

# Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society

## Eco~Notes

Winter 2009

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Photo by Georgette Pascotto

### Family Fun Day Enjoyed by All

Our Family Fun Day on October 17<sup>th</sup> was a great success thanks to the help of many people contributing their time and skills. Phyllis Terwilliger used an apple and a knife to demonstrate to a captivated audience how little available soil we have on this planet in which to grow our food.

Then everyone assembled for a photo later put on the 350.org website. 350.org is using that site to help urge world leaders at the upcoming climate conference in Copenhagen to cut carbon back to 350 parts per million in our atmosphere to avoid catastrophic climate change.

Finally, everyone set off to visit twelve different stations where they planted and took home garlic with the help of Janice Pierson and her daughter Chris Bond, made homemade organic skin scrub under the skilled tutelage of organic farmer Jo Clearwater of Clearwater Acres, used hand-powered farm and kitchen implements to peel apples and shell and grind corn with Nancy Savage and Kathy Dodge, and painted with mud under the guidance of Phyllis Terwilliger. They also learned how to make a toad or snake shelter with the help of Pat Sanders,



**This apple peeler is not only good for the planet, it's fun!**

sampled fair trade goodies from Mark Terwilliger's church program, played a "green board game" with the help of Kelly Block and Chris Weigand, learned from Nathaniel Whitmore how to start a fire without matches, and tied important and useful knots with the help of knot guru Pete Snyder. Last but not least, Ray and Ella Hoerning came with an ingeniously engineered bottle rocket to encourage re-use and recycling of plastic bottles. Other helpers included board members Barbara Leo, Marileta Robinson,



Photos by Pat Sanders

**Phyllis Terwilliger was one of many volunteers who helped make Family Fun Day successful.**

Bob Campbell, and three students doing community service with Justiceworks. Thanks to all!

—Katharine Dodge

### Alternative Energy Field Trip

The 2009 Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Festival was well worth the trip to Kempton, Pennsylvania, this past September. It is very special to have such a large and well-run event only two hours away. We did not have enough people to run the bus we had reserved, but a number of people car-pooled. This festival is

chock-full of innovative renewable and sustainable ideas, displays, speakers, workshops, and dealers.

Audubon will not be sponsoring a bus next September, but we will be happy to help with car-pooling. So if you have never attended, put next September 17, 18, or 19 on your calendar and call us to car-pool!

—Katharine Dodge

### 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

This newsletter arrived in your mailbox at the same time a major climate conference is being held in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Kyoto Protocol to prevent global warming expires in 2012. To keep the world on the right path, there is an urgent need for a new climate agreement to take its place. Representatives from 170 countries are in Copenhagen now to work on this, about 8,000 in all, including journalists, NGOs, and heads of state. This is the last time government-level people will convene to design a new protocol before the old climate agreement expires.

This is a really big make-or-break deal, a matter of survival for billions of people, life or death for thousands of species. This could decide the very

## Sanctuary Receives Audubon Grant

Your local Audubon Chapter has received a \$1,100 grant from National Audubon to locate interpretive signs along the trails at the Browning-Beaver Meadow Sanctuary in Lookout, Pennsylvania. The grant was obtained by Barbara Leo and Georgette Pascotto, who wrote the request and provided photographs of the trails.



Photos by Georgette Pascotto

**The new trailhead entrance into the Sanctuary.**

Work is now underway to create a new entrance and trails at the beginning of the property. A look at the property this past spring

## Audubon Conducts 110<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count

The Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society is looking for volunteers to join in the Christmas Bird Count within a 15-mile radius of White Mills. The Count will be held on Sunday, December 20, beginning at dawn and ending when the last volunteer has finished! This is a wonderful way to take note of the many birds that are around at this time of year. You might get a chance to see late migrating birds if the weather permits.

The Christmas Count dates back to 1900 when ornithologist and writer Frank M. Chapman organized an alternative to the side hunt, when hunters would go afield

survival of a viable planet.

People around the world have been pressuring world leaders for meaningful action. (Go to [350.org](http://350.org) to see how you can help pressure them.) We urge you to take your own actions: do whatever you can to cut your own carbon emissions. This holiday season, think how you might make greener choices while celebrating and gift-giving. Is a gasoline-powered motorbike or a snowmobile a smart way to teach our kids how to have fun in the twenty-first century? A simpler, more conserving life-style can be happier, more fulfilling, healthier, and fun.

We wish you all a healthy, happy, green New Year!

—Katharine Dodge

showed evidence of increased beaver activity, making the old trail system difficult to use. Pete Synder and Jim Sanders began work after the nesting season to identify and clear a new trail. Barbara, Georgette, and Kathy Dodge placed markers to point out habitats of birds and mammals. Joan Thirion has identified wildflowers and will provide support for other vegetation that fits each habitat.

—Barbara Leo



**Beaver “engineers” are including this footbridge, which leads to the back of the Sanctuary and its higher elevations, in their dam.**

and try to come back with the “biggest pile of feathers.” Today we go afield in search of birds that may have stayed because of a mild, early winter and those that have arrived because of harsh conditions in Canada.

Our count last year produced many pine siskins and, to our delight, twenty-four evening grosbeaks, the most tallied for our region. This year will provide other surprises for those willing to brave the elements and add to our knowledge of early winter populations. Call Barbara today at (570) 253-2364 and get involved.

