



The NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

2015

Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts

April to June Calendar of Events

APRIL

- 11 Saturday WESTFIELD RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION SYMPOSIUM:
"Outdoor Fun in Your Watershed," *Westfield*
- 12 Sunday Building Homes for Kestrels, *Russell*
- 15 Wednesday APRIL MEETING: Streams, dams, and isotopes:
Exploring stream continuity and food web dynamics in the
Westfield River Watershed
- 16 Thursday A Walk on the Rail Trail, *Southwick*
- 25 Saturday Biking on the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, *Westfield*

MAY

- 2 Saturday Chapel Brook Falls and Hike to the Summit of Pony Mountain,
Ashfield
- 8 Friday An Early Evening Ride on the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail,
Westfield
- 9 Saturday Fort River Birding and Nature Trail, *Hadley*
- 17 Sunday Big Pond Kayaking or Canoeing, *East Otis*
- 17 Sunday Walden Pond Revisited, *Concord*
- 20 Wednesday MAY MEETING: Berkshire Wildlife Linkage: Using wildlife
tracking and cameras to learn where animals are moving and
ways we can help
- 21 Thursday A Walk at Robinson State Park, *Agawam*
- 23 Saturday Hike at High Ledges, *Shelburne*

JUNE

- 6 Saturday Deerfield River Canoe Trip, *Shelburne*
- 12-14 Fri. - Sun. Longwood Gardens Bus Trip, *Kennett Square, Penn.*
- 18 Thursday A Walk in Stanley Park, *Westfield*
- 20 Saturday Mountain Laurel Meander, *Union, Conn.*

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



Fireflies

When I first moved from New England to Seattle, I was struck by the abundance of large parks, some on the shore, some in forested areas and, most importantly, some with meadows. Surely there would be plenty of places to observe fireflies! But spring and summer came and went, with no sign of the familiar light displays I had enjoyed on the East Coast. Why, I wondered, could I not find a good place to observe my favorite insects?

These “flies”, which are really beetles, have captured human interest for centuries. They have inspired a poem by American writer Robert Frost (found elsewhere in the NCN) and an experiential sculpture by Japanese visual artist Yoi Kusama. Roberta Lapucci, an art historian and conservator, argues that sixteenth-century Italian painter Michelangelo Merisi

da Caravaggio went one step farther, integrating not the imagery of fireflies but physical structures from them directly into his artwork. During a chemical analysis of Carravagio’s paintings Lapucci identified a photosensitive substance that likely accounts for the “glow” many see in the paintings. That substance, Lappucci argues, likely came from crushed fireflies¹. Much more recently, molecular biologists have used genetic information from fireflies to label cells, providing unprecedented opportunities to study patterns of cancer metastasis².

Bioluminescence, the ability of an organism to produce and emit light, is shared by diverse organisms. The deep-sea shrimp, marine bacteria of the genus *Aliivibrio*, and the jack-o-lantern fungus, *Omphalotus olearius* can all produce impressive displays of light. Many bioluminescent organisms, including fireflies, use a chemical pathway in which the enzyme luciferase combines oxygen with luciferin, a very small molecule, to produce light. Fireflies of several species control their bioluminescence with a precision unknown in most other taxonomic groups: Most bioluminescent fungi, bacteria, and crustaceans merely *glow*. By contrast, many firefly species *flash*, producing the beautiful light shows of early summer.

The mechanisms whereby fireflies control light emission to produce flashing patterns remained mysterious until the early 2000s, when Sara Lewis, a biologist at Tufts, and Thomas Michel, of Brigham and Women’s Hospital, began to investigate a possible role for nitric oxide (NO). In humans, NO and the closely related chemical nitroglycerin dilate blood vessels. Nitroglycerin is used to treat angina, a painful condition characterized by spasm of the blood vessels that supply blood to the heart. Even a very small dose of nitroglycerin is sufficient to relieve the symptoms of angina.

