1, May 8, May 15, and May 22

Age Group: Children (ages 9-12)

Leader: Chris Lyons, Naturalist & Electrical Engineer (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

Fee: \$70 Mass Audubon members, \$85 non-members

Registration: REQUIRED.

Please visit www.massaudubon.org or call 413-584-3009

Meeting Place: Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon), 127 Combs Road, Easthampton / Main Building

Ants belong to the *insect class* and have fairly well-understood roles that, together, allow a colony to survive and prosper. In this class we'll look at the structure and organization of an ant colony and break down their actions and behavior so we can develop models that will allow us to create basic robotic versions of the players. We'll look at their *habitat, home building techniques, scouting activities, food needs, sensory abilities, communication methods*, and ways they *protect* themselves and the colony. Students will use this information to *design, build, and test* specific robotic ant implementations and see how well (or if!) our colony can survive.

This is a follow-on class to the introductory *Animal Robotics* class held in the winter, but new students are also welcome to participate. The computer-based *LEGO Robotic Invention System* will be used to create our robotic models and develop the "brain- power" necessary to give our ants the ability to "live."

If you have "*ants in your pants*" thinking about how much fun this will be, then sign up today for some great fun! Everything is included in the price. All you need to bring is your enthusiasm and your thinking cap!! **Class limited to 10 students MAX, so please register EARLY.**

Intro to Bird Watching, *Westfield*

Sunday, May 2, from 9 to 11 a.m.

Leader: Janice Zepko

Meeting Place: The entrance sign to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary. (Call 413-568-9312 with any questions.)

This walk will help beginners learn the basics of spotting and identifying birds. We will point out how to use binoculars effectively, how to focus on the important characteristics of different groups of birds, and how to look for the fine points of plumage that clinch a bird's identify. Bring a pair of binoculars if you have one. Heavy rain cancels.

Hubbard River Gorge, *Granville*

Saturday, May 15, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon?

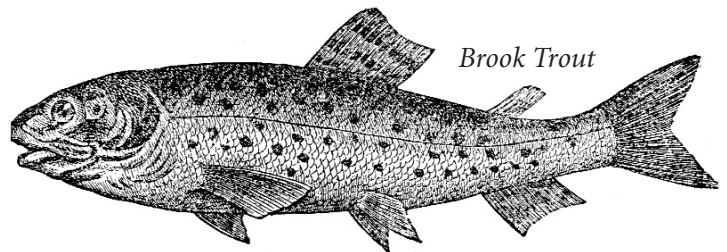
Leader: Bill Fontaine

Meeting Place: Dunkin Donuts Parking Lot, Southwick, on Route 10/202.

Registration: Call Bill (413-533-2153)

Come explore the Hubbard River Gorge! On this walk/hike, we'll explore the Hubbard River Gorge in Granville State Forest. The area was 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 and 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 walk along a gated, paved forest road and follow the river south, toward Connecticut. When we've had our fill, we can go back the way we came or, if water levels allow, we can consider other options for our return trip. If you wish, bring a sandwich and a drink and tarry a while longer to enjoy lunch along this beautiful river.



We need the tonic of wildness ~ to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk . . . to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. . . . We can never have enough of Nature. . . . In wildness is the preservation of the world.

~ Henry David Thoreau

Enjoy the Birds of Spring, Westfield

Sunday, May 16, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Leader: Janice Zepko

Meeting Place: The entrance sign to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary.
(Call 413-568-9312 with any questions.)

