

Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society

Eco~Notes

Spring 2010

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Photo by Georgette Pascotto

A Good Day for Eagles

The majestic bald eagles that flock to the Upper Delaware River each winter were the stars of our Eagle Excursion on January 23. Seventeen eagles were spotted on a perfect sunny day for observing and photographing eagles. Jan Lokuta, a trained Eagle Institute guide, was entertaining and most informative. President Lori McKean graciously assisted in every way possible.

Linda Shay wrote, "The Eagle Excursion was awesome and I totally enjoyed it. I intend to become a member and plan to attend the bird trip on Earth Day." Our waiting list held twenty-eight people in addition to the thirty-six participants, some of whom followed the bus. We saw many eagles on the towpath road along the Lackawaxen River. An eagle nest was heavily photographed near Shohola on New York Route 97. No eagles were sighted at the bird blind at Rio on the Mongaup Reservoir because the reservoir was almost frozen. However, participants who want to search on

Meet Our New Board Members

We would like to welcome two new members to our board.



After working in Internet technology in the healthcare industry for over five years, new board member **Chris Fischer** is presently studying professional photography and freelancing as a web consultant. He is an avid birder, and his passion for nature and birds has led to a growing interest in

conservation issues. Last fall he spent six weeks working on an environmental conservation project in Botswana and South Africa. Chris says, "I am excited to be joining the Audubon board and becoming involved in conservation issues here at home."

their own now know safe procedures for viewing eagles and the best places to observe them.

Our participation this year was amplified by extra publicity from Alex Zidock's "Out in the Open" TV 13 show on which Kathy Dodge and I were interviewed. A full-page feature in the travel section of the *Morning Call*, "The Eagles are Landing," also mentioned our trip. I received many calls from both of these sources. It was a joy to share my passion for eagles.



Photo by Stephen J. Davis

Any day I see an eagle I feel uplifted and inspired by their beauty, courage, vision, and somehow touched by spirit.

—Joan Thirion



Phyllis Terwilliger, our new education-committee chair, will oversee educational programs presented to community groups, schools, and at public events. Phyllis is an experienced educator and has taught in schools in this country and abroad. She is also a Master Gardener and serves on the Wayne-Pike Adult Literacy Program Board of Directors. Phyllis commented, "I look forward to working with folks in environmental education through the Audubon Society."

Our Mission Statement

Our goal is to conserve and restore our environment to benefit humanity, birds, and other wildlife through education, action, and advocacy.

Message from the President

Let's face it. Industrialized humans are complicated and messy. We build houses and high-rises out of steel, glass, wood, brick, cement, sheetrock, plastic, insulation, shingles, paint, and pipes. We invent machinery to help us manufacture all these things. We invent all kinds of stuff to fill and maintain these places. Then we build highways and flyways to connect all these constructions and the vehicles to travel them. We invent amazing ways to grow immense amounts of food: chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified seeds. Wow! What brains we have.

Our legacy? Well, along with our dear children to carry on this complicated life, there are magnificent things like the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris—one of the most breathtaking high-Gothic structures in the world, which brings me to tears when I see it; a library at Yale with translucent marble walls to protect the treasured books from harmful light; the gracious Statue of Liberty; healing

medicines; microscopes that can detect minute secrets of our ecosystem; and telescopes that reach back to the beginning of time. Then there is the legacy we cannot call magnificent: landfills, toxic chemicals and waste dumps, dead zones at the mouths of our rivers, belching smokestacks, and nuclear weapons.

It is interesting to think about what birds use to carry on their lives: feathers, feet, beaks, eyes, the usual internal organs, ears (well, really holes in the head), voice boxes, and pea-sized brains. They raise families in biodegradable nests and navigate incredibly accurately using the stars and the planet's magnetic fields. Their legacy? Well, they spread and eat seeds, keep insect populations in check, pollinate plants, leave a bit of bird poop and finally, a small carcass maybe in the form of an owl pellet or in some predator's scat, and they leave their offspring to carry on an amazing ability to live lightly and beautifully on our planet.

—Katharine Dodge

Summer Camp Scholarships

The Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society is offering three scholarships to selected environmentally focused summer camps, covering all costs except transportation to and from the camp.

