

2021



The

# NATURALISTS' CLUB

NEWSLETTER

Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts

## OCTOBER

- 3 Sunday Hawkwatch Atop Shatterack Mountain, *Russell*
- 9 Saturday Fall Walk in Bear Hole, *West Springfield*
- 10 Sunday Quabbin Hike, *New Salem*
- 16 Saturday Hawkwatch in the Mount Holyoke Range, *Hadley*
- 20 Wednesday OCTOBER MEETING: The Science Behind a Tree's Value. . .  
Explained in Plain Language, for the Rest of Us
- 24 Sunday Happy 6025th Birthday, Earth, *Simsbury, Connecticut*

## NOVEMBER

- 6 Saturday Late Season Paddle on Littleville Lake, *Huntington*
- 13 Saturday Conant Brook Dam, *Monson*
- 17 Wednesday NOVEMBER MEETING: Light and Color in the Earth's Atmosphere
- 28 Sunday A Peaked Mountain Hike – Hike Away Your Thanksgiving Meal, *Monson*

## DECEMBER

- 5 Sunday Annual Late Fall Hike at the Quabbin, *Belchertown*
- 11 Saturday Haystack Mountain Hike, *Norfolk, Connecticut*
- 11 Saturday Evening with Naturalists, *Wilbraham*
- 15 Wednesday DECEMBER MEETING: Holiday Meeting

The Naturalists' Club – Dept. of Biology  
Westfield State University  
P.O. Box 1630  
Westfield, MA 01086-1630



# NATURALIST'S CORNER

*Besides the mindfulness aspect, hiking has taught me a few things I would like to share with you.*

## Three Observations from a Morning Walk

I roll over in bed and adjust my eyes to see the alarm clock. It's 4 a.m. Time to get up and start my day. After a brief morning routine and a light breakfast, it's off to school. I could sleep in a bit longer, but a few years ago I added a walk to my morning routine. I stop about halfway to school and walk for about 20 minutes at the West Suffield Wildlife Management Area, right on the Connecticut-Massachusetts state line. This is a relaxing time which gives me a few minutes to prepare my thoughts for the energetic onslaught of middle school children. Besides the mindfulness aspect, my hikes have taught me a few things I would like to share with you.

First, Earth is tilted on its axis. Of course, we know this, at least intellectually. But have you seen the proof? I have. The walk I take is almost exactly along an east-west line, so in late September the sun rises straight ahead of me. On my walks in October and November, the sun rises a bit further and further to my right each morning as I walk eastward. The sun is moving across the sky from day to day. . . which of course we know is not correct. It is Earth's tilt that is causing the apparent change in the sun's location. Right around Christmas time, the sun's southern motion slows to a halt and eventually shifts northward. At first the change is slow, but it picks up speed, and by March the sun is again rising straight in front of me as I take my morning walk. Now it rises a bit to my left every day as it moves to its northern extent in late June, when my morning walks end for the season. Now, some sharp-eyed reader might be thinking, "If he sees the sun rise in September, he cannot be seeing a sunrise in December." You are absolutely right, but I can see some of my favorite planets. The planets follow the same path as the sun and can therefore be used to locate the morning sunrise point.

My second lesson is that cold air sinks. Again, you might know this intellectually, and perhaps if you happen to own an apple orchard you know this practically, but have you experienced the phenomenon? I have. This trail at the West Suffield Wildlife Management Area, a road really, undulates across a large open field. The parking lot is on a small rise and so I begin my stroll by dropping down into a small gulley. In the fall and again in the spring, the temperature change as I drop 20 feet downslope is very pronounced. During the night the air cools and becomes just slightly denser. This "heavier" air then settles into the low spots. In fall and spring, the sun is just coming up as I walk the trail and so the air has not had time to absorb the sun's energy; it remains cool, trapped in the hollow of the land. Interestingly, cold air can hold very little moisture, so on many mornings I walk from the parking lot into a bank of fog. The fog layer sits above this cooler area, so from the bottom of the hollow, I look up to see the layer of fog above me. As I climb out of the hole I cross through that layer, and later, when the trail dips again, I drop back through it and into another cold sink before eventually reaching the turnaround point of my hike. Again, I go in and out of the fog as I return to my car.

