



# COVE CURRENTS

## GREETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the summer wanes, the leaves of the Eastern Cottonwood trees outside my office window lose their lush green color and drift to the ground. The humidity is gone, the look and feel of the sun is different, a pleasant chill fills the air, and my energy level rises in preparation for an active fall season at Palmyra Cove Nature Park (PCNP).

Each September, for seven consecutive years, PCNP and the Burlington County Bridge Commission have hosted "Make a Splash Water Festival" for the Cinnaminson School District. It has become the kickoff event for our fall school field trip season. Approximately 300 students, teachers, presenters, and local dignitaries attend the day-long event focused on the subject of water: where it comes from, where it goes, what pollutants it picks up in its travels, what role it plays in the daily life of all living things, and what we can do to protect and conserve this precious natural resource. All in all it is a long, tiring, and wonderful day.

October is a month filled with activities for preschool children (Cove Caterpillars), elementary school field trips, the Philadelphia University of the Arts Industrial Design class overnight field trip, Wednesday evening family hikes, Saturday morning family hikes, and Beginning Birding classes for adults. And, speaking of birding, fall bird migration as enjoyed at Palmyra Cove

Nature Park is a huge attraction for area birders. Fall also brings an "Evening of Dancing with Silent Auction" scheduled for Saturday, November 22, 2008. This annual fund-raiser is held to benefit environmental education programs at Palmyra Cove Nature Park. Preparations begin long before the event takes place. Those preparations continue while each day, it seems, brings increasingly dire national and international economic news. Non-profit organizations, such as Palmyra Cove Environmental Education Foundation, Inc. rely on the generosity of individual and corporate donors to support their work. Making a compelling case for support becomes more difficult when newspaper headlines announce corporate bankruptcies, government bail-outs, job losses, and declines in stock market indices. However, I believe we can make that case for Palmyra Cove and make it convincingly.

Each year approximately 3,000 students who live in southern New Jersey and south eastern Pennsylvania visit PCNP for environmental education programs. They come from public, private, parochial and home school experiences. Many schools return once or twice a year and we continue to add new schools to our list. We offer programs that are economical (\$8.00 for a two hour session, \$10.00 for a four hour session), age and site specific. Our programs, designed by Edward Sanderson, Director of



## Naturalists Notes

I always look forward to autumn: perfect weather, migrating birds, and our Fall Cove Caterpillars preschool program begins. This fall we have an outstanding Cove Caterpillar program. Our hour-long Monday series started September 8 with pre-schoolers that range in age from two to six. We introduced our Caterpillars to a number of hands-on nature programs tailored to their blossoming curiosity and tiny hands. Topics this season have included the following: Cove Bingo, Traveling Seeds, Butterflies of Palmyra Cove, Seining the Delaware River, Trees and Their Leaves, Colors and Shapes in Nature, Natural and Unnatural Objects, Mammal Signs, Birds of Palmyra Cove, and Food Chains. After our Cove Caterpillars have taken their wondrous walks and collected some of nature's treasures,

we go back to the classroom for a follow-up nature craft to take home with them. We have had as many as twenty Caterpillars and their parents attend our Cove Caterpillar program. It has been a great success. The Fall Cove Caterpillar program will continue until November 10 and we will start our Spring Cove Caterpillar program in April.

Another exciting aspect of autumn is fall bird migration. Starting in August with shore bird migration, Palmyra Cove is a flurry of activity from the neo-tropical birds migrating through and the birders who come to observe them. Over 215 bird species come through the park in a year on their way to their wintering grounds in the fall or to their nesting grounds in the spring (Frank Windfelder, 2006). September and October are the best times to see migrating warblers at Palmyra Cove. Some of the special species observed in the park this fall have been: Pied-billed Grebe, Little Blue Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Osprey, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Cooper's Hawk, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Palm Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow-breasted Chat, Magnolia Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Ovenbird, American Redstart, Connecticut Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, and Baltimore Oriole. When visiting the park, be sure to stop by our information kiosk on the way into the park to check our updated bird and wildlife sightings lists. Please, also, visit the kiosk on the way out to record any species you have observed on your walk. Thank you.



Kristina Merola, *Naturalist*



Letters to the Editor can be mailed to Clara Ruvolo at Palmyra Cove Nature Park, 1300 Rt. 73 North, PO Box 6, Palmyra, NJ 08065-1090.

Photos credited to Brad Fusco, Bennett Landsman, Richard Merry, and Marty and Shari DeAngelo.

Palmyra Cove Environmental Education Foundation thanks Ed McCabe for his assistance in editing Cove Currents.

## Education Corner

**Staff Training and Updates:** Our teaching staff used the summer months for vacation time, and their places were filled by our summer interns. Summer recreation programs ended in the middle of August and preparation for the fall season began. All returning teachers have at least one year's experience and several have been here since our inception. We currently employ 13 part-time teachers but anticipate adding staff in the spring. If you have a passion for environmental causes and love to be outdoors, please call us at 856-829-1900 x 263.

