

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!

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| <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 | | |

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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

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RIVER TALK

Winter 2008 - 2009

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Annual Dinner meeting set for February 18th

The annual dinner meeting of the Carantouan Greenway is set for 6 PM on Wednesday February 18th. Our guest speaker for the evening is Dan Spada, the Supervisor for Natural Resources Analysis, for the New York State Adirondack Park Agency.

Dan earned an A.A.S. degree in Forestry at Paul Smiths, an A.S. in Biology at Orange County Community College, a B.S. in Forest Botany at Syracuse and a M.S. in Environmental and Forest Biology at Syracuse's College of Environmental Science and Forestry as well. His MS thesis was "A Characterization of the Vegetation of High-Elevation Wetlands in the Catskill Mountains."

In reality Dan is a WETLAND BIOLOGIST and NATURALIST. He has trained staff on the identity and delineation of wetlands, has determined the presence, location and extent of wetlands and other habitats using air-photo interpretation, developed policies and procedures involving projects dealing with wetlands on State Lands including the Adirondack Park.

Dan is an excellent communicator who has taught at Syracuse, Plattsburgh, Cornell and Paul Smiths. I should add that Dan is also a professional musician, an expert woodcrafter, a motorcyclist, an artist and a first class down-to-earth human being. You do not want to miss this!!!

To make reservations for the buffet dinner at Tomasso's on Wednesday February 18th contact our treasurer Jim Daly. You may send Jim your reservation at \$20/person to 305 Lincoln Street, Sayre, PA 18840. You may e-mail Jim at jjdaly@stny.rr.com.

Black-berried elder (*Sambucus canadensis*)



The Black-berried elder is in the same family as the Viburnums. All are shrubs but the Viburnums have simple opposite leaves whereas the elders have opposite pinnately-compound leaves. They all tend to have a flattened array to tiny flowers with 5 fused white petals. There is also a red-berried elder, but it has a brown pith as opposed to the black-berried white pith. The pith is the frothy material found in the center of its woody stems. You may remember that from general science in school when they used pith balls to demonstrate static electricity. Or, perhaps, you used a wire to clean out the pith to make a pea shooter. Then you could collect the green fruits from the choke-cherry and blow them

out at your friends. I did. This past fall while checking on the reconstruction of the Wildwood dam I noticed that the black-berried elders in the hedgerow along our alfalfa field was heavily laden with its dark purple berries. I harvested a good bunch and for the first time made some elderberry jam. They are a little seedy but taste great on a toasted English muffin. I have some frozen berries if anyone else wants to give nature's bounty a shot.

Marcellus Shale Controversy Continues

Our Fall 2008 Newsletter "River Talk" set out the Carantouan Greenway's position on the extraction of gas from the Marcellus Shale beds. The shale beds are a rich resource of potential natural gas, but it is buried deep (over 1 mile) and its extraction involves a new fracturing technique that utilizes a substantial amount of water.

We are glad that some landowners, particularly farmers, will receive large signing bonuses as well as royalties. We stated "... that the Marcellus Shale should be explored, **but in a very controlled and regulated manner**". We were and continue to be concerned about potential damage to both surface and ground water resources. When drilling proceeds we stated that the **.."BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ARE to be FOLLOWED AT ALL TIMES"**.

Sandy Long of Narrowsburg's "The River Reporter" reported on the DEC hearing that took place in New York City on December 12. At that hearing NYC councilman and chair of the NYC Council's Environmental Protection Committee James Gennaro called for a complete ban on drilling in the NYC watershed which supplies drinking water to 9 million people.

Albert Appleton, a former NYC Commissioner of Environmental Protection, stated "Risks to drinking water are not just environmental issues; first and foremost, they are public health issues." Appleton went on to question DEC's ability to permit and monitor the projected long term exploration. He noted "If just 20% of the 12 million acres of the Marcellus Shale was developed at an extremely low density of one well pad every 100 acres – one every 25 acres is common – New York would have to oversee 25,000 well pads." Appleton suggested that such oversight would require the addition of more permit administrators, field inspectors, emergency responders, groundwater hydrologists, drilling technology experts, public health specialists, testing-lab workers, law enforcement professionals, land use planners and administrative support personnel.

