River Talk

Newsletter of the Carantouan Greenway

Fall 2026

NYS Reforestation Project Kicks Off At Wildwood Reserve



A team from TCS&WD plant the field with native trees and shrubs.

A ceremonial planting of native trees and shrubs took place Tuesday morning, September 22, at the Wildwood Nature Reserve in Barton. Through a cooperative effort by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and Tioga County Soil and Water Conservative District, reforestation of land will be undertaken throughout locations within Tioga County, mainly marginal agriculture land owned by nonprofits and municipal lots that are located in close proximity to the Susquehanna River. The Upper Susquehanna Coalition consists of 22 soil and water conservation districts

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Greenway President Marty Borko,(left), Sen. Tom O'Mara (third from left) and agency representatives plant one of the native species trees.

President's Message

Tuesday, December 1st, is National Giving Tuesday. The Carantouan Greenway wants to thank our supporters who enable us and encourage us to keep going; maintaining trails, leading educational walks, partnering with other groups like the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Tioga County Soil and Water, Valley Audubon, and Valley libraries as well as providing fodder for our neighboring farmer. Our latest project, planting our small field with native hardwood trees, will increase populations of red-backed and spotted salamanders and as the planting evolves provide a greater opportunity for nesting scarlet tanagers and rose-breasted grosbeaks. We wish you a happy and healthy holiday and look forward to seeing you on the trails. *Marty Borko, President*

Fall Woodland Color

Exsudoporus frostii, aka apple bolete, is a deep red mushroom with a vibrant red cap, pore surface as well as a deeply furrowed red stipe. It gets its Generic name from the exudate from the pore surface and its trivial name from a Vermont mycologist. Its fungal, or mycelial threads, aka mycorrhiza, are allegedly associated with bringing nutrients to hardwood trees and in our case I suspect *Quercus prinus*, pin oak. When the cap is broken the porous layer immediately stains blue.





Discoveries in Wildwood's Vernal Pools

On the afternoon of June 19th, the curious were invited to see what they could discover growing in one of the vernal pools at the Carantouan Greenway's nature reserve. Could that actually be a shrimp growing in the vernal pool at Wildwood Nature Reserve? Spotted under the lens of a microscope was what appeared to be a tiny shrimp swimming on its side. Turns out it was not an actual shrimp, but a close cousin, known as a scud or side swimmer. Explorers also discovered damsel fly larvae jetting through the water and water striders scooting on the surface. Salamanders and green frogs represented the amphibians, while the discovery of turtle eggs verified the secretive presence of reptiles. Crawling water beetles and water boatman paddled effortlessly through the water of a fine spring day.

Getting Butterflies at Dinner Meeting



Though April 14 was a dark, stormy night, the room at Yanuzzi's Restaurant was illuminated with brillant colors of butterflies as speaker Charlie Smith presented slide after slide and spoke to an enthralled audience. He started out by describing the advantages of pursuing an active interested in the species. For example, they are easier to get a good close look at than birds, it helps sharpen your power of observation by noting minute diffferences between look-alikes, little special equipment is needed and it helps increase our knowledge of plants by associating them with certain butterflies. He explained when we see a group of butterflies on the ground than are engaging in what is known as puddling behavior. It is usually male butterflies consuming nutrients from wet soil, salt, fermented fruit and other things that are extracting chemicals that will deliver a nutritional boost to the eggs during fertilization. Of the 20,000 species of butterflies, 800 of them inhabit North America.

Meet Timothy....



Timothy grass *(Phleum pratense)* is a tall exotic grass introduced for agricultural purposes over a century ago. It produces three- to four-inch spikes of dense florets that produce a halo of purple male stamens and two parted pistils. It is commonly seen as one walks along Wildwood's back field.

...and Clover



Alsike clover *(Trifolium hybridum)* is an introduced clover that dominates the Wildwood meadow trails as well as many lawns in the Twi Tiers. It exhibits dense globose heads of white to pink five-parted flowers. Its generic name *Trifolium* means three leaflets, which is characteristic of all the clovers. Being a clover it has root nodules with bacteria that fix nitrogen, which enriches the wet acid soil that the plant prefers.



New Signs

Early the morning of July 11, Carantouan Vice President John Palmer and his wife Marilyn replaced the stolen Joyce Kilmer trees sign at its Wildwood site.

Later that morning Carantouan President Marty Borko presented a Joyce Kilmer *Trees* sign to the Waterman representative Michelle Knuepfer and followed up by leading a nature walk at the center on the "moles, shrews and mice" of the area.



Spring Hike At Wildwood Reserve

As anyone who has ever gone on a guided hike with the Carantouan Greenway will tell you, Saturday, March 21st, was once again an enjoyable way for the curious among us to spend an afternoon. Naturalist Marty Borko led visitors on a hike through some of the trails at Wildwood Nature Reserve in Barton and shared his vast knowledge of the natural world as it exists in springtime. At one stop he showed the crowd an oak gall, also known as an oak apple as it resembles a small apple. The gall is formed when a wasp lays its eggs in a tree bud or on a leaf. This producess the protective gall in which the wasp larvae grow. The larvae feed on the gall material that surrounds it. Sometimes a different species of wasp will invade the gall and lay its own eggs in the spongy gall. Hikers also got a firsthand look at beaver activity. Several small trees had been chewed off and dragged away, notably allowing more sunlight on the forest floor to nurture the emerging pine saplings.





Beaver Anatomy

The beaver skull (*Castor canadensis)* exhibits its brown-enameled, continuously growing incisors, a large space called a diastema and a row of molars used for chewing. The brown enameled incisors have been strengthened by iron because of the heavy work they do in cutting down trees and cutting off the rich cambium layers that nourish these large aquatic residents. They have from time to time been a pain at Wildwood as they naturally react to the sound of flowing water by plugging it up. So each morning when they were present, Marty would pull out all the cut branches that they put in overnight. At Wildwood they have killed the large willow and this winter they climbed up the pine-woods bank, cut down several muscle woods and dragged them under the ice through a maintained opening along the shore. In cutting the muscle woods *(Carpinus carolina)* they did reduce the amount of shade in the understory, giving the young white pines a better chance of survival.

Reforestation

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in New York and Pennsylvania that incorporates the headwaters of the Susquehanna. On Oct. 20th, a team from TCS&WD completed the planting for a total of 165 trees at Wildwood. Representatives from both associations were on hand as was state senator Tom O'Mara. Additionally, representatives of the NYS DEC, Village of Owego and Waterman Conservation in Apalachin were in attendance. Owego and Waterman both have properties that will be benefitting from planting of native species through this grant awarded by the State of New York.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

GIVING TUESDAY

DEC. 1

is only a few weeks away. Please remember to renew or donate.