The teachers convened on September 8 and 9 to review the fall schedule and get reacquainted with the ever changing features of the park. The appearance of the park can change significantly as dictated by the weather and seasonal changes; for example, we have had below normal precipitation for several months causing two of our ponds to go completely dry in late August. The staff explored the physical changes and their impact on the habitats and teaching sites.

This fall marks a return to school for me. I am currently enrolled in a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) course at Burlington County College. I am hoping to use the course to develop specialized maps for the park.

**Fall School Visits:** As usual, Philadelphia Mennonite High School began our fall season of school visits. Pam Seretny, the biology teacher, has been bringing her students to the Cove since the fall of 2005. The Archway School of Washington Township visited on September 23. The students and staff of Archway were very engaged in the activities and indicated they would be interested in a return visit. The "Make A Splash!" water festival" followed on September 26. This annual event is organized by the Cinnaminson Public Schools. Carol Polino, Eleanor Rush School, was the coordinator of this year's festival. We actually had a little more water than we wanted from a storm moving up the East Coast. One benefit of the rain is that our ponds will have some water for October visitors. October at the Cove is synonymous with Moorestown. For the fifth consecutive year, Palmyra Cove will be hosting Moorestown Upper Elementary School's 4th graders. Moorestown's visits will be followed by St. Joseph's Pro Cathedral 7th and 8th grade classes on October 17. St. Jo students visit twice a year over a two-year period to study watersheds. Roher Middle School 7th graders of Haddon

Township will be returning for a second visit to study forest and wetland ecology. The Delair School, Pennsauken, is also visiting a second time and will be doing wildlife observation.

**Scouting:** Scouts from Cinnaminson, Pine Hill, Southampton, Voorhees and Westampton will be visiting this fall. Activities include map reading, forest and wetlands ecology, and river ecology. These activities are applicable to many of the badges that scouts try to attain. We are also fortunate to have an Eagle Scout Project scheduled for the fall. Doug Engle, Cinnaminson, will be blazing new trail markers as his Eagle Scout project.

**Cleanups:** Due to the failure of many people to recycle materials, particularly plastics, the Delaware River is flooded by trash that runs off from streets and lawns after heavy rains. Our oceans and waterways are under constant assault from trash and debris. Globally, 378,192 people picked up 6,075,698 pounds of debris along 33,426 miles of shoreline in 2006. In cooperation with the International Ocean Conservancy, Palmyra Cove Nature Park participated in the fall "Adopt A Beach" cleanup on September 20. More than thirty individuals collected sixty-five bags of debris, weighing more than 1000 pounds. A special thank you is due to the Bethany Lutheran Church of Palmyra. More than a dozen members of the congregation spent several hours cleaning our beach. The Palmyra High School Interact Group also participated for the third consecutive year. Pam Tidswell of Burlington County Clean Communities contacted numerous individuals whose efforts are also greatly appreciated. Additionally, Den 7, Cinnaminson and Cove teachers donated their time to help the cause. On October 18, members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Cherry Hill, NJ will offer their service by cleaning up debris on our shores. In recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of people willing to volunteer to preserve the beauty of the river. Their actions are a testament to their individual character and their desire to protect the environment.



*Edward Sanderson, Director Environmental Education*

Education, and Kristina Merola, Naturalist, provide a hands-on learning experience in a small group setting and conform to State Core Curriculum Content Standards for science.

At a time when the entire world is faced with policy decisions on many critical environmental issues, access to environmental education for all children is urgent. With its wetlands, woodland, and protected tidal cove, PCNP is an outstanding outdoor science lab, a place where we introduce students to the natural world in a way that we hope will spark a life-long interest in protecting this world for future generations. If you have participated in events and activities in the park, then you know that we are passionate

about our mission: to preserve natural habitat and to provide environmental education and passive recreational opportunities for all to visit. If these goals are important to you, please join us by supporting Palmyra Cove Nature Park: attend one (or more) of our fund-raising events throughout the year; become a member of Palmyra Cove Environmental Education Foundation, Inc. or make a donation in any denomination, at any time. Your hard-earned contribution will be put to good use and sincerely appreciated by all who enjoy and benefit from Palmyra Cove Nature Park.

*Clara Ruvolo, Executive Director*



### Notes on the Gardens at Palmyra Cove

For the past two years volunteer gardeners have been taking cuttings from their own gardens, sowing seeds, and tending over 600 blooming plants that thrived in Palmyra Cove this summer. This summer the garden sustained a variety of butterflies and hummingbirds on their migration. The gardens have been building to a dramatic fall finale, a pyrotechnic display of movement, color, and light. The display will continue until hard frost brings an end to the festivities. Come take a walk and see how beauty feeds not only the butterflies and hummingbirds, but those of us lucky enough to work in the gardens.

November will be a very exciting month for the volunteers and staff at Palmyra Cove. This year the Philadelphia Horticulture Society has chosen the Nectar Gardens at Palmyra Cove for its "Greening of America" award. The award is to be given to the

volunteer gardeners in November. We are all extremely proud and excited to be part of this project. If you would like to join this effort you will be made welcome. All you need is an interest in nature and a willingness to learn. These are teaching gardens as well as wildlife gardens.