In their work with fireflies Lewis, Michel, and their colleagues discovered that pulsatile release of nitric oxide inhibits cells’ use of oxygen³. A pulse of NO thus increases the amount of oxygen available for luciferase to combine with luciferin, enabling the emission of light. Because released NO degrades very quickly, a small dose yields the bright, yet fleeting flash characteristic of fireflies. This light production is impressively efficient: Nearly all of the cellular energy fireflies invest in light production is released as light. By comparison, only about 5% of the energy that runs to an incandescent lamp is converted to light energy; the rest goes to waste as heat.

Pulsatile light production serves a wide range of functions in fireflies. In *Photinus pyralis*, one of the twenty-five firefly species known to reside in New England, a male flashes while in flight. When a flightless female *P. pyralis* is impressed by his display, she flashes back, revealing her location. When he receives this approving reply from the female, the male lands, walks toward her, and mating occurs. The female then lays some 500 fertilized eggs in the soil, where larvae hatch, pupate, and mature into adults, typically two springs later.

Subtle differences among signaling patterns enable males and females of a given species to find one another amid the visual cacophony arising when individuals of disparate species flash on the same evening. For example, signals differ substantially among three *Photinus* species that rise in New England: when the nighttime temperature is about 75°F, *P. ignitus*, males produce a single flash every five seconds or so, *P. marginellus* males produce a single flash every 3.5 seconds, and *P. macdermotti* males produce a double flash every six seconds.

Not all firefly flashes are equally beneficial to signaler and recipient. Females of some firefly species flash to attract prey. When they see the flash pattern of male *Photinus*, females of the genus *Photuris* imitate the response flashes of female *Photinus*. Male *Photinus* then approach, with the goal of mating; instead, the *Photinis* males are devoured by the *Photuris* female.

Of all the North American fireflies, perhaps none produce a lightshow so dramatic as that of male *Photinus carolinus*, whose synchronized displays in May and June attract many visitors to Great Smoky Mountains National Park^{4,5}. Tens of thousands of male *P. carolinus* swarm together and, in synchrony, produce flashes of intense light. Several different ideas have been proposed to explain the evolution of these synchronized displays. One suggestion is that by flashing simultaneously, males create a beacon much brighter than the signal produced by a solo male and so collectively produce signals sufficient to recruit females from great distances away. The observation that synchronized flashing occurs in species in which females can fly – *P. carolinus* in North America and *Pteroptyx* in Southeast Asia – is at least consistent with this “beacon hypothesis”. Other researchers, however, have discounted the beacon hypothesis, pointing out that it does not explain what would prevent an individual male from standing near a swarm of flashing males, letting them invest energy to attract females to the group. Such, a “freeloader” could

initially save up his energy, and then use it later on to create an especially impressive display for a female who has decided to draw closer after being attracted by the group's flashing. These objections have led to the alternate view that a male's mating success is determined by two things: being a member of a group that flashes more brightly than nearby groups, thus providing at least an indirect benefit for every male contributing to a group display; and, later, flashing more brightly than group mates, securing the attention of females who have already decided to venture closer⁴.

Can these features of firefly biology help to explain why various parts of the US – including Seattle – seem to lack the summertime lightshows that abound on the East Coast? Perhaps in part. In contrast to my impressions from Seattle's parks, there are in fact some firefly species on the West Coast. One of these is the Douglas fir glowworm, *Pterotus obscuripennis*. Males of this species sport dramatic, feathery antennae. *P. obscuripennis* differs from East Coast fireflies in two important ways. First, only females glow, but do not use a nitric oxide-based pathway to control light emission. As a result, the females glow continuously and faintly rather than producing intense flashes. Secondly, the female "worms" are larviform, meaning that they never develop wings and thus are confined to the ground, where leaf litter often hides them from human observers. Perhaps, then, fireflies are infrequently observed in some parts the US simply because they have a less flashy lifestyle than do many East Coast species. Another, more ominous explanation for the difficulty in spotting fireflies in various parts of the US is that firefly populations are in precipitous decline. Though firefly census data are only beginning to accrue, pesticide use, habitat loss, and light pollution seem to be major contributors to recent population declines. Pesticides can be toxic for larvae that overwinter in soil, and habitat loss and urban lighting can limit reproductive success.