My third observation occurs only in the spring, as the birds return from the south. Different species of birds sing from perches of different heights. As winter breaks and the snow melts away from the trail, I look forward to the return of the songbirds. Sparrows always seem to be the first to return. The fields are barren and so they have few perches from which to sing. They tend to sit low to the ground and belt out their songs. At first, I thought that this was a result of a dearth of opportunity. Surely if there were tall plants, the sparrow would alight at the top and sing, but in the case of the chipping and white-throated sparrows this does not seem to be the case. Throughout the season, the sparrows always seem to sing from a low perch, often hidden from view when the grasses grow tall. Not the case for the meadowlark. I only find these birds singing from the highest, most open perches. The West Suffield property was an old farm and is being managed for upland game birds. There are a number of tall posts, 20 or more feet in height, scattered across the landscape. It is from these posts, and these alone, that the meadowlarks sing. They like to be up high before sharing their song. But the species that really got me to recognize this trend was the common yellowthroat. Like the sparrows, when they return the fields are barren, but yellowthroats find a perch 15 to 20 inches high from which to sing. As the grasses and forbs grow, they keep to that same height. In the early spring I have no trouble spotting these little warblers, but as the season progresses, they disappear below the growing grassland. They keep on singing even if now they cannot be seen. I should acknowledge that some birds, like the American robin and the tufted titmouse, do not seem to prefer any particular height for their singing. They might sing from the ground, from a short stump, or from a branch high in the trees.

My school year has just started again, and I look forward to my renewed walks. I have been walking this trail nearly every day during the school year, rain or shine. It never ceases to amaze me, how this simple little trail can change so much from day to day and season to season. I encourage you to find a trail that you can call your own and explore its moods and secrets over time.

~ Tom Condon

### **Hawkwatch Atop Shatterack Mountain, Russell**

Sunday, October 3, from noon to 2 p.m.

Leaders: Nancy Condon (413-297-0778) and Tom Swochak

Registration: Not required.

Meeting Place: Russell Post Office, Main Street, Russell

Raptors are still heading south for the winter. Shatterack Mountain provides a great vantage point from which to see them. Join Tom Swochak atop Shatterack to look for and learn about the hawks and their behavior. Tom has been hawkwatching for 30 years, first from Mt. Tekoa, then from Blueberry Hill in Granville, and now – since 2005 – from Shatterack.

We will carpool from the post office, then drive most of the way up the mountain. The remaining quarter-mile hike up to the ridge is rocky in a few places, so wear sturdy hiking boots. Bring your binoculars and spotting scope if you have one, and a chair if you wish. Two scopes will be available for group use.

### **Fall Walk in Bear Hole, West Springfield**

Saturday, October 9, from 10 a.m. to noon

Leader: Dietrich Schlobohm

Registration: Call Dietrich at (413-788-4125)

Meeting Place: Intersection of Prospect Ave. and Morgan Road, in W. Springfield., known as “4 Corners”.

This walk is a celebration of the eight-year struggle by the West Springfield Environmental Committee to gain a Conservation Restriction for the 1500-acre Bear Hole watershed. This goal was achieved this past July with the help of many people. Now this property will be protected in perpetuity. The land can never be developed, and can only be used for passive recreation.

We will begin our walk by going west on Prospect Avenue, observing fall colors at Prospect Pond. Then we will head north on Millville Road, past Heron Pond and Lost Pond, ultimately arriving at an old mill site.

To reach 4 Corners, take Morgan Road just opposite the Riverdale Shopping Plaza, on Rte. 5 in W. Springfield, until it turns into a dirt road, passes under the Mass Pike, and meets Prospect Avenue. Call Dietrich for any additional information.

