



BURLINGTON COUNTY NATURAL SCIENCES CLUB NEWSLETTER

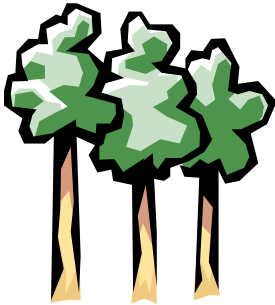


November, 2009

Meeting: November 11, 2009 at 7:45 p.m.
Community Center at Lumberton Leas, Woodside Drive, Lumberton

The program for November's meeting will be:

Urban Woodlands: Saddler's Woods



Donna Moffett, Director of Education and Community Outreach, will present to us information about Saddler's Woods, a 25-acre urban forest located in Haddon Township, New Jersey. Saddler's Woods is unique for its combined features of an old growth forest, young woodlands, wetlands, and meadow. Through a 45 minute presentation, Moffett will discuss the ecology of Saddler's Woods including facts about our old growth tree species, wildlife, and native flora. She will explain the history, conservation efforts and educational efforts of Saddler's Woods Conservation Association (SWCA), the non-profit volunteer organization that strives to maintain the beautiful woodlands of Saddler's Woods.

Field Trip: Camden County Birding and Woodlands Walk, Saturday, November 14th

Our plan for November's field trip is twofold: an early morning walk at Marie Greenwald Park followed by a walking tour of Saddler's woods. We will start with a walk along the Cooper River looking for Wood Duck and late migrants as we settle into the winter season. It's an easy walk on flat trails although after a rain, it can be a bit muddy in spots. Then we will move to Saddler's Woods where our November speaker, Donna Moffett, will take us on a guided tour of the woods. Trails in this area are a little bit up and down for short distances but fairly easy to navigate.

We will meet to carpool at 7:30 am at the Kohl's/Shop Rite Shopping Center at 70/73 in Marlton. Look for Susan Setterberg in the parking lot in front of the Pet Smart. Be aware that the entry from Highway 70 into the shopping center has been moved toward the circle. This will be a morning field trip and we expect to be back in Marlton before noon. Please sign up in advance by contacting Barbara Jones at 609 268 0940 or via email at wildbyrd@comcast.net. If you wish to participate in only the Saddler's Woods walk, call for directions and time.



Little Big Sit by Barbara Jones

This year, on Sunday, October 11th, birding's most sedentary event took place in little spots all over the world. For over 15 years the 'Big Sit' has been hosted by Birdwatcher's Digest and sponsored by Swarovski Optik. Clubs and individuals alike have participated, some just for fun and some as a fundraiser.

In most ways, the Big Sit is the antithesis of birding's normal 'big days'. For instance, a Big Day is usually held at the peak of spring migration; the Big Sit is held in the fall. A Big Day usually involves running frantically to as many different sites and habitats as can be squeezed into a 24 hour period; a Big Sit involves staying in the same 17' diameter circle for as much of 24 hours as you can tolerate.

This year Margaret Thomas, club member and local birder, took on the challenge of a "Little" Big Sit. Margaret has been birding seriously only for about 5 years – since she retired from her job with the federal government -- but she's been aware of birds and birders for much longer than that. "There was always a book in the table when I was a kid," she said.

Continues on next page.

When green architecture achieved broad acceptance within the design community, questions began to arise as to its effectiveness. What criteria should be used to measure a design’s “greenness,” and how does project “A” compare with project “B” in sustainable design? Enter the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design system, LEED for short. LEED was created by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) about 10 years ago. Since its inception the USGBC has LEED green-certified approximately 2,000 projects, with another 15,000 certifications in progress. So far over 4.5 billion square feet of construction space has been involved with the LEED system. It is now an accepted third-party benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of green buildings.

LEED is a point-based system, with points earned and allocated in several weighted categories. The five major categories include Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality. In addition, bonus points may be earned for Innovation in Design and for implementing green building strategies that address environmental issues of a particular region. There are four levels of certification, and the total number of points earned by a project determines its level of certification. Using a 110-point system, LEED awards its highest (greenest) certification, Platinum, to projects earning 80 or more points. Other certifications include Gold (60-79 points), Silver (50-79 points), and basic Certified (40-49 points).

Using LEED checklists, point allocations are earned based on design approaches that will have the greater positive impact on sustainability, energy efficiency, and CO₂ reduction. For example, the Energy and Atmosphere category is the most heavily weighted and has a maximum attainable score of 35, or almost a third of the total possible score of 110. Sustainable Sites comes in second with 26 points. Credits allocated to the Sustainable Sites category include such diverse items as public transportation access, wildlife habitat protection or restoration, bicycle storage and changing rooms, maximizing open space, light pollution reduction, stormwater design, development density, and community connectivity.