One \$2200 scholarship will be awarded to a high-school student to attend a two-week interdisciplinary residential program at the Environmental Studies Summer Youth Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges located on Seneca Lake. The student must be at least sixteen years old. The program explores the scientific, social, and humanistic perspectives of environmental issues. There will be opportunities to conduct research at the college's science labs, on a 65-foot vessel on Seneca Lake, and in streams and quaking bogs during a camping trip in the Adirondack Mountains. The camp will be held from

July 11 to July 24.

Two scholarships will also be awarded to students from the ages of 14 to 17 with an interest in wildlife, conservation, and the outdoors to attend a week at the PA Wildlife Leadership Academy. Students will engage in hands-on learning about the biology, ecology, and management of the Pennsylvania state bird, the ruffed grouse (June 11-26), or white-tailed deer (July 6-10). Activities include grouse and deer necropsy, radio telemetry in the field, using GPS in the field, and habitat evaluations and management.

Applicants must reside in Lackawanna, Susquehanna, Wayne, or Pike Counties of Pennsylvania. Forms, which may be found at www.nepa-audubon.org, are due to NEPA Audubon Society by April 30.

—MaryAnn Lunnis

Welcome New Members

Kevin Albaugh	Suzan C. Cook	Herbert Goldstein	Jennifer Lim	Karen Rutkowski
Robert Ballot	Steven Coraor	Kathy Haser	Joan Lonsdorf	Judith Schrecongost
Catherine Bauer	Evelyn Cottrell	Thomas Haser	Lorraine Mack	Stephen Schuster
Georgia Begley	Maureen A. Crook	George and Elise	Susan C. Mancuso	Elaine Sciarrind
Bunnie E. Benz	Curtis Family	Hernandez	Joan L. Manze	Blanche Scott
Arlene Binner	Marilyn Dawes	Jo Ellen Hudgins	Barbara F. Medici	Bananas Suriano
Patricia Buehring	Juanita Delgado	J. Russell Imlay	Carol Miller	Thomas Teneralli
Diane Bugat	Jo A. Depew	Leonard Kalechitz	Basil Moots	Richard Teneyck
Chad Burnham	Debra Edwards	Diane J. Kimberley	Laura Moran	Teresa Tyler
Theodore Cabo	Joseph Eglezia	Michael Klein	Nicholas Niles	Patricia Williams
Jennifer M. Capkovic	Alice M. Evans	Natalia Kulischenko	Effie A. Potter	Shelley A. Wilson
Rocky L. Capria	Mary Pat Freitag	Alex Laferriere	Margaret C. Rafter	Phyllis Yannelli
Bob Charles	Reba R. Gifford	Laura M. Lamia	Bonnie Rinker	Janelle Zigon
Ethel Choinski	Beverly Gilmore	Diane H. Lenahan	C. Russo	Carolyn Zipperlen

Gas Drilling—Recent Developments

The issue of gas drilling will be with us for a very long time. Your chapter has tried to take a reasonable and realistic position on the issue, and we will continue to take an active role in protecting our environment from drilling impacts.

Much has happened recently, for example:

- State forest land has been leased to the gas industry to fill the revenue shortfalls in the state budget. We are very concerned about possible lack of oversight to prevent adverse impacts upon wildlife, air, and water. Representative Vitali (D-Del) has introduced legislation that would put a two-year moratorium on any further leasing on state lands until in-depth studies have assessed the impact of drilling on our forests, wildlife and water quality.
- A severance tax on resource extraction has been proposed, something we favor as long as revenues from such a tax will be used for strong environmental protection and for minimizing impacts upon affected communities rather than going to the general fund.
- The Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Quality Advisory Board issued amendments to strengthen regulation of total dissolved

Audubon Announces \$4000

College Scholarship

The Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society announces a \$4000 college scholarship for a student who wishes to pursue a career in an environmental field such as forestry, natural resources, environmental planning, environmental engineering, fish, game, or wildlife management, ecology and/or environmental science. Applicants must be from Pike, Wayne, Lackawanna, or Susquehanna County and must enroll full time in an accredited two- or four-year college or university program. The winning applicant will receive \$1000 per year for up to four years. The scholarship is funded by the annual Audubon Arts and Craft Festival held each July. Interested students can find the application form at www.nepaudubonsociety.org or they can use the universal scholarship application form available at their high-school guidance office. Forms are due to NEPA Audubon Society by April 30.