The water quality health threat is in the fracked fluid which may contain; ethylhexanol, formaldehyde, glutaraldehyde, ethylene glycol, methanol, Isopropanol and dazomet. These are but a few of the potential fracked fluid ingredients that may cause damage to our bodies by acting as carcinogens, endocrine disruptors or immune response triggers.



Christmas Bird Count by Marilyn Palmer



On December 12, John and I had the opportunity to participate in a Christmas Bird Count in the Corning Area that was sponsored by the Chemung Audubon Society. We arose before dawn to a temperature of 13, and with memories of the gale force winds that brought wind chills in the low teens for our birding excursion along the Massachusetts coast in November, we pulled on layer upon layer of clothing before heading out to meet Marty for the day. A full moon shone through ice crystals in the air, turning the snow-covered terrain through which we travelled into the kind of breath-taking beauty that makes one's heart expand with awe. As we drove west Marty told us to look behind us, and we saw an incredible array of roses and oranges that heralded the arrival of the

sun. By the time we arrived at our assigned sector the sun was fully shining on snow-covered trees and fields through veils of ice crystals that made me think of Christmas cards powdered with diamante dust. The whiteness of the terrain and the coldness of the air made bird spotting easy. Their colors were easy to see, and many were out busily scavenging for food in order to stay warm. We saw many birds I that didn't realize stayed this far north in the wintertime, and, like always on these outings, I saw several birds that I had never before seen in the wild. We were challenged to count the high numbers of birds that you would expect to see, like crows, English sparrows, and rock doves, but we were also extraordinarily lucky also to see excellent views of Carolina wrens, mocking birds, a shrike, Pine Siskins, an Eastern Towhee, and Hooded Mergansers. The sun made the colors of the birds glow against the snow. One puffed up robin was so fat it looked like a big apple in the tree. Sometimes as we walked along a shaded roadway, the sun shining on a clump of trees threw them into blinding relief. I longed for my camera, and had to remind myself that my task was to look for and count birds, but it was easy to become distracted by the beauty all around us.

At the end of our allotted time we met the other birders at Denny's to share the day's adventures, compare notes, and compile a final count for the day. It was fun to meet with others who are as enthusiastic about enjoying nature as we are. They were experienced and knowledgeable birders, and they were all willing to offer information on places to go if we wanted to see certain birds, and to invite us to future birding events that will be happening in this area.

I was grateful for the gift of that day, and spent every moment enjoying it to the fullest. Days like that, so rare and precious, make me feel the full weight of the burden we all should be sharing with regard to caring for and preserving our planet. The day is not far off when our pristine fields and hills will be marred by mining operations, and the quiet roads along which we strolled that day will be filled with tanker trucks. In the meantime, I will leap at every opportunity to get outside and enjoy the beauty of this area before it is gone forever.

Wildwood Reserve Dam Celebration

At the February 18th annual meeting we have invited, as Greenway's guests, the people who made the dam repair and stabilization possible. As Joe Schmiege reported Mike Jura of Tioga County Soil and Water was key. He facilitated the work with the sponsors; The Upper Susquehanna Coalition and the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Greenway is now a cooperator with the Fish and Wildlife Service and we must monitor the dam, mow its berm and clean its exit pipes for the next 15 years (that is through December 1923). As a 501 (c) (3) we have to do that anyway so it sort of comes with the territory. Wildwood Reserve is available to the public and we maintain it for the public good and expect to do that in the future.

We have invited Mike Jura as well as representatives from the Fish and Wildlife Service and The Upper Susquehanna Coalition. Additionally we have invited Ralph Porter our neighbor and supporter who provided the clay, the #4 stone and use of the 65 foot long-stick backhoe that was needed to expose the drainage system.

The costs to recreate Wildwood's wetland was; (a) \$15,500 for removing vegetation, re-grading and shaping the berm, removing old and installing new drain pipe, constructing auxiliary spillway with geotextile fabric and cover with #4 stone (This was paid for by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.) (b) \$3,830.50 for excavating and cleaning the drain inlet, delivering clay, concrete and rock and seeding & mulching the site (This was paid for by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.

We are grateful for all participants. It is therefore most appropriate that we have as our guest speaker the Adirondack Park Agency's wetland biologist, Dan Spada, who will share some of his perspective with us.