How can naturalists help to protect fireflies against these many threats? Conservation of land and avoidance of pesticides and light pollution are surely a good start. Collecting data on firefly phenology and abundance, too, are important contributions. The Museum of Science in Boston coordinates a citizen scientist program through which volunteers can contribute information on firefly sightings near home. Data collected through a similar program on the West Coast, organized by the Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partners, yielded some exciting news for the human residents of British Columbia. In 1997, reports from citizen scientists inspired research entomologists to search for, and eventually find, British Columbia populations of *Photinus obscurellus*, a flashing firefly not previously documented in that region⁶. Clearly, there is still much to learn about the evolution, biology, and biogeography of these sometimes conspicuous, yet at times elusive, insects.

~ Diane Genereux

References

1. Caravaggio created firefly "photos" *Italy Magazine*, November 2008.
2. Kalra, J. 2011. Validating the use of a luciferase labeled breast cancer cell line, MDA435LCC6, as a means to monitor tumor progression and to assess the therapeutic activity of an established anticancer drug, docetaxel (Dt) alone or in combination with the ILK inhibitor, QLT0267. *Cancer Biology and Therapy*. 11(9): 826-838.
3. Cromie, W.J. 2001. Fireflies seen in a new light. *Harvard University Gazette*.
4. "Synchronous Fireflies" <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/learn/nature/fireflies.htm>
5. Lloyd, J. 1973. "Model for the Mating Protocol of Synchronously Flashing Fireflies" *Nature* 245:268-270.
6. Cannings, R.A. et al. 2010. The Fireflies (Coleoptera: Lampyridae) of British Columbia, with special emphasis on the light-flashing species and their distribution, status and biology. *Journal of the Entomological Society of British Columbia* 107: 33-43



Westfield River Watershed Association Symposium "Outdoor Fun in Your Watershed," Westfield

Saturday, April 11, starting at 8 a.m.
Location: Scanlon Banquet Hall at
Westfield State University, Westfield



"Outdoor Fun in Your Watershed" is the theme for this year's WRWA Symposium. Morning sessions will feature presentations from several speakers and exhibitors, and will include a keynote address by Joe Giffune President of the Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail. He will discuss the history, present, and future of this invaluable new resource for transportation, recreation, and observing nature. In the afternoon there will be opportunities for local field trips, including a visit to the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail. For more information, see <http://westfieldriver.org/>.

Building Homes for Kestrels, Russell

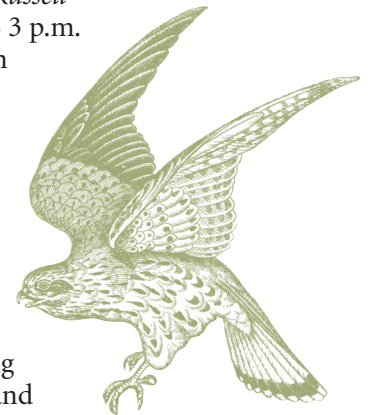
Sunday, April 12, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon

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

Meeting Place: The Condon
home

Remember back in November when Tom Sayers came to talk to the Club about his work with the American Kestrel? Well he's out there doing his thing again this year, setting up boxes and then monitoring their residents – no starlings allowed! Now it's time for us to help him out. When he spoke, Tom told us that the thing he needed most were the boxes that serve as homes for kestrels. Come to the Condon home and help us put together a bunch of future homes for these remarkable birds. We have a friend who will be donating some rough-cut lumber; we just need a few hands to knock the pieces together. If you have a hammer or a cordless drill, bring it along. If you just have a desire to help, bring yourself! We'll even have snacks and drinks to make the time fly by.



2015 APRIL to JUNE

APRIL MEETING

STREAMS, DAMS AND ISOTOPES: EXPLORING STREAM CONTINUITY AND FOOD WEB DYNAMICS IN THE WESTFIELD RIVER WATERSHED

Wednesday, April 15, starting at 7 p.m.