—Chris Wiegand

solids (tds) in waste water. We sent testimony supporting such a move.

- Senator Lisa Baker has responded to various letters from your Conservation Chair regarding the understaffing in DEP, the removal of responsibility for Erosion and Sediment Control monitoring of the drilling sites from the local Conservation Districts, and the untimely responses to complaints about contamination at drilling sites. She is well aware of these mutual concerns and says she will do her part to effect legislation on the issues. She is a member of the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee in the State Senate.
- The DEP just recently hired more staff to monitor the gas drilling, but is still lagging behind in its regulation of the oil and gas industries. The Oil and Gas Act needs to be updated and strengthened in order to protect all the residents of this state (wildlife included).

Fracking was exempted from the Clean Water Act through a back-room deal during the Bush Administration. We need to undo that by passing S. 1215 in the Senate (Contact Senators Arlen Specter and Bob Casey), and HR 2766 in the House (Contact Representative Chris Carney).

—Barbara Leo

Free Film Screening



Join us for a **free** showing of *Under Our Skin*, an award-winning documentary on the complicated issues connected with diagnosing Lyme disease.

The film will be shown on March 20, 2010, at PPL Learning Center on Lake Wallenpaupack in Hawley. The film is co-sponsored with our partners in conservation education: Lackawac Sanctuary and PPL. Call (570) 253-2364 for information.



Save a tree! Would you like to go paperless and receive this newsletter via e-mail? Just send an e-mail to nepaudubonsociety.org and we will add your address to the list.

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The date on the address label is the date your national and/or local chapter Audubon membership expires. National Audubon will send you reminders well before your national membership expires.

Editor: Marileta Robinson

Contributors: Katharine Dodge, Barbara Leo, MaryAnn Lunnis, Joan Thirion, Chris Wiegand.

Mark Your Calendars

Saturday, March 20, 2 PM: *Under Our Skin*, an award-winning film about Lyme disease. PPL Environmental Learning Center near Wallenpaupack High School. Free. Call Barbara at 253-2364 for more information.

Saturday, April 17, 10 AM to 3 PM: Earth Day Celebration. Activities for all ages provided by many organizations. Audubon members will lead bird walks throughout the day. Food and beverages available. PPL Environmental Learning Center near Wallenpaupack High School. Free. Rain or shine.

Saturday, April 24, 9 AM: Annual Litter Pick-Up, followed by a FREE breakfast. We pick up litter along a two mile stretch of Route 191 near Lake Ariel. All equipment provided. Call Marge ASAP at 253-9599 to register.

Saturday, May 8, anytime between 5 AM and noon: International Migratory Bird Day. Join our bird experts to welcome returning spring birds. Free and open to all ages and all levels of skill. Prompton State Park near Seeleyville. Call Barbara at 253-2364 for more information.

Saturday, May 22, 8:30 AM: Dedication of our new trail and interpretive signs at Browning Beaver Meadow Sanctuary. Nature walks and refreshments. Go about 10 miles north of Honesdale on Route 191. Turn left at the Lookout General Store and go less than a mile. The sanctuary will be on your left at the junction of Hawley Road. Free. Call 253-9250 for more information.

Saturday, May 29, 10 AM: Children's Treasure Hunt with biologist John Jose. Explore micro-habitats along the shore. Door prizes, too! Free. Prompton State Park near Seeleyville. Call 253-9250 for more information.

Saturday, June 19, 8 AM: "Birds and Blooms," Floyd Schnakenberg Memorial Walk. See wildflowers and breeding birds at our Browning Beaver Meadow Sanctuary. Bring binoculars and sturdy shoes. Call Joan at 228-1704 for more information.

Sunday, June 20, noon: Annual Canoe/Kayak trip on the Delaware River. A covered-dish party at a nearby cabin follows the trip. A limited number of boats are available—reserve early. Call Pete at 253-9250 to sign up.