

River Talk

Newsletter of the Carantouan Greenway



Spring 2014

President's Message

by Marty Borko

2013 has been another year with a tight budget with the Carantouan Greenway not quite running in the black. Our organization, as a land trust and environmental organization, run totally by volunteers, needs to excite some greater public support and active membership. With our limited resources, however, we still have done quite a bit.

Our webmaster is in Saudi Arabia, and from there Jerry has very successfully created our application for our initial 4K trail run, updates our current events and modifies our board membership. Jim, our founding member, continues to clear our finances with NYS, PA and the Federal Government via annual reporting and auditing. John facilitates our work sessions and continues to maintain open trails for public safety and this year he was joined by Barry Skeist for some of the chain sawing activity at Wildwood that was necessary after this fall's major windstorm. Sue Williams has joined us and is working to improve our communication via the newsletter. Theresa Pipher has also joined us, helping at our 4K, but futuristically getting more youth involved.

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and the movie "Triple Divide". The Greenway led a field trip for the NYS Forest Owner's Association dealing with exotic invaders at Wildwood including garlic mustard, Japanese honeysuckle and multi-flora rose. The Greenway also presented to and led a field trip at the Sayre Riverfront Park for the Sayre Rotary. We presented ourselves at the Satterlee Creek Environmental Center's OPEN FOREST program and John and Marty represent the Greenway on the Futurescapes' Trail Committee, with multiple partners, to construct a trail along the Susquehanna from Athens through Sayre.

The Greenway partnered with the Shale Network to sponsor three public events held at the Athens Unitarian church. The programs were the showing of "Bidder 70" dealing with the sale of drilling rights on public land, a forum on the "Chemistry of Hydrofracking"

Several members of the Greenway attended the 10th annual celebratory dinner for the Community Foundation of the Twin Tiers (CFTT). Our endowment rests with the CFTT and has grown through the years so that this year we have been in receipt, for the first time of over \$1000, which will help defray our insurance costs. It was my optimistic hope in 2014 to have it grow even faster, but more practically would like to grow the annual contribution to cover our annual insurance costs by 2020. Our 4K trail run raised almost \$680, some of which will grow our endowment.

Our 6th grade e-bird challenge continues and we will know by the 15th if we had any classes accept it. In an effort to enroll participants all 6th grade principal offices in Tioga County and Sayre and Athens were personally visited and handed copies of the challenge for each teacher. We may have to do still more.

I want to thank all the volunteers and contributors as we work together to enjoy and educate about our shared environment.



We have a winner

This St. Paddy's Jog runner was winner of this wonderful birdhouse, just one of many prizes won by participants in our first St. Paddy's Jog. For more photos and story see page 3.

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Mayapples

A springtime hike along the trail results in the delightful discovery of a colony of mayapples, also called American mandrake, whetting our appetite to return later to see their red fruits from which their name is taken.

duck feather that I found in the pine woods. These are all potential nesters but with each day I carefully listen to see if the Pine warbler has arrived. The pine warbler along with the yellow-rumped is among our earliest.

Are there any insects in the air? Not many, but 4 scouting tree swallows have returned to claim the nest boxes on the dam while scouring the sky for chow.

It was during the 1st week in April that all the ice left Wildwood including the vernal pool. The water in the vernal pool is deep due to this winter's heavy snow but I have yet to hear the peepers, or the wood frogs, or seen any sign of the spotted salamanders. Maybe tomorrow will be the day. A new day can always be full of surprises, like discovering 210 robins in the alfalfa field in early March. It was then that I knew that spring was inevitable.

Have you renewed your membership for 2014?

We're trying something new!

We all know how easy it is to think we have already paid our annual membership fees each year or how sometimes good intentions just slip away. This year we are trying something new. We have established an annual renewal month. Since December seems to have more than its share of organizations asking for annual contributions, we felt June would be a good month to declare as our Month of Renewal. Hopefully by establishing a designated month it will be easier for you to keep track if you have made your annual membership donation that helps keep the Carantouran Greenway operating in the black so we can all enjoy these beautiful green spaces. Please use the form on the back page or go on line to renew.

Spring

We all ask ourselves, what is it that makes us believe that spring is really here. Today is the 5th of April and it is cold, breezy and overcast; not very hospitable to working in the yard or enjoying a long walk. Nonetheless I have seen signs of spring and have heard some signs as well. During the last couple of weeks during morning walks at Wildwood the sky would be filled with both the sound and sight of Canada geese - as many as 300 during a single visit. Yesterday this was reduced to 14, mostly in pairs getting ready to nest on the island.