### **Quabbin Hike, New Salem**

Sunday, October 10, starting at 10 a.m.

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

Registration: Please call Dave and Suzy.

Meeting Place: CVS Plaza near the junction of Routes 9 and 202, Belchertown

Join us for a wonderful October hike at the northwestern side of Quabbin (Gates 25-26), one of the area’s most beautiful locations. From this vantage point, one can look across the calm water and spot a string of small islands. We will make a loop along an old road through mixed hardwood forest with wonderful October foliage. Bring a lunch or snack. The hike is about three miles. After the hike, we can go into the Town of New Salem, a wonderful little village that looks just as it did in the 19th century. From town, we will have the option to take a second, brief hike to some beautiful vistas that you will love! Then we will visit a farm and orchard in town for some wonderful hot apple cider. Rain cancels.

### **Hawkwatch in the Mount Holyoke Range, Hadley**

Saturday, October 16, from 10 a.m. to noon

Leaders: Dan Russell (413-527-7323) and Dietrich

Schlobohm (413-788-4125)

Meeting Place: Summit House parking lot, Skinner State Park, Mt. Holyoke Range

October is a great time for viewing fall hawk migration. We will have potential to see a variety of birds: red-tailed, sharp-shinned and Cooper’s hawks. Osprey, kestrel, peregrine, some less common hawks and bald eagles are all possibilities, too. Summit House provides a broad view of the valley and access to a major migratory route for hawks.

Dan and Dietrich will help participants recognize the primary characteristics of the different species. Pack a snack, and dress warmly because the wind at the summit can be chilling at times. Don’t forget to bring binoculars. Call Dan or Dietrich for more details, or directions to Summit House.

*The wind is rising, and the air is wild with leaves.  
We have had our summer evenings; now for  
October eves! ~ Humbert Wolfe*

## The Science Behind a Tree's Value... Explained in Plain Language, for the Rest of Us

Wednesday, October 20, starting at 7 p.m.  
Springfield Science Museum, Tolman Auditorium  
Speaker: Dr. David Bloniarz



Dr. David Bloniarz, of the USDA Forest Service, will discuss the value of urban trees growing right here in the Pioneer Valley. Using tools developed by the U.S. Forest Service to calculate the environmental and monetary value of a city or town's urban forest, he will highlight local examples of how trees help to counter global climate change, right in our own backyards. He will present scientific data in an easy-to-understand manner, breaking down the complex calculations used to determine tree values.

David Bloniarz, Ph.D., is an urban forester with an extensive background in urban forest management and landscape design. He holds a master's degree in landscape architecture a doctorate in urban forestry from UMass Amherst. He is a scientist with the Urban Natural Resources Institute. The Institute's focus is on development of new tools and technologies for use by planners, green space managers, and researchers. David's work involves research and technology transfer initiatives related to urban natural resource structure, function, and value. He serves on the i-Tree development team, providing technical and programming support for the inventory and analysis initiative and is on the faculty of the UMass Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

I cannot endure to waste something as precious  
as autumn sunshine by staying in the house.  
~ Nathaniel Hawthorne

At press time, masks are required during all  
indoor events at the Springfield Museums. Please  
check <https://naturalist-club.org/> for possible  
Covid-related updates.

# Happy 6025<sup>th</sup> Birthday

## Happy Birthday Earth, Simsbury, Connecticut

Date and Time: Sunday, October 24, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Leaders: Tom Condon

Registration: Please contact Nancy (413-297-0778; [nancy@paddleforwater.net](mailto:nancy@paddleforwater.net))

Meeting Place: McDonalds, 273 Cottage Grove Road, Bloomfield, Connecticut

Barred Owl image:  
[barred-owl-clipart-texas.eps](#)



In 1650, Irishman James Ussher, began counting all the "begats" in the Old Testament. He further analyzed ancient calendars, Hebrew and Egyptian texts and came up with a date for the Creation. The world, he concluded, had begun one day in 4004 BC – specifically, on the eve of October 23rd. Join us today in a celebration of what Ussher would have calculated as Earth's 6025th birthday.