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. We may encounter as

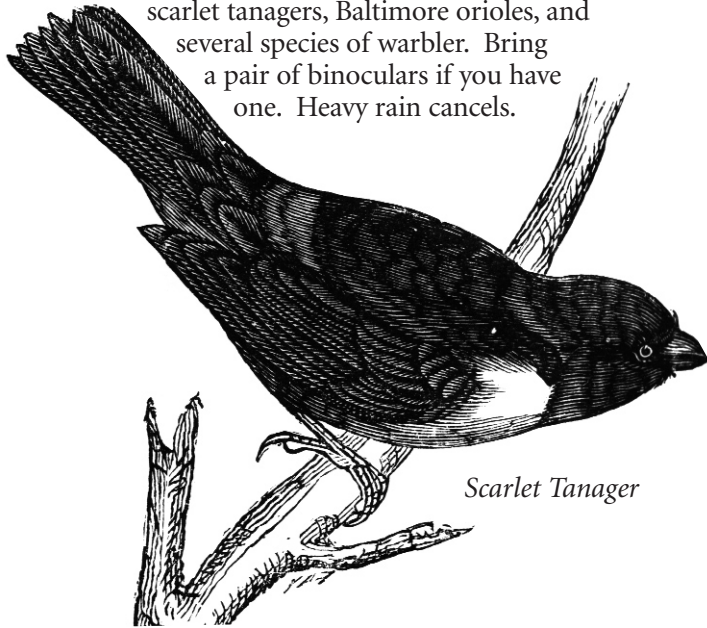
many as fifty different species, including

scarlet tanagers, Baltimore orioles, and

several species of warbler. Bring

a pair of binoculars if you have

one. Heavy rain cancels.



Scarlet Tanager

Astronomy Walk Series: Solar Eclipses & Sun Viewing, Easthampton

Sunday, May 16, from 2 to 4:30 p.m.

Leader: Chris Lyons, Astronomy Educator

(e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

Fee: \$5 Naturalists' Club members, \$8 others.

(Fee covers auditorium use.)

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

This month we'll be talking about **solar eclipses** and the mighty spectacle these awesome alignments of the sun and moon deliver! As everyone knows, we live on a very special planet, but you probably didn't know that Earth is the only place in the solar system where a total solar eclipse can actually be seen. We'll discuss many of the details behind eclipses and look at how these magical events inspired our ancestors through the ages. Weather permitting, we'll also take a peek at the sun through a solar-filtered telescope to get some close-up views of our nearby star and its structure. This will be a fun-filled spring celebration of the sun, so please join astronomy educator Chris Lyons for a *hot time*!

This is a fun active-learning indoor/outdoor program for adults (16 and up), with a presentation given in the Arcadia auditorium each month, followed by outside sky observing with eyes and binoculars (*weather permitting*). No need to attend all sessions; topics are continually reviewed to help keep everyone up to speed, so please join us whenever you are available. Please dress appropriately, bring binoculars if you have them (several pair will be available if you don't), and be ready to **take a walk through the universe!** Please contact me if you have any questions.

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

The Astronomy Walk Series will be taking a break in June but will be back in July.

MAY MEETING

THE AUTOPOIETIC FOREST

Wednesday, May 19th, at 7:30 p.m.

Presenter: Gary Beluzo

This multimedia presentation, utilizing images, video and audio, brings together science, natural history, and the arts. Gary will present a new way to think about natural systems, particularly old-growth forests. We will look at what a forest is, the characteristics of an old-growth forest system, and the mapping of them with GIS in Massachusetts. All this may change how we view and designate forests in Massachusetts. As the state continues to propagandize the cutting of much of our 100-150 year old state-owned forests that comprise 300,000 acres, it is important that we have information about these forests to make sound decisions.

Gary Beluzo is a professor at Holyoke Community College, where he teaches Environmental Science and Ecology. As a systems ecologist, he has explored many of the different types of forested landscapes throughout the eastern United States. His concept of the "autopoietic forest" is new to forest ecology and seeks to define forests in terms of their degree of naturalness and complexity. Twelve years of characterizing and mapping old-growth forests with colleague Bob Leverett has provided insights and inspired new ways of thinking about natural systems, particularly old-growth forests. Gary is the science advisor to Friends of Mohawk Trail State Forest and a key researcher for the Eastern Native Tree Society (ENTS).



Spring Bird Walk, West Springfield

Saturday, May 22, from 9 to 11 a.m.

Leader: Doug Guyett

Registration: Please call Doug at 413-739-5731

Meeting Place: Bear Hole Watershed at the intersection of Prospect Ave and Morgan Road. For more specific directions, call Doug or use MapQuest.

May is the time of year when many birds pass through this area on their annual journey north. Some of the birds reside here until the fall, while others move further north. On this walk, birdwatchers may be able to see or hear warblers, vireos, finches, grosbeaks, orioles, sparrows, and possibly the pileated woodpecker, red-tailed hawks, and wild turkeys. Great blue herons also frequent the area.