—Barbara Leo

## Board Restates Position on Gas Drilling

The Board of Directors is restating its position on the issues facing our region during the current exploration of the Marcellus Shale gas formation, and indicating what actions we have taken to address those concerns.

In the spring of 2008 we stated our concerns about groundwater, air quality (pollutants released in all stages of drilling operations) soil contamination, fragmentation of habitat, and the disruption of the quality of the rural life which has supported regional tourism. We have indicated our respect for those who have signed leases but believe they must recognize the impact and repercussions intense drilling will have on the community at large. The potential environmental disruption of multiple drilling sites can lead to an industrial zone with unlivable conditions. Chiefly, our mission requires us to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves: the flora and fauna and the resources upon which we all depend.

In the past year we were asked to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact regulations required under New York state law. Our comments addressed the open-pit containment ponds that are used for backflow from the drilling operations. There are no regulations either in Pennsylvania or New York requiring overhead netting to

protect unwary waterfowl from landing on them for feeding or rest. We argued against the actions of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection that took local control from the Conservation Districts for monitoring erosion and sedimentation connected with drilling operations. Ours was one of the 1400 letters to the Delaware River Basin Commission urging greater oversight of the water withdrawals from the Delaware and encouraging their strong diligence on other issues, including the impacts of removing water from our watershed for treatment of “fracking” wastewater. Our most recent action was in July when we obtained over 200 signatures in support of Senate Bill 1215, introduced by Senator Casey, which would overturn the exemptions from regulations given to the gas and oil industry in the 2005 Energy Act. At the time of this writing, we are pleased to see that passage of this bill by the full Senate and a similar bill co-sponsored by Representative Maurice Hinchey of New York are coming up for a vote and indications are that they will be passed and signed by President Obama.

If you would like to read full comments, please let us know and we can publish them in upcoming newsletters or on our website.

—Barbara Leo

## Expert Demonstrates Owl Banding



Darrel Spicher bands a saw whet owl.

On the night of November 6<sup>th</sup> twelve people participated in an NEPA Audubon-hosted field trip to Skytop Lodge to watch Darrel Spicher of Pocono Avian Research Center band saw-whet owls.

Darrel used a recording of saw-whet calls to entice owls into mist nets. After three trips to the nets, Darrel and others from the group returned with a saw-whet. Darrel

weighed her, checked her eye color, measured her beak length, checked the color of the feathers under her wings with a black light to determine her age, pointed out her surprisingly large ear openings, and fastened a metal band around her leg. We then took her outside and released her. If she is caught again, the band will help determine her migration pattern.

It was really fascinating to see this little eight-inch owl up close. Why not join us for next year's banding on October 22, 2010?

—Bob Campbell

## Many Thanks . . .

- to all those who came out this spring to help clean up our highway.
- to John Miller for donating a canoe for the use of the NEPA Audubon Society.



Save a tree! You can read Eco-Notes on line at [www.nepaaudubonsociety.org](http://www.nepaaudubonsociety.org). If you no longer wish to receive the paper version of our newsletter, please notify us by e-mail at [audubonworks@gmail.com](mailto:audubonworks@gmail.com)

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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.

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Contributors: Bob Campbell, Katharine Dodge, Barbara Leo.

### *Mark Your Calendars*

**Saturday, January 23 (snow date January 24):** Annual Bald Eagle Field Trip. Join us for the best bald eagle viewing in the Northeast with a guide from the Eagle Institute at Lackawaxen. Dress warmly in layers, and wear waterproof boots. Bring a bag lunch and binoculars. Call Joan at (570) 228-1704 or e-mail [jthirion@aol.com](mailto:jthirion@aol.com) for reservations. There is a prepaid non-refundable \$10 fee for the bus unless both days' trips are canceled.

**February 12-15:** Great Backyard Bird Count—Everyone can have input in Cornell Lab of Ornithology's important National Bird Survey...and from your own backyard! Call Bob at (570) 676-9969 for more information, or go to [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc) to get started.

**March (date and place TBA):** A free showing of the documentary *Under our Skin* outlines stories of people with Lyme disease and their journey trying to find adequate treatment. This disease has reached epidemic proportions in Pennsylvania. *Look for an announcement in local newspapers or our spring newsletter.*

<b>New Members:</b>	Nancy Chludzinski	Selma Etter	Judy McInnis	Sandra Romano	Joan Stepanaukas
	Jesse Colwell	Louis Ferrari Sr.	Ann Nemeth	Linda Sacco	Jo A. Tate
Bertha Acher	William Cresswell	George Geiges	Mariann Norvilas	Jonathan D. Schmidt	Charles Taylor
Carol Ashman	Charles Curtis	David Harris	Marty Panek	Lisa Schreffler	Darryl Thaler
Harriet Beck	Frank Dressler	Norma Jaget	Virginia Patterson	Elaine Sciarrino	Joy Tichenor
Thomas E. Brennan	Donna Dunbar	Don Kemmann	Elizabeth Pearl	Stacey Selemba	Janet Veltri
Robert Brewer	Joseph Ehrenhardt	John Kochis	Karen Pfefferkorn	Dolores Skoronski	Duane Wrightson
Ellen Caleca	Mary Ei	Sharon Lafferty	Joseph Reviello	Kathy Sparks	Douglas Yeager