Springfield Science Museum, Tolman Auditorium

Speaker: Dave Christensen, Biology Department, Westfield State University

Currently, there are over 3,000 dams and 30,000 bridges and culverts documented in the State of Massachusetts. These structures can disrupt stream continuity, fish habitat, fish migration, water quality, and stream morphology. Collectively, dams and culverts have contributed to the decline of brook trout, *Salvelinus fontinalis*, and Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar*, in New England. These species are important indicators of healthy cold-water ecosystems and their protection is the premise for a statewide effort to remove unnecessary dams in order to restore stream continuity. The intentional introduction of nonindigenous species to support recreational fisheries may have a compounding influence on disturbed aquatic ecosystems. In particular, largemouth bass, *Micropterus salmoides* was introduced into lakes throughout New England over the past two centuries. As a top predator, largemouth bass may disrupt the feeding behavior of native predators such as the chain pickerel, *Esox niger*, potentially restructuring aquatic food webs. Dr. Dave Christensen will discuss his work assessing the influence of a small dam removal project on the biotic and abiotic environment of Kinne Brook. Dr. Christensen will also describe the use of stable isotope analysis in exploring the feeding ecology of largemouth bass and chain pickerel in Hampton Ponds, MA. Dave Christensen is an Assistant Professor in the Biology Department at Westfield State University and completed his doctorate at Washington State University. His research interests include food web interactions, restoration ecology, and fish migrations.

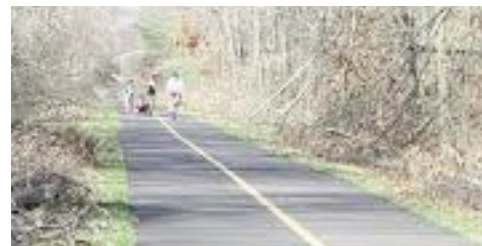
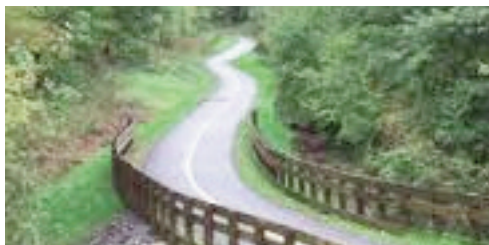
A Walk on the Rail Trail, Southwick

Thursday, April 16, starting at 9:30 a.m.

Leader: Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

Registration and 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.



Biking on the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, Westfield

Saturday, April 25, starting at 11 a.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy

Registration: Not necessary.

Meeting Place: Meet where the rail trail crosses Shaker Road (Shaker Rd. becomes Ponders Hollow Rd. at or near this point). There is a parking lot (with a sign) near the trail crossing, which is also at the entrance to Shaker Farms Country Club.

A new portion of this bike path extends towards Westfield Center, which we can examine if the group wishes to, but the main portion of this ride will be south into Southwick and perhaps into Connecticut. There are several possibilities for stops near the trail for coffee or a snack, or perhaps participants will wish to bring along food and drink. The trail passes through a variety of habitats that may yield some interesting stops along the way.

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

Saturday, May 2, starting at 10 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and 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 with its rugged beauty of ridges and forest. Some old growth trees dot the landscape and wildflowers cover the forest floor. Chapel Brook has streams that surge and trickle with the seasons except when spectacular Chapel Falls are in full roar, and they will be roaring this year! After we explore the falls, we will hike the summit trail to the top of Pony Mountain. It's 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.

An Early Evening Ride on the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, Westfield

Friday, May 8, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Leader: Diane Genereux

Registration: Please call Diane (413-388-2830).