LEED certification is available for all building types, including new construction, major renovation, existing buildings, schools, neighborhood development, and commercial interiors. Home certification was recently added. Administration of the certification process is performed by the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI), a network of third-party certification entities.



The GBCI also manages the LEED professional credentialing program ensuring that professionals have current knowledge and understanding of sustainable design practices. In order to receive a certified LEED credential a professional is required to take a detailed and comprehensive written examination. As testimony to the popularity of the program, there is hardly an architectural firm that now does not have at least one LEED accredited professional on its staff.

Despite its obvious merits, LEED is not perfect. A recent article published in the New York Times disclosed that design intentions are not always realized. The article points out a glaring problem in the Energy and Atmosphere category, the very category that LEED deems most important. It reports that about 25% of the certified buildings do not save as much energy as their designs predicted. A USGBC study last year found more than half of the 121 new buildings certified through 2006 did not qualify for the EPA Energy Star label and that about 15% used more energy per square foot than 70% of comparable buildings. A few reasons for the dashed good intentions include faulty design or construction, poor equipment maintenance, an unforeseen increase in the building population, and poor user training in the operation of the building energy systems. Another apparent flaw, at least in the eyes of some architects, is that LEED does not discourage design gimmicks done solely for effect and which needlessly consume resources and energy with no sustainable payback.

LEED is working to overcome these deficiencies. Beginning this year new buildings will be required to provide energy and water use bills for the first five years of operation as a condition of certification. LEED is also considering adopting the EPA’s Energy Star model, which confirms energy efficiency only for the year labeled, and not perpetually, as a certification prerequisite.

One can find a few faults in the LEED system, but it should be considered a work in progress. Version 3, LEED 2009, was implemented this year and includes many new requirements. LEED is an evolving and practical method of defining sustainable design credibility and an antidote to spurious “greenwashing” claims we often hear from developers eager to jump on the green bandwagon.

More LEED information can be obtained from the Green Building Council website at www.usgbc.org or by doing a Google or Wikipedia search for “LEED.”

She learned to identify her favorites, and still counts the Blue Jay as one of her favorite species based largely on experiences she had as a child.

Margaret lives in Medford on Lake Pine, and she chose to make a circle that included her dock and her deck (there are no rules about how high your circle can go!). She named her team the Lake Pine Gray Geese (in honor of the ‘antifreeze’ that got her through the second night!). The Big Sit day dawned bright and clear, but Margaret had already been birding for a bit over 6 hours by then. Starting at night turned out to be a good idea, but she may have been able to grab an extra hour or two of sleep based on the avian traffic on, near and over her house. Most of the night visitors came between 3:00 a.m. and dawn, and some were never seen again. Among the nighttime finds was a pair of Great Horned Owls having a conversation across the lake, a Swainson’s Thrush doing its best imitation of a Spring Peeper, a Black-crowned Night Heron ‘kwoking’ over the water, the only grackle of the entire day, and a small flock of Snow Geese heralding the coming dawn at about 5:30 a.m. Most of the usual suspects showed up sooner or later (see the list following), but there were also a few disappointments. The Pied-billed Grebe that had been hanging around for the better part of a week failed to show for the Big Sit. The same was true for the Golden-crowned Kinglet, but the Ruby-crowned Kinglet joined her in the circle, and hasn’t been seen before or since. The first Juncos of the season showed up on the 12th, too late to count toward the total, but Margaret saw a very respectable 41 species on the 11th.

It was a bit cold at night, but the daytime temperatures were comfortable. She was joined by Pat Hannigan, who provided sustenance, moral support, and continuity during the inevitable bio breaks. As the evening started to get colder, again, he was also the one in charge of calling an end to the event at 10:00 p.m. after 22 hours of watching and listening for birds.