This trip is open to anyone interested in birds, ranging from beginner to seasoned veteran. We will also be on the alert for wildflowers and other harbingers of springs that may present themselves. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars and a beverage and snack. Comfortable, sturdy footwear should be worn. All ages are welcome. Pets should remain at home. Heavy rain cancels. Rain date is Sunday May 23rd at the same time.

Hike at High Ledges, Shelburne Falls

Saturday, May 22, starting at 9 a.m.

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

Meeting Place: Parking lot at Dick's Sporting Goods, Route 5/Riverdale Road, West Springfield.

Enjoy the beauty of the forest and its wildflowers, with a unique chance to see yellow ladyslippers, on this moderate two-mile hike. A special treat is 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." If you like, you may take the afternoon to explore the town's unique shops and beautiful waterfalls. Wear sturdy footwear and bring a lunch. Rain cancels.

Westfield River Watershed Association, in cooperation with Wilderness Experiences & Westfield Water Sports, will hold a kayak and canoe Demo Day at Hampton Ponds State Park on Saturday, May 22, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Participants can test paddle over 60 kayaks and canoes. Demonstrations of kayaking techniques will be held throughout the day, and some lucky person will win a brand new kayak from Wilderness Systems. Admission is only \$5/person or \$10/family. For a complete list of the day's events, call (413) 569-1287 or visit www.weu.com or www.westfieldriver.org.



Spring Wildflowers, Westfield

Sunday, May 23, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Leader: David Lovejoy

Meeting Place: The entrance sign to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary. (Call 413-568-9312 with any questions.)

This will be a casual walk through the various habitats in the Sanctuary, in search of wildflowers in bloom. A mixture of native and naturalized species will be observed, with a total of more than 30 species likely. Bring a field guide if you like, but one is not necessary to enjoy the walk. Heavy rain cancels.

Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, Longmeadow

Thursday, May 27, at 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

This property has 333 acres of forest, marsh, meadow, and farmland along a major river ~ and varied habitat encourages a diversity of plant and animal life. Hey, spring is busting out all over! Come out and see! Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Call to register and for meeting place. Bad weather cancels.

Forest Park Bioblitz, Springfield

Saturday, June 5

Leader: Kerry Cesan

How many kinds of living things call Forest Park home? To answer this question, forty seventh-grade students and local scientists/experts will conduct a bioblitz on June 4th and 5th. A bioblitz is a 24-hour event to find, identify, and record as many species as possible, from microbe to mammal (and everything in between), for a given location.

Bioblitzes provide valuable information to park managers and get kids excited about science and the natural world. In addition to the species counting, themed nature walks and talks will occur throughout the day on Saturday.

Please join us in celebrating Springfield's 735-acre gem of a park and its biodiversity, by volunteering for this event. General volunteers, walk leaders, experts, presenters, and species counters are all needed and appreciated, as well as financial donations. Please email kcesan@yahoo.com or call Kerry (413-827-9844) for more information or to sign up.

The United Nations Program for the Environment has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity to draw attention to the rapid loss of biodiversity the planet is experiencing and the benefits of having rich biodiversity. The Forest Park bioblitz is a small local action that we can undertake to increase awareness and appreciation for the biodiversity in our own backyard.



Quabbin Reservation: Gate 30 ~ Rattlesnake Hill, Orange
Sunday, June 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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, level paved road, through a variety of habitats on the northern end of Quabbin Reservoir. This is an area featuring abandoned fields and orchards, wetlands, plantation plantings, cellar holes, a hand-laid keystone bridge and a variety of wildlife and wildflowers. We'll take our time as we wind our way toward the reservoir some 2.5 miles away. It's an easy in and out, so you can walk the whole 5 miles or any part of it. Wear appropriate footwear and bring along something to eat and drink. We'll linger a bit at the reservoir to take in the view and have lunch.

Biking and Nature Along the Norwottuck Rail Trail, Northampton

Sunday, June 13, starting at 10 a.m.

Meeting Place: Parking lot at trailhead on Damon Road, off Route 9

Leader: Dave Gallup (413-525-4697)

Norwottuck means "in the mist of the river." We will start our ride by crossing over the Connecticut River on a truss-type bridge which spans over 1400 feet. We'll also cross Hadley Commons and the Route 9 tunnel, both of which are filled with history. The trail runs 8.5 miles each way. It is an easy, beautiful tree and pond lined ride. We could also stop for brunch at Whole Foods! Make sure you wear a helmet! Hope to see you there! Rain cancels.