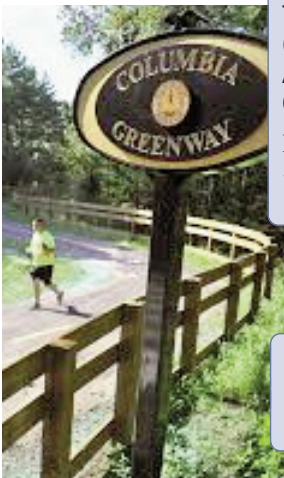
Meeting Place: Meet where the rail trail crosses Shaker Road (Shaker Rd. becomes Ponders Hollow Rd. at or near this point). There is a parking lot (with a sign) near the trail crossing, which is also at the entrance to Shaker Farms Country Club.

Evening is a great time for a bike ride on the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail. We'll enjoy the cool evening air, see what's in bloom, listen for birdcalls, and perhaps spot some turtles basking in the last of the day's sunlight. We'll plan our travel carefully to ensure return to the parking area in time for sunset at 7:56 p.m. We ride in light drizzle, but not heavy rain.

Here come real stars to fill the upper skies,
And here on earth come emulating flies,
That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.

Fireflies in the Garden
~ Robert Frost 1874-1963

The fireflies, twinkling among leaves,
make the stars wonder.
~ Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

**Fort River Birding and Nature Trail, Hadley**

Saturday, May 9, starting at 9:30 a.m.

Leader: Bill Fontaine

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

Meeting Place: Friendly's parking lot on Newton St. in South Hadley

This walk will take us along the newest addition to the Silvio Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The Fort River Birding and Nature Trail traverses 260 acres of grassland, wetlands, hardwood, and floodplain forests as it winds its way in a 1.2 mile loop along the Fort River in Hadley. The universally accessible trail features graded, edged pathways, elevated walkways and several observation platforms. The federally listed dwarf wedgemussel makes its home here, as do some 125 species of birds! Wear comfortable shoes and bring your binoculars and something to drink.

Walden Pond Revisited, Concord

Sunday, May 17, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. or so

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon

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

Meeting Place: AMF Bowling Alley off of I-291 near the Mass Pike entrance in Chicopee; behind the huge white statue.

Let us take a trip back in time to visit the place where Henry David Thoreau experimented with simple living. Having built a modest cabin in which he lived for nearly 2 years, Thoreau concentrated on writing in the woods by Walden Pond. We will visit this area, now Walden Pond State Reservation, take a guided tour out to Thoreau's original cabin site, and hike around Walden Pond on an easy trail that encircles it. Afterward, in Concord, we'll see if we can pay a call to Ralph Waldo Emerson's homeplace, or walk the streets on an historic trail in the town.

We'll meet and carpool; there is a \$8 fee per car for parking. Bring your lunch and drink, and any favorite Thoreau quotes.

The first sparrow of Spring! The year beginning with
younger hope than ever! ~ Henry David Thoreau

Big Pond Kayaking or Canoeing, East Otis

Sunday, May 17, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Leaders: Debbie and Dave Lovejoy (413-848-2047)

Registration: Not necessary

Meeting Place: Otis State Forest boat launch site. Take a right off Route 23 near the center of East Otis, 0.3 miles west of Hall's store.

Big Pond and its slow-moving outflow channel provide a nice setting for a quiet paddle with the opportunity to do some birding, observe beaver (at least in previous years), and examine plants along the shore. Light rain will not cancel this trip, but call the leaders if unsure.

2015 APRIL to JUNE

MAY MEETING

BERKSHIRE WILDLIFE LINKAGE: USING WILDLIFE TRACKING AND CAMERAS TO LEARN WHERE ANIMALS ARE MOVING AND WAYS WE CAN HELP

Wednesday, May 20 at 7 p.m.
Springfield Science Museum, Tolman Auditorium,
Speaker: Laura Marx, The Nature Conservancy



The Berkshire Wildlife Linkage is a critical wildlife corridor between the Green Mountains in Vermont and the Hudson Highlands in New York. During the winter of 2013/14, The Nature Conservancy, the Berkshire Environmental Action Team, the Westfield River Wild and Scenic Advisory Committee, and a crew of enthusiastic volunteer wildlife trackers conducted a mammal-tracking study in the southern Berkshires and Westfield River watershed.