We will be hiking Talcott Mountain of central Connecticut, along the traprock mountain ridge located 6 miles (10 km) west of the city of Hartford. The ridge, a prominent landscape feature, forms a continuous line of exposed western cliffs visible across the Farmington River Valley. Talcott Mountain is known for its microclimate ecosystems, rare plant communities and expansive views from cliffs and the Heublein Tower that rises up to 700 feet above the surrounding landscape. As we hike along, we will stop and explore the geology of the area and discuss how scientists today understand the age of the planet.

Parking is limited at the trailhead on Summit Ridge Drive, so we'll meet in Bloomfield and then carpool to the mountain. The trail starts steep, but once it reaches the ridgeline it becomes a gentle path to the historic Heublein Tower, our turnaround point. Although I have seen people hiking in flip-flops, I recommend comfortable, sturdy shoes. Pack a lunch, water, and be prepared for the weather on this fine October day.



### Late Season Paddle on Littleville Lake, *Huntington*

Saturday, November 6, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon

Registration: Please contact Nancy (413-297-0778; [nancy@paddleforwater.net](mailto:nancy@paddleforwater.net))

Meeting Place: Littleville Lake parking lot, about a mile off Route 112 in Huntington (32 Goss Hill Road, Huntington). Turn left after Huntington Country Store; go past the school; cross the single-lane bridge on the right; go up the hill and turn left into the parking lot.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers oversees the 1,567 acres that encompasses Littleville Lake, the dam that creates it, and the hundreds of acres of hemlock, pine and mixed hardwoods that surround the lake. This backup water supply to Springfield is home to bass, perch, smelt, and stocked trout. We will have a leisurely paddle along the shoreline, watching for birds and other wildlife. Bring your boat, paddling gear, lunch, water, and dress for the weather.

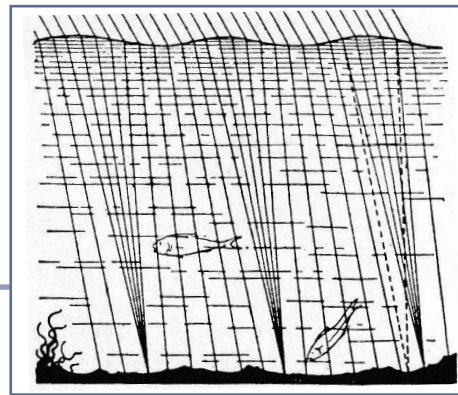
### Conant Brook Dam, *Monson*

Saturday, November 13, from noon to 2 p.m.

Leader: Kevin Kopchynski

Registration: Please contact Kevin at 413-267-4757 or [kevin@nature-explorations.com](mailto:kevin@nature-explorations.com)

Conant Brook Dam is a small dam managed by the Army Corps of Engineers and located on the Monson-Wales border. There are opportunities for waterfowl sightings. We will explore a network of trails near the parking lot, looking for highlights of the post-foliage autumn season. Rain or high winds will cancel.



*Rays of sunlight penetrate the water and by the refraction of the waves are collected into lines of light. The blue rays (dotted) are more strongly refracted.*

image from *The Nature of Light & Color in the Open Air*, Marcel Minnaert (1937)

NOV.  
Meeting

### Light and Color in the Earth's Atmosphere

Wednesday, November 17, starting at 7 p.m.