Riverside Forest, Agawam

Thursday, June 17, at 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

Place: Robinson State Park

To quote from the Friends of Robinson Park website: "Experts who have examined this forest are astounded by it, saying they would have never expected to find this kind of forest in such excellent condition in Massachusetts, particularly near a city." Take a walk along with folks who appreciate finding themselves in natural surroundings. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Call to register and for meeting place. Bad weather cancels.

Robinson Park Day, Agawam

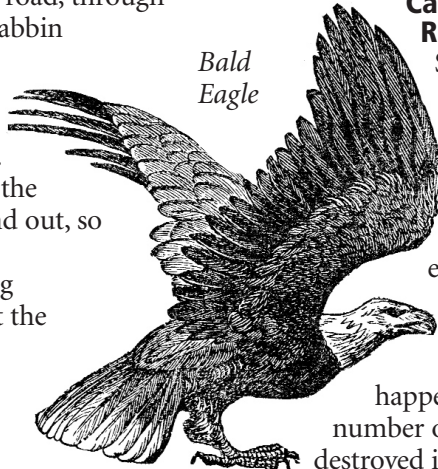
Saturday, June 19, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Organizers: The Friends of Robinson Park

Meeting Place: Robinson State Park in Agawam

The Friends of Robinson Park invite you to join them in celebrating the park and learning of their efforts on behalf of Robinson Park. Come participate in a number of activities that will take place throughout the day. Join guided hikes, plant identification lectures, wilderness safety presentations,

water safety demos, animal identification hikes, a talk on the history of Agawam including Robinson Park, kayak demonstrations, photography and art instruction. Come for all or part of the day. For more information contact Carol Gilmour (786-9453 or carol@oneilz.com) or Claudia Hurley (568-9379)



Bald
Eagle

Canoe Explorations on the Connecticut River, Gill

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

Where: Barton's Cove, Route 2 in Gill

Registration: Call Tom or Nancy Condon (413-564-0895) to register.

Meet at Barton's Cove public launch site. You can rent a canoe nearby at the electric company site if you don't have one. Daily rental is \$40. We'll be starting and ending at this spot. We'll paddle past the bald eagle's nest and see what's

happening. Eagles have nested here for a number of years. After the pair's first nest was destroyed in a passing storm when the pine it was in blew down, the pair built another nest in a red oak 100 feet to the west. We'll take our time exploring the nooks and crannies of the cove. Then we'll head upriver, toward the French King Bridge. Here, we'll learn of the dramatic story of plate tectonics. This is the spot where the African and North American plates attempted to separate 250 million years ago.

Then we'll turn around and go with the flow, back to Barton's Cove to take out. After loading the cars, we'll head over to Turner's Falls to tour the Great Falls Discovery Center. Through habitat displays, fish tanks, programs, and outdoor gardens with views of the canal, the Discovery Center highlights the Connecticut River Watershed. Admission is free. Be sure to bring your binoculars and camera, lunch, and water. Dress for the weather.

Island Hopping, Westfield

Saturday, June 26, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Leader: Arthur O'Leary

Meeting Place: The entrance sign to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary. (Call 413-568-9312 with any questions.)

Munn's Island and Nelson's Island in the Wildlife Sanctuary contain wetlands, floodplain, and riparian corridors. Bushwhack through the brush and hop a channel where once flowed the entire Little River and a canal dug by pick and shovel. Explore the habitats on these remote islands, and learn how they support wildlife with food, cover, and nest sites. Wear appropriate hiking attire, sturdy boots, and bring water, camera/binoculars. Heavy rain cancels.

Sometimes, while I am watching these birds . . . the illusion of the untouchability of this wilderness becomes so strong that it is stronger than reality, and the polished roadway becomes the illusion, the mirage that has no substance.