Join us for a presentation by Laura Marx of the Nature Conservancy, who will share maps, photos, and videos from this study and discuss why animals need to be able to move freely throughout New England.

The presentation will end with a question and answer session about what is being done, and what we can do, as landowners and community members, to ensure that this corridor continues to allow both wildlife and people to safely get where they need to go.

For more information contact Laura Marx, lm Marx@tnc.org or (413) 584-2596.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

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

A Walk at Robinson State Park, *Agawam*

Thursday, May 21, starting at 9:30 a.m.

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

Registration and 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. Bad weather cancels.

Hike at High Ledges, *Shelburne*

Saturday, May 23, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup. Please call to let us know you are coming (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 slipper, on this moderate, two-mile hike. One special treat to look forward to 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.

Deerfield River Canoe Trip, Shelburne

Date and Time: Saturday, June 6, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon
 Registration: Please call us at 413-564-0895 to register; if bad weather forces cancellation we will contact you.
 Meeting Place: Barnes & Noble Parking Lot in Holyoke.

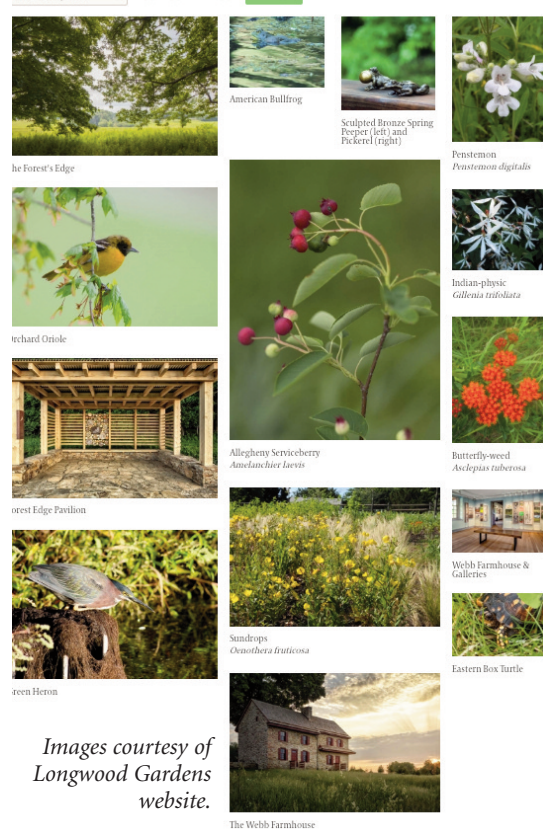
The Deerfield River is one of the most pleasant early summer paddles in Western Massachusetts. Starting at the Bardwell Bridge in Shelburne, the river meanders through northern forests and picturesque valleys as it makes its way to the Connecticut River in Montague. This 12-mile trip is divided nearly in half by the character of the river; the first 6 miles flows at a comfortable pace, with occasional waves as the river drops over or around small rapids. These rapids offer new

paddlers an opportunity for a bit of fun and a new challenge. The second 6 miles is a more bucolic paddle as the river enters the flood plain of the Connecticut River. The river twists and flows gently past high banks leading toward agricultural fields.

It is not necessary to be an experienced canoeist to join us for this pleasant canoe trip. Space is limited so please call early. Venture Crew 872 of Southwick allows us to use their canoes, paddles, and life jackets for a mere \$10 per person, so even if you do not own a canoe, you can still join us. Participants should bring water and a lunch. A small dry bag or freezer strength zip-lock can ensure that electronics and optics stay dry in bad weather and in the unlikely event of a capsized boat.

Garden Highlights
 June 12-19, 2014
Last year's events.