Springfield Science Museum, Tolman Auditorium

Presenter: Richard Sanderson

Amazing and varied sky phenomena arise from the interaction of sunlight and moonlight with clouds, atmospheric water droplets, ice crystals and impurities, plus the optical properties of the air above our heads. Using his own photographs, Richard Sanderson will illustrate and explain such beautiful sky displays as rainbows, fogbows, haloes, crepuscular rays, sun pillars, cloud iridescence and the volcanic afterglow caused by the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo. He will describe how he made the only known observation of a chromospheric rainbow in 1977. He will also show some of his favorite storm pictures, including the 2011 tornado that devastated Springfield's South End.

Richard Sanderson retired in 2018 after a two-decade tenure as curator of physical science at Springfield Science Museum, where he managed the Seymour Planetarium and rooftop observatory. He is coauthor of the 2006 book "Illustrated Timeline of the Universe" and has written hundreds of articles for newspapers, astronomy magazines and scientific journals. In 2017, an asteroid orbiting the sun between Mars and Jupiter was officially named "6893 Sanderson" in his honor.

### A Peaked Mountain Hike - Hike Away your Thanksgiving Meal (Say goodbye to the pie), *Monson*

Sunday, November 28, starting at 10 a.m.

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

Meeting Place: In front of Burlington at the shopping mall, Allen and Cooley Streets, in Springfield

Join us for this annual hike and walk off those calories from Thanksgiving dinner! We will hike to the summit of Peaked Mountain with its incredible vistas of the valley below. From the summit, you can see Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire. We will hike some different trails. This is a moderately strenuous hike. Bring a lunch and plenty of water. Sturdy hiking shoes are recommended, and do not forget your binoculars! Rain cancels.

### Annual Late Fall Hike at the Quabbin, *Belchertown*

Sunday, December 5, starting at 10 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup

Registration: Please call Dave and Suzy (413-525-4697)

Meeting Place: CVS Plaza, near junction of Routes 9 and 202 in Belchertown

It is that time of the year again: a time to get together and share a late-fall day. Our destination is Gate 13 or 15, which takes us on a wonderful hike with great views of the northern section of the Quabbin – lots of stone walls and farm sites. There is some chance we will see eagles and hear loons! Previously, we've seen moose tracks on the Quabbin's sandy beaches. This is a great hike in one of the most beautiful areas to explore. Bring a lunch, hot drinks, and binoculars. Dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy hiking boots. Rain cancels.

### **Haystack Mountain Hike, Norfolk, Connecticut**

Saturday, December 11, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon (413-297-0778)

Registration: Please contact Nancy via phone or [nancy@paddleforwater.net](mailto:nancy@paddleforwater.net)

Meeting Place: Haystack Mountain State Park Entrance, North Street (Rt. 272) Norfolk, Connecticut

A lonely tower sits atop this sentinel of a mountain in northwestern Connecticut. This stone tower was built as a war memorial. Today it offers spectacular views across the western hills of Connecticut, into New York, and north into Massachusetts and on a clear day as far as Vermont's Green Mountains.

Most of our hike will be along the paved park road, which at this time of the year is open only to foot traffic. The road sweeps by a lovely pond and then climbs to near the

summit. We will stop for wildlife and to explore the geology of the area. The last half mile or so to the summit is along a narrow path, but the view is well worth the climb. Pack a lunch, water, and dress for the weather. Wear sturdy boots. Rain cancels.

### **An Evening with Naturalists, Wilbraham**

Saturday, December 11, starting at 7 p.m.

Host: Sonya Vickers (413-218-7742)

Sonya has moved, but the holiday party is back! She looks forward to welcoming you to her new home in Wilbraham. We gather to share stories of our encounters in nature through the last two years. Bring a holiday treat we can all share. To join in for this festive event, please call Sonya to register and for directions to her new home.

At press time, masks are required during all indoor events at the Springfield Museums. Please check <https://naturalist-club.org/> for possible Covid-related updates.

## **DEC. Meeting**

### **HOLIDAY MEETING**

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

Springfield Science Museum, Tolman Auditorium

Presenters: You!

