

**Friends of the
CARANTOUAN GREENWAY**

Yes! Count me in! I believe in protecting farm and forestland, wildlife habitat and watersheds in the Penn-York Valley. I want to become a member of Carantouan Greenway!

- | | | | |
|--|----------------|---|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mighty Oak | \$500 per year | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailblazer | \$25 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golden Eagle | \$75 per year | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stargazer | \$50 per year | | |

Name _____

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Gifts to Carantouan Greenway are fully tax deductible! (Tax Id Number: 23-2750872)

Please send all contributions to Carantouan Greenway, PO Box 441, Sayre, PA 18840-0441 or PO Box 827, Waverly, NY 14892-0827



CARANTOUAN GREENWAY

PO Box 441
Sayre, PA 18840-0441

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



RIVER TALK

Spring 2010

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SIGNS OF SPRING

By Marilyn Palmer

One of the best resources we have in this area is the Greenway's own Marty Borko, with his extraordinary knowledge of plants, trees, and birds. He generously offers his time to take people on local tours to see and learn about what wonders this area has that are hidden away in wooded lots, fields, marshes, ponds, or along trails that the Greenway maintains for the public. This year, spring exploded on us, and trees and other flora started leafing out and blooming two to three weeks early. Yet, the birds are arriving at their normal times. I worry that the orioles, who feed on the blossoms of many trees, will find slim pickings this year. The hummingbird may need the help of backyard feeders, as many of the early flowers they use for sustenance when they arrive exhausted from their long migration will be long gone.

Most people eagerly anticipate the arrival of the earliest harbingers of spring – bluebirds, robins, and redwing blackbirds. It is even more exciting to search out the more unusual newcomers. It's always worthwhile to check out Wildwood during early migration. You never

know what water fowl will be resting on the pond. This year we got good views of pintails and hooded mergansers. On a later visit we saw egg masses for both the spotted salamander and wood frog in our vernal pool! On March 27 Marty took us for a walk around Riverfront Park and Destiny Kinal Trail, where in addition to the more familiar arrivals we heard a carolina wren and saw a brown creeper. It is astonishing what loud voices two of our smallest feathered arrivals have! We also watched a yellow shafted flicker feeding on the ground under a tree. On April 17 Marty took us through some woods belonging to Bill Hotchkiss, where we were treated to the sight of a pileated woodpecker. The woods seemed to be filled with woodpecker species – downy, hairy, yellow-bellied sapsucker, and yellow-shafted flicker. The next super thrill came from the viewing of a pair of hermit thrushes that were next to the trail and quite willing to let us inspect them at close range. Marty then led us toward the sound of a ruby-crowned kinglet, but we were distracted when I spotted a brown creeper. Brown creepers are smaller than a warbler, so actually viewing one closely is a treat! By the time we finished enjoying the inspection of the creeper the kinglet had gone silent. However, with an expert like Marty along, it is possible to know what is there even when you don't actually see it – a huge plus in my book!

Your Support is Paying Off

The Greenway recently received notice that, "the Board of Directors of the Community Foundation for the Twin Tiers (CFTT) is delighted to inform you that the Carantouan Greenway's endowment fund will be receiving a grant in the amount of \$844 from its income in 2009." The grant from CFTT will be used to install a new bench at Wildwood Nature Reserve, fund a new Carantouan Greenway website (see related article), and help defray the cost of our Heron Photo Exhibit. On behalf of the Greenway I'd like to thank all of our members for their continued financial support; your contributions really make a difference to help us achieve our mission!

CARANTOUAN GREENWAY HERON PHOTO EXHIBIT

In early 2009 The Carantouan Greenway commissioned photographer Ron Dixon to produce 12 – 16"x20" high –resolution black and white photographs showcasing the great blue heron, one of the area's most recognized and elegant birds. Dixon spent an estimated 180 hours of field work over six months, submitting over 100 digital images to the Greenway's selection committee. Dixon then worked with B&C Photo of Elmira to produce the photos for this exhibit. The Greenway will use the photos as a traveling art exhibit to showcase one of the Penn-York Valley's great natural resources, and build community appreciation for protecting herons and their habitat. The exhibit will complement the Greenway's spring heron rookery viewing programs where spotting scopes are setup at the Rt. 17 rest stop west of Owego to allow visitors a great view of herons on the nest. The photo exhibit is currently at the Owego Town Hall on Rt. 434 until the end of May.

About the Artist:

Elmira resident Ron Dixon recently retired after having taught art, art history and photography at Waverly High School for over 30 years. A painter and photographer, Dixon has exhibited his work in a variety of venues, including the Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, NY; 171 Cedar Gallery, Corning, NY; Community Arts of Elmira, Inc., Elmira, NY; and the Gmeiner Gallery, Wellsboro, PA, as well as work in private collections here and abroad. His professional awards include: Best in Show Photography: Regional Exhibit, Elmira 1980; Award for Painting: Arnot Museum Regional 1988; Best in Show for Drawing: NYS Art Teachers Convention 1989; NYS Art Teacher of the Year, Section 4, 1989; National Award Scholastics: 1991, 1999; Best in Show Photography: Gmeiner Regional 2005; and the Award for Photography: Gmeiner Regional 2008.