JUNE 12-19, 2014 OUTDOOR INDOOR MEADOW



Forest's Edge
 Orchard Oriole
 Forest Edge Pavilion
 Green Heron
 American Bullfrog
 Sculpted Bromine Spring Peeper (left) and Pickerel (right)
 Penstemon
 Penstemon digitalis
 Indian-plum
 Gilbea triflorata
 Butterfly-weed
 Asclepias tuberosa
 Webb Farmhouse & Galleries
 Eastern Box Turtle
 Allegheeny Serviceberry
 Amelanchier laevis
 Sundrops
 Oenothera fruticosa
 The Webb Farmhouse

Images courtesy of Longwood Gardens website.

**Longwood Gardens Bus Trip, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania**

Friday, June 12 at 6:30 a.m. to Sunday, June 14
 Leaders: Bryan Clarke and Eileen Saunders
 (413-783-9721; bbc757@comcast.net)

Registration: A check in the amount of \$180, payable to The Naturalists' Club, must be received on or before May 6 by Dave Lovejoy at Westfield State University, Dept. of Biology, Westfield MA 01086.

Join us for a visit to Longwood Gardens in beautiful Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Longwood Gardens is one of the premier botanical gardens in the United States consisting of over 1,077 acres of gardens, woodlands, and meadows. In addition to 20 outdoor gardens, there are 20 indoor gardens in a 4.5-acre conservatory. We have reserved a block of 15 rooms for two nights at The Wyndham Garden Hotel, Glen Mills, PA at the rate of \$120 per night plus taxes. Breakfast buffet is included in the room rate; lunches and dinners not included. Please call the hotel at 610-358-1700 by May 6 to make your reservation. Mention that you are with the Naturalists' Club and specify your preference for two queen-sized beds or one king-sized bed. Lunches on Friday and Saturday will be at Longwood Gardens. The \$180 price covers bus fare, 2-day admission to Longwood Gardens with guided tour, driver tip, and share of driver's lodging. We need 30 registrants to run the trip, so please contact leaders as soon as possible.



Image by Patty Franklin O'Brien

A Walk in Stanley Park, Westfield

Thursday, June 18, starting at 9:30 a.m.
 Leader: Colette Potter (413-786-1805)
 Registration and Meeting Place: Please call Colette for further information.

Come enjoy a lovely morning walk round the park on this almost-summer day. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Please call to register and for meeting place. Bad weather cancels.

Mountain Laurel Meander, Union, Connecticut

Saturday June 20, starting at 10 a.m.
 Leader: Sonya Vickers (413-466-3406).
 Registration and Meeting place: Please call Sonya.

We will be meeting in East Longmeadow and carpooling to Union, Connecticut for a look at a sanctuary that is not well known. The dirt road is lined with impressive mountain laurel bushes, almost the size of trees. Photography opportunities will be great. Bring a picnic lunch for after our stroll.

2015 APRIL to JUNE

EVENTS of Interest sponsored by other organizations

Laughing Brook, April to June 2015

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 12 from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

American Woodcock at Laughing Brook

Leader: Pete Vancini, Laughing Brook Caretaker
You are invited to Laughing Brook to see a special dance...the dance of the American Woodcock! Related to the snipes and other water birds, the woodcock has moved inland. Each spring the male establishes his territory and does an amazing dance to attract a mate. We'll watch the fields until dark.

Saturday, April 18 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Vernal Pools at Laughing Brook

Vernal pools are unique and critical habitats that are breeding grounds for many state-listed amphibian species. April is the best, and often the 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.

Saturday, May 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Turtle Day

This is a free program of nature activities, pond animals, and nature walks

Saturday, June 7 and 14, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Basic Nature Photography

This is a two-session class.

Stanley Park, May to June 2015

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. Event listings were not available at press time – for more information, please visit stanleypark.org.

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



LILA CLAND, Pelham

Lilac season, mid-May to early June

The Lumley Family invites the public to share the beauty, colors, and fragrances of their 200+ lilac varieties. From the center of Amherst, travel about 4 miles east on Route 9.

Take a left onto Harkness Road when you see the Pelham town line. Proceed 1.3 miles and look for a "Lilacland" sign. Park there or on the road. Enjoy the lilacs, and check out the Art Exhibit in the barn. And, of course, don't pick the flowers!