~ George Melendez Wright

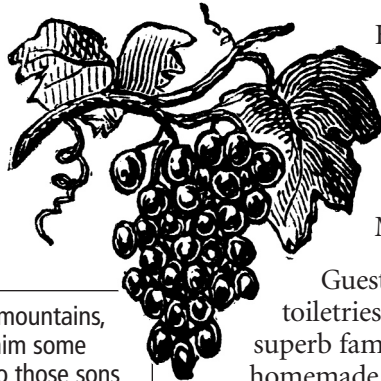
THE NATURALISTS' CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 Karen Daniels (786-8228), Delores Gentile (783-6113), Colette Potter (786-1805). Nominations may also be made from the floor at the May meeting.

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



Ordinarily, the man who loves the woods and the mountains, the trees, the flowers, and the wild things, has in him some indefinable quality of charm which appeals even to those sons of civilization who care for little outside of paved streets and brick walls. John Muir was a fine illustration of this rule.

~ Theodore Roosevelt

Stump Sprouts Weekend, West Hawley

From dinnertime Friday, September 10, through Sunday luncheon, September 12

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

LAUGHING BROOK

NATURE PROGRAMS

Although he was not born in Springfield, Thorton Burgess did live and work here for much of his career. He is very much "our" hometown naturalist. He was, indeed, a naturalist as much as an author. His portrayals of nature were highly respected by leading scientists and conservationists of his day. Laughing Brook is the property where he lived and roamed during the years he wrote his famous nature stories.

Club member Kevin Kopchynski continues the tradition of nature education at Laughing Brook with a series of nature walks held the third Saturday of most months, from 10 to 11:30 am. These walks, intended for families with children age 5 and up, are programs offered by Mass Audubon and require registration and a fee of \$3 for members and \$5 for nonmembers. You can call Kevin for information at 413-267-4757, but you need to register with Mass Audubon at Arcadia at 800-710-4550. Laughing Brook is located on Main Street in Hampden.

- ☛ Saturday, April 17 ~ Vernal Pools
- ☛ Saturday, May 15 ~ Birds, Glorious Birds!
- ☛ Saturday, June 19 ~ Forest Sensory Exploration
- ☛ Saturday, July 17 ~ Insects of Field and Forest
- ☛ (No program third Saturday of August) Other programs not in this series will be held at Laughing Brook unless otherwise noted. The first two are primarily for adults.
- ☛ Saturday, May 22 ~ Early Morning Bird Walk, 7 to 8:30a.m. Leader TBA. MAS Members free, non-members \$5
- ☛ Sundays, June 6, 13, and 27 ~ Introduction to Digital Photography, 1 to 4 p.m. at Hampden Town Hall. Led by Kevin. \$40
- ☛ Friday, August 13 ~ Star and meteor observing, 8 p.m. Led by Kevin. Fee TBA

THE NATURALISTS' CLUB 2010

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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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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Just a reminder... Please be mindful of the environment. If possible, please:

- carpool to destinations
- share costs with your driver

~ Thank you ~ Naturalists' Club Board of Directors

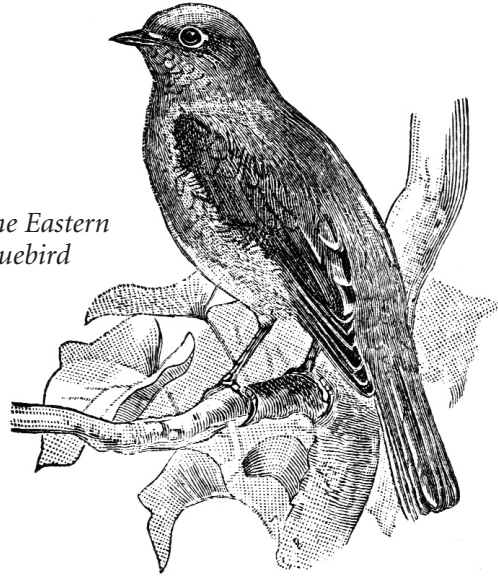


FROM THE TREASURER

Members with '09-10 or later on their newsletter label are paid for the current year. If you have not yet paid for this year ('08-09 on label), this issue is the last newsletter 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 College, Westfield MA 01086. Note: If your address and contact information have not changed, the form below need not be completed. Thanks.

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

*The Eastern
Bluebird*



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

BECOME A CLUB MEMBER OR
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR
2009-2010

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 College, Westfield, MA 01086.