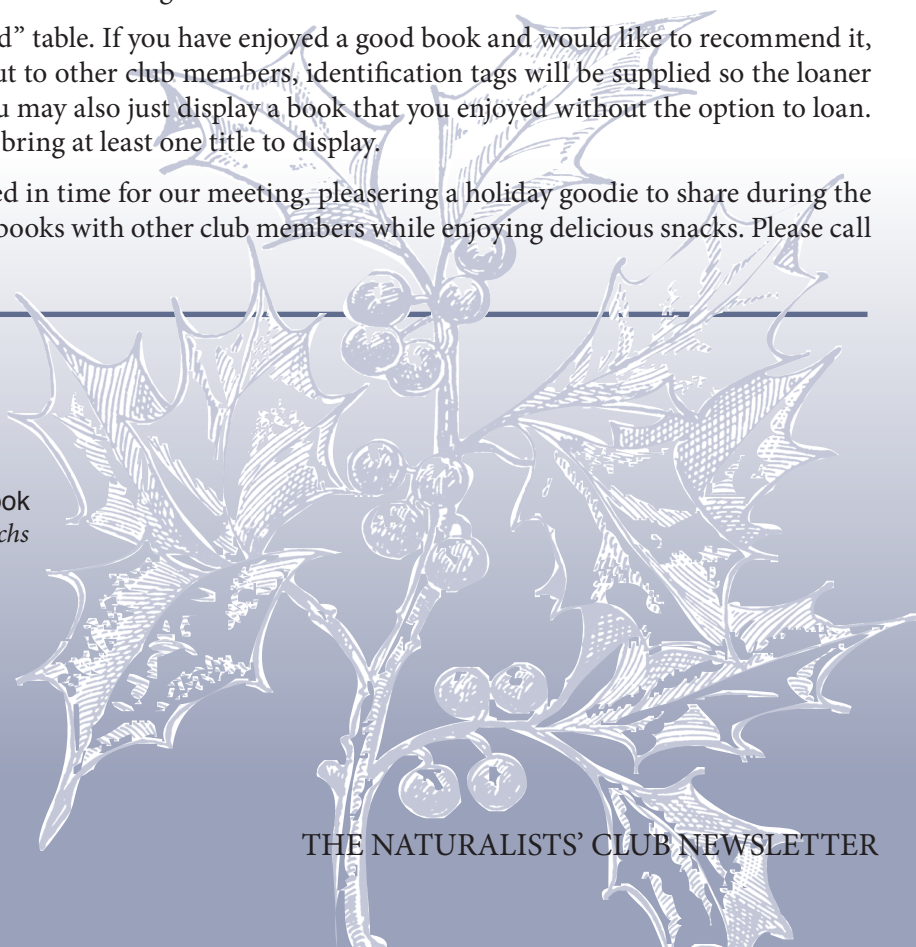
Emcee: Nancy Condon (413-297-0778; [nancy@paddleforwater.net](mailto:nancy@paddleforwater.net))

Our annual holiday meeting is an opportunity to share your most memorable and interesting nature and travel experiences with other club members. Have you visited someplace you would recommend to others? Have you taken up photography during our COVID isolation? We want to hear from you. Show us some of the highlights by way of PowerPoint or photo album. Presentations may be no longer than 10 minutes in length.

This year we would like to repeat the "Good Read" table. If you have enjoyed a good book and would like to recommend it, bring it in. If you are willing to loan the book out to other club members, identification tags will be supplied so the loaner and borrower can swap contact information. You may also just display a book that you enjoyed without the option to loan. Either way, look through your library and try to bring at least one title to display.

If existing rules against shared food are rescinded in time for our meeting, please bring a holiday goodie to share during the social hour. That way, we can discuss intriguing books with other club members while enjoying delicious snacks. Please call Nancy to get on the roster for presentations.

In the winter she curls up around a good book  
and dreams away the cold. ~ Ben Aaronovitch



## Events at Laughing Brook

Please call Laughing Brook at (413) 584-3009 or visit [massaudubon.org](http://massaudubon.org) for information on this event and others.