LOOKING AHEAD

Stump Sprouts Weekend,

West Hawley

From dinnertime Friday, September 11, through Sunday luncheon, September 13

Leaders: Dietrich and Julie Schlobohm (413-788-4125).

Registration: All-inclusive cost for two nights' lodging and six meals is \$162 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.

THANK YOU NOTES

From the Desert Protective Council

Thank you so much for your generous donation of \$500 to the Desert Protective Council.

Your gift enables us to continue educating the public about the unique features and precious habitats of our Southwestern deserts and advocating for preservation of our natural heritage.

Your support helps us continue the fight against destructive remote desert energy development and other ill-advised, myopic schemes for the desert. We will be able to continue to advocate for renewable energy development through rooftop solar and local distributed generation.

Please keep in touch with DPC's activities and projects throughout this year by visiting our website and reading our *El Paisano* newsletter.

Sincerely,
Janet A. Anderson, President
<http://protectdeserts.org>

P.S. Thank you so much for your interest in protecting the deserts.

From Erica Morin, February speaker

Dear Dave and the Naturalists' Club,

Thank you so much for inviting me to speak at the February meeting.I was delighted by everyone's interest in wind power and thoughtful consideration of the beauty/utility debate. And in addition, everyone was so kind and complimentary after the talk. I felt truly welcome and appreciated. Please share this with everyone, if you wish. Thank you again!

Erica

From the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

Dear Friends in the Naturalists' Club,

At the next public meeting of the Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife Board, I will report another generous grant to the Wildlands Conservation Fund that was received from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts' Phyllis Wheat Smith Naturalists' Fund at the recommendation of the Naturalists' Club. I know the Board will publicly acknowledge and express their appreciation and thanks that your organization chose the Wildlands Conservation Fund for this \$1000 grant.

Since the inception of the Wildlands Conservation Fund in 1990, the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has purchased more than 30,000 acres of wildlife habitat with the monies received. All properties purchased with the Wildlife Conservation Fund monies are permanently protected conservation lands under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution. The permanent protection afforded by the Wildlands Conservation Fund acquisition assures that these lands will be forever wild.

Please accept our appreciation and thanks, as the advisors to the Phyllis Wheat Smith Naturalists' Fund, for recommending this generous grant to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for the acquisition of wildlife lands.

Very truly yours,
Wayne F. MacCallum, Director

From the Kestrel Land Trust

Dear friends,

We were thrilled to receive your very generous gift of \$8,000 from the Phyllis Wheat Smith Naturalists' Fund on January 14, 2015, for the purpose of land acquisition in the Valley. Your investment in land conservations means so much to us!

You'll be pleased to know that on December 30, Kestrel finalized the conservation of a parcel of 186 acres of woodland, owned by the Phelps family in Granby, on the Mount Holyoke Range. Kestrel also recently partnered with the Barstow family to protect their 200-year-old farm in Hadley. Conservation-minded people and organizations like yours are helping to make these conservation projects a reality!

Thank you for inviting us to speak briefly about our efforts at your March meeting. In the meantime, you may wish to visit our website, kestreltrust.org, and subscribe to our monthly news.

The next time you admire the beauty of our mountainous horizon, I hope you'll feel proud that your organization is helping preserve this iconic landscape. Thank you again for your generous support. As always, please contact me if you have any questions about our work.

Sincerely,
Kristin DeBoer, Executive Director

P.S. Thank you so much for this very generous gift! We look forward to visiting your club in March and thanking the group personally.

2015 APRIL to JUNE

THE NATURALISTS' CLUB 2014 - 2015

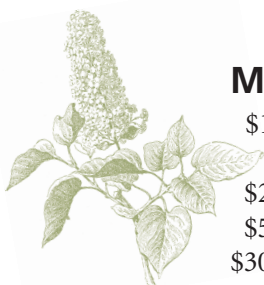
FROM THE TREASURER

Members with a "14-15" (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, 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.



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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