

River Talk

Newsletter of the Carantouan Greenway



Winter 2019

Looking Forward to 2020

The new year will bring a notable milestone. 2020 will be the Greenway's 25th year of sharing nature, educating the inquisitive, partnering with other organizations, and advocating for the environment.

Carantouan Greenway's naturalist, Marty Borko, counts birds at Wildwood Nature Reserve almost every day, logging the results on Cornell's eBird database and generating an eBird page on the Greenway's website. Last year Marty recorded an amazing 117 species, which highlights the great habitat diversity at Wildwood. That is the good news. The bad news comes from Audubon's new climate report, "Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on The Brink", which shows that of the 604 species studied, 389 are in jeopardy of extinction as early as 2080 unless we immediately address climate change. These are some of our favorite birds - American Robin, Goldfinch, Scarlet

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Frozen winter pond at Wildwood.

Fall Asters



The New England Aster belongs to the large group of plants known as composites because they exhibit both tubular florets and strap-shaped florets. Each tube and each strap consists of five fused tiny petals with the

golden tubes clustered in the center and the 30 or so purple straps surrounding them. Each floret may contain both male and female parts within. This late summer and early fall, damp soil-loving perennial provides pollen and nectar for many bees, flies and beetles including our native monarch butterfly.

Eagle Scout Projects Enhance Greenway

This October brothers Richard and Simon Stevens have served our community by completing their Eagle Scout projects at Wildwood Nature Preserve. This area serves as an environmentally protected site available to the community as they convene with nature. The Carantouan Greenway schedules regular walks at Wildwood to help interpret the terrestrial and aquatic environments. Our volunteers facilitate the visitor experiences by maintaining the trails and educational displays. One of the Eagle Scout projects involved trail work and the creation of two Leopold benches. This has added safety for the visitor and provides extra opportunities for visitors to sit and contemplate nature at its best. The second Eagle Scout project involves the construction of a deer enclosure. The white-tailed deer has been found guilty of eating many of our native plants and retarding the regrowth of our temperate deciduous forest. The enclosure will help the Greenway educate the public via a clearly demonstrated site what the difference really is when deer are excluded. Pages two and three of this newsletter tell their stories.

Simon's Project: Leopold Benches and Trail Improvement

If you walk over to the north side vernal pool or hike over to the pine woods overlook you will find new benches have been installed along these trails. These benches, along with grooming of the Mollie Glaser Caplan Trail and the installation of new wood chips, are a result of Simon Stevens' Eagle Scout project. As a Scout Simon has enjoyed hiking the Forbidden Trail and Waverly Glen so it felt like a good fit to do something in the Wildwood Preserve. At the first meeting with the Greenway Board it was clear that there were many project opportunities. Upgrades to existing trails and the need for benches where hikers could enjoy the wildlife were high on the list. So Simon had his Eagle project to plan and execute.



Selecting a spot for one of the Leopold benches. Here Simon decides to place one bench in the pine woods.

An unexpected learning opportunity kept presenting itself during research of trail bench designs. He kept coming across "Leopold" benches, raising the question "What is a Leopold bench?" and "Why is it unique?" This led Simon on the path of learning about Aldo Leopold who was an American author, philosopher, scientist, ecologist, forester, conservationist, and environmentalist. He is considered by many to be the father of wildlife ecology and the United States' wilderness system. Leopold was also known for a bench design he used to watch birds. Impressed by Leopold's many accomplishments and as a small tribute to him, Simon knew he found the bench design he wanted to build.



Simon showing completed benches at the vernal pool and pine woods trail.



In the workshop crafting benches.



Mollie Caplan Trail after improvements.

(Answers to last newsletter questions: white pine, pileated woodpecker and brown creeper).

Richard's Project: Deer Exclosure to Aid in Habitat Study

As hikers complete the loop of the pine woods trail they will come upon a new deer exclosure. A deer exclosure is an area of forest enclosed by a tall fence. Deer cannot get into this area to browse, so the deer exclosure vegetation can be compared over time with the vegetation outside the exclosure to measure the effect of deer on the vegetation at the Wildwood Nature Preserve.

The design, build and installation of the deer exclosure is the result of an Eagle Scout project by Richard Stevens of Troop 17. When meeting with the Greenway Board discussion centered on the educational and environmental study opportunities that are provided by a deer exclosure. This being a new subject to Richard, it presented him with a good learning project while meeting a need for the Wildwood Nature Reserve.

deer do in our eastern deciduous forest. The information collected will help determine the best management alternatives of plants and animals living at the preserve.



Richard along the pine woods trail side of the completed deer exclosure.



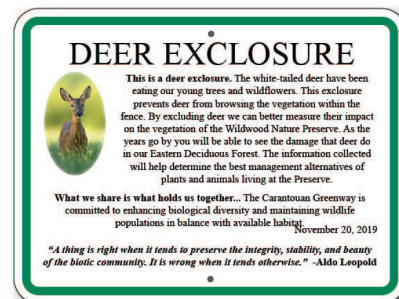
Staking out the area to be enclosed.

Minimizing the need for posts by utilizing existing trees the deer exclosure is a 114 linear foot area.



Construction of exclosure.

By excluding deer we can better measure their impact on the vegetation of the Wildwood Nature Preserve. As the years go by hikers will be able to see the damage that



Sign explaining the concept of a deer exclosure.

Looking Forward ...(continued from page 1)

Tanager, Baltimore Oriole, Wood Thrush, and many more. One in five species in the U.S. is threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation; for many climate change will render their habitat unlivable with nowhere else to go. Although the focus of this study was birds, the negative impacts from habitat loss apply to all species. This is why it is so important to protect places like Wildwood and look for ways to build corridors to other key habitats to allow species to adapt to changes in the ecosystem.

Please consider a generous contribution to Carantouan Greenway to insure that Wildwood remains a good home for wildlife, a valuable location for environmental education, and an enjoyable place to recreate and experience all that nature has to offer. For those who have recently renewed their membership, thank you for your support!

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!

- Mighty Oak \$500/year
- Golden Eagle..... \$75/year
- Stargazer \$50/year
- Trailblazer \$25/year
- Other \$ _____
- Renewing member** **New member**

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