### **Misunderstood Wildlife: Opossums, Online**

Tuesday, November 30, starting at 7 p.m.

Registration: Please contact Laughing Brook

*Event description from MassAudubon:* Have you found an overturned trash can in your yard and blamed an opossum? Maybe you've spotted one slinking about the edges of your neighborhood late at night and were taken aback by their hairless tails and sharp teeth. While kangaroos are a close relative of the opossum, and well loved by many, opossums are often thought of as overgrown rats! The truth is that opossums are very beneficial, eating many garden pests, and consuming huge amounts of ticks. Opossums may even be a weapon against Lyme disease. Discover amazing truths about the awesome opossum, and come to understand how they benefit our world.

## Additional Events in November

### **Fall Chrysanthemum Show at Smith College,**

*Northampton*

Saturday, November 6, to Sunday, November 21, 2021

Location: Lyman Conservatory

Each fall as colors fade outdoors, a riot of color erupts indoors in the Lyman Conservatory at the Botanical Garden of Smith College.

Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily

Fridays 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Friends of the Botanical Garden only: 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. daily. Please bring your Garden membership card.

The suggested donation is \$5.00

The annual Fall Chrysanthemum Show features an extraordinary display of blooms in a variety of shapes and colors. The Fall Mum Show has been a popular college and community tradition since the early 1900s and showcases the hybridizing experiments of the horticulture class. The public gets a chance to vote on their favorites.

*Please contact The Botanic Garden of Smith College for any Covid-related updates (1-413-585-2740).*

December's wintery breath is already clouding the pond, frosting the pane, obscuring summer's memory. ~John Geddes

## Naturalists' Club Contributions in 2021

In July of this year, the Naturalists' Club Board voted to make the following distributions from the Dorothy Anne Wheat Naturalists' Fund and the Phyllis Wheat Smith Fund, both held by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. The distributions were made to a wide range of organizations, each of them engaged in activities that promote appreciation of nature and help to preserve our natural environment.

Springfield Museums Corporation, \$2500

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, \$500

West Springfield Environmental Committee, \$3000

World Wildlife Fund, Inc., \$500

Friends of the Bosque del Apache, \$500

Minnechaug Land Trust, \$2000

Trustees of Reservations, \$1000

Kestrel Land Trust, \$1500

Massachusetts Audubon Society, \$2500

Tom Ricardi, Birds of Prey Rehabilitation, \$1000

## Club Elections

Naturalists' Club Elections will be held at the November Meeting. Members may contact the Nominating Committee to make any additional nominations.

Nominating Committee

- Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

- Leo Riendeau (413-224-1468)

The following members are running:

- President – Dave Gallup

- Vice President – Nancy Condon

- Treasurer – Tom Condon

- Corresponding Secretary – Sue Gallup

- Recording Secretary – Dave Lovejoy

- Directors – Carole Dupont, Jack Megas, Dietrich Schlobohm, Sonya Vickers



## FROM THE TREASURER

September is membership renewal time! If you receive a paper copy of the Newsletter, the mailing label will include information about the status of your membership. "21-22" means that dues are owed for the year starting now. Members who receive the Newsletter as an email attachment will see their membership status in a brief message.

Payment should be sent to the Club Treasurer at the address on the "Renew your membership" form below. If your contact information has not changed, you need not include the form; please just send your check.

Renewal time can serve as a reminder for those receiving a paper copy to consider switching to electronic delivery, which saves the Club a couple dollars per year per membership in postage. Of course, those wishing to receive a paper copy may continue to do so.

Thanks.

*~Dave Lovejoy*

## MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

\$20 per year for Individual  
or Family Membership  
\$30 per year for Supporting Membership  
\$50 per year for Sustaining Membership  
\$300 for Lifetime Membership

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you opt for electronic delivery of the Naturalists' Club Newsletter? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

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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