Recycling Opportunities

People frequently ask where they can recycle certain items, especially electronics. You can search by item at <http://earth911.org/>, but a couple of specific electronic places nearby are:

Amandi Services, Inc. in Vestal, NY, call ahead: 607-321-2079.

www.react-e-cycling.com/ in Horseheads

Carantouan Developing New Website

Good fortune comes to the Greenway. Earlier this year we learned that our website host, Geocities.com, would be going out of business. Although we still have a website provided by CQ Services, the storage space is very limited and our webmaster, Jim Daly, is already overworked with Treasurer and communication duties. While attending a recent gas drilling seminar, Marty met Barton resident Jerry Gordon, and during their conversation, Jerry volunteered to be the webmaster for Carantouan and set up a new website. Jerry already serves five other non-profit groups, including Tioga Gas Lease, as their webmaster. We'll keep you posted on our progress, and hope to have the website up and running soon.

Sanibel Island 3/2/10

Sanibel Island lies off the Florida shore and in the Gulf. The new causeway is a sweeping span of roadway recently planted with palms, palmetto and some broad-leaved vegetation. The island is flat and lends itself to biking and walking on the islands extensive trail system. Calls and song familiar to Tier residents included the throaty stacatto of the red-bellied woodpecker, the whistling of the cardinals and the oooing of the morning doves. Instead of the standard crow the common call was that of the fish crow.

The real surprise was the number of pileated woodpeckers seen while on foot and a most delightful surprise, on a bike ride, was seeing two otters crossing the high-way.

In the bay-side Ding Darling Refuge we did get to enjoy, in among the mangroves, the anhinga,

great herons, snowy & cattle egrets, great and little blue herons & the reddish egret. We watched the latter as it danced around stirring the benthos with its feet while shading the light with its wings. We also saw yellow-crowned nite herons, roseate spoonbills, white and glossy ibis, both pelicans and wood stork. In the open bay there was a flock of blue-winged teal with many cormorants and a few red-breasted mergs. We missed the gators but had seen them elsewhere on the island along with spotted sandpipers.

While shelling on the gulf side with Penelope we enjoyed willets, turnstones, black-bellied plovers, sanderlings, laughing and ring-billed gulls. We had the joy of watching brown pelicans feeding between the shore line and the breakers as well as the sanderlings rushing back and forth with every outgoing wave. There were rows of washed up shells and lots of human collectors.

At our residence we got to see a red-shouldered hawk and on our walks many ospreys and a couple of bald eagles. The white ibis would come and check out the leaves in the corner of the yard. A few palm warblers ventured into the yard and in front of the house I ran into a flock of yellow-rumped warblers. Both of these species were probably readying themselves for the trip north. The few catbirds may have been considering the same but I am not so sure about the mocker. February 23-26, 2010.

Owling

I had heard about Amherst Island, Ontario, but never did more about it than search the web. When I learned that the Cayuga Bird Club was going there at the beginning of January I signed up to join 5 fine ladies and 2 fine gentlemen for a 6 hour plus trip from Ithaca. We took the ferry, which was breaking ice, to the island and our home away from home for the nite. The ferry leaves for the Island every hour on the half-hour.

We saw several snowy owls perched as well as one in flight; two short-eared owls in flight as the sun was setting, and three perched owls that included the saw-whet, the boreal and the barred. These latter three were almost within touching distance. We all stayed back so as not to disturb the resting birds. The saw-whet and the boreal, to me, are about the same size and look alike so it was great to look at one carefully and then go back and look at the other so as to see how they differed. The easiest way for me is the fact that the beak of the boreal is black while the saw-whet is yellow. The former also shows spotting while the latter shows barring.

It was a great weekend of birding, sharing, friendship and travel. A few of the other birds seen include the cardinal, w-b nuthatch, downy, hairy, chickadee, house finch, shrike, red-tail, harrier, and sharpie. The great lake shore had lots of goldeneyes along with a few mallards.

Vernal Pools

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition along with the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District built the vernal pool at Wildwood along with several vernal pools that they constructed for Bill Hotchkiss on Barton's Ridge Road. The productivity of the Hotchkiss Vernal pools has been overwhelming. For the past two years, with this year being a red-letter year, the Greenway has been trapping and transferring spotted salamander and wood frog eggs to Wildwood. We discovered that we too have egg masses in our Wildwood Vernal Pool; a first confirmation of its success. This was April 11, 2010. Vernal Pools that were in deep shade were not as far along as those pools that were more exposed and therefore warmer leading to earlier hatching of the double and triple gelatinous covered egg masses. We can now use the vernal pool as a teaching site, and we thank the Hotchkisses for helping to make that happen. (A vernal pool is a shallow water pocket that may dry up as Spring progresses). This leads to rapid development of the salamander larvae and frog tadpoles.

Wildwood Dam

The Wildwood dam has had its grass cover maintained by 50 to 60 Canada geese keeping the grasses very short and helping us to manage it. On April 17th the Swamp sparrows returned only to be joined a day later by returning female red-wings, both staking out their territories in the cattails. The screen on the dam's outlet has been regularly plugged with floating cattails. Since the dam's restoration the cattail population has exploded and that fur-bearing mammal, the muskrat, has been having a feast. In their feeding process many cattails float freely and they continually block the outlet. When you are out there you will notice the large cattail mat that has been pulled up onto the earthen dam by your volunteers. We have not yet needed the rock-covered overflow.