Male red-winged blackbirds came back very late this year but as of yet no females. The males arrived early, stake out and patrol the best territories and solicit female companionship. Common and hooded mergansers along with green-winged teal were there too along with a single wood-

Climate Change

Evidence for climate change continues to grow. The glaciers in Montana's Glacier National Park continue to waste away. The arctic ice is melting, opening up a northern passage for shipping and attracting applications for oil exploration.

Locally the warming trend has been evidenced in changing bird populations. Fifty years ago the cardinal and the tufted titmouse, southern garden birds, moved into the Twin Tiers. Twenty years ago the red-bellied woodpecker and the Carolina wren, two other southern garden birds, moved into the Twin Tiers.

The Pennsylvania dividing line separating the black-capped chickadee and the Carolina chickadee continues to move north. These are documented facts. We are warming.

We have been experiencing unusual weather patterns that have been delivering extreme conditions. We have survived Sandy with major flooding in Athens, Owego, Binghamton and the Cannon Hole. The midwest has been hit hard with multiple tornadoes and the west has been hit with drought, flooding and major forest fires.

Most scientists credit these changes to us. We are the guilty party. That is, each of us who heats our home, drives a vehicle and shops for more "things".

Solar and geothermal sources are two ways we can reduce our energy damage along with personal life changes. It is a fact that carbon dioxide and methane are heat-trapping gases contributing to our present condition.

Carantouan Greenway 4K Trail Run

On Saturday, April 15, the Carantouan Greenway held its initial 4K Trail Run at Wildwood. Jason and Teresa Pipher were there early in the a.m. with the tables for registration, prizes and hot soup. Cases of water, donated by Chemung Spring Water and Tops, were made available along with potato-leek soup prepared at the hands of Jean Schmeig, proofed by Joe Schmeig, and served in paper hot cups.

Fifty-six people participated including a runner in her 70s and several young children running with their parent. There was no recognition of place as we did not wish to make it a race but instead offer random drawings with all participants eligible. Drawings included; bird feeder and seed donated by Agway of Athens, bird houses donated by Ralph Geiger, Croft's hat and shirt as well as a garden waste basket, a Kinsley one-visit chiropractic adjustment, Waverly New Image 30-day membership, Penelope's carrot cake, Athen's Procure Shake Bar gift card and Gloria's dog goodie basket, winter trax, homemade bread and Mr. Ellie Pooh's Elephant Dung Paper.

The course was marked with road cones from the Town of Barton, arrows & ribbons by John and managed by volunteers.

The rationale for having the 4K was to encourage physical activity, introduce more people to the resource of Wildwood, and make some money to grow the endowment fund. It worked out and we thank all who helped make it a success.

2014 Annual Meeting

by John Palmer

Forty-two people attended the Carantouan Greenway annual meeting held at Tomasso's April 29. Following a buffet dinner, President Marty Borko held a brief business meeting to welcome two new board members, Sue Williams and Theresa Pipher, and to elect officers for 2014. Incumbents Marty Borko - president, Jim Daly - treasurer, and John Palmer - vice president/secretary were re-elected.

Scott Freyburger, Tioga County (NY) public health engineer, gave a presentation on ticks and Lyme disease, which generated an enthusiastic audience discussion about their personal tips and experiences with prevention and treatment.



The Tutu Girls

This mother-daughter team donned their green "tutus" for the St. Paddy run.

Through the woods...

Runners make their way through the wooded trail.



...and over the field

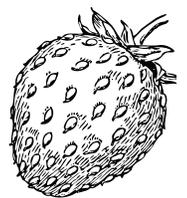
The course began and ended on the flat alfalfa field.

Runners

We did have the trail run in March but this is not about that. This is about plants that produce horizontal stems or shoots that take off and expand the population of that plant species. The common shrub that does this is sumac. Staghorn sumac, the shrub that produces pyramids of red fruits that last through the winter, is often found in what we call clones. These are the result of some of this type of growth. At Wildwood their fruits present a year-round survival strategy for many birds including robins, catbirds and chickadees.

In our wetland the runners are very evident with the cattails. This past fall I pulled out many from the vernal pool and the tremendous growth of runners was incredible. In our main pond edge they form a virtual tight mat of vegetation that is used by nesting swamp sparrows and Virginia rails.

As summer approaches we will look forward to our favorite strawberry-rhubarb pie. The strawberry plants productivity will depend on the weather and how far their runners have moved out. Something we eagerly anticipate.



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**

Name _____

Address _____

Town, State, and Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

Telephone _____

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

Please send all contributions to Carantouan Greenway, P.O. Box 441, Sayre, PA 18840-0441
or P.O. Box 827, Waverly, NY 14892-0827 or on-line at carantouangreenway.org/joinonline



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