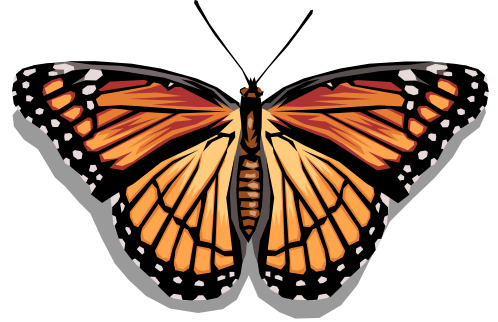
A couple of weeks before the Big Sit was scheduled, Margaret decided to make it more of a challenge by offering her services to raise money for the Burlington County Natural Sciences Club. A number of club members have pledged support (and its not too late: if you want to support her effort and the Club, feel free to send a check made out to BCNSC to me at 36 Washington Way, Tabernacle, NJ 08088 – I’ll see that she gets a record of your support). Margaret also talked to a number of friends and family members that are donating to the Club to honor her efforts. We’ll report the total in the December newsletter, but would like to thank Margaret for her time, her talent, and her thoughtfulness in supporting our Club even before the results are known. Perhaps, if she’s willing, we can make this an annual event, and see if we can drum up extra support for the Club next year.

Following is the species list (in phylogenetic order) for the Little Big Sit:

Great Blue Heron	Green Heron	Black-crowned Night Heron
Snow Goose	Canada Goose	Mallard
Black Vulture	Turkey Vulture	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper’s Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Laughing Gull
Mourning Dove	Great Horned Owl	Belted Kingfisher
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Downy Woodpecker	Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker	Eastern Phoebe	Blue Jay
American Crow	Carolina Chickadee	Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch	Carolina Wren	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Swainson’s Thrush	American Robin	Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird	Cedar Waxwing	European Starling
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Northern Cardinal	Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow	Common Grackle	House Finch
American Goldfinch	House Sparrow	

Monarch Migration Update:

The good news is Luanne and Dan Weekes ended the Monarch rearing and tagging season having tagged 798 individuals. They were a headline feature at the White's Bog Pinelands festival on October 4th, tagging and releasing Monarchs with the help of club members and visitors to the Club Booth. Since our last newsletter, John, Paul, Ringo and Georgina entered into Mexico. They followed the high peaks of the Sierra Madres, bending with the mountain ridges which run easterly then turn south. At this point, they entered a major Monarch highway, joining other migrants hugging the mountains to the west of Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas. West of Jaumave, Tamaulipas they passed through an amazing portal into the inner montane valleys called the Novilla Canyon. When south of Ciudad de Maiz, San Luis Potosi there's a pass where monarchs go through at exceedingly high rates, probably thousands per minute. Reports from northern Mexico indicate large numbers of migrants this year. As of Oct 22, none have reported into the wintering grounds of in the states of Michoacan and Mexico as yet. While we are getting a hint of wintry temperatures here in New Jersey, our adopted Monarchs will soon be basking in the sunshine.



Illustrated talk on December 9 will appeal to nature lovers, history buffs, and photographers

In 1997, Haddonfield native Deborah Garwood began a photographic study of Evans Pond, a part of Cooper River Park that borders both Haddonfield and Cherry Hill. Over a period of more than ten years, she took many hundreds of photographs. She also researched the history and changing fortunes of the pond, a natural resource that served as a millpond in colonial times and prospered under generations of Quaker farmers. From the American Revolution to Civil War eras, the mills at Evans Pond fostered lively economic and social networks for residents of Haddonfield and surrounding communities. After World War II, upstream development led the pond toward ecological decline over a period of fifty years, a potentially reversible state that is being studied by New Jersey's Soil Conservation Department.

Deborah Garwood's essay, more than 100 of her color photographs, and several historical images used by permission of the Historical Society of Haddonfield have been published in a 104-page book titled "Evans Pond: A Long-term Study of a Single Place." The Historical Society of Haddonfield and the Haddonfield Parks Conservancy will sponsor an illustrated lecture by Deborah Garwood on **Wednesday, December 9 at 7:30pm**. The venue will be the auditorium of the **Borough Hall, 242 Kings Highway East, Haddonfield**. Copies of Ms. Garwood's book will be available for purchase at \$25. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the sponsoring organizations.

NEWSLETTER

Please send any changes of name or mailing address, telephone, including area code, and, if you have one, an e-mail address to Susan Setterberg, 9 Grand Banks Circle, Marlton, NJ 08053. These are necessary to contact you quickly for any changes in the meeting place or for changes in field trips. If you would like to receive a electronic copy of the newsletter or any changes to your e-mail address, should be sent to Barbara Jones at wildbyrd@comcast.net. We would like to thank Barbara Jones, Joe Costanza, and Susan Setterberg for their submissions to the newsletter. We also like to thank Susan Setterberg for the newsletter mailing. The newsletter is in need of field reports and articles. Just write them down and e-mail or mail them to egilmore@ansp.org or Ned Gilmore 720 Morgan Ave. Palmyra, NJ 08065. Deadline for December's newsletter is November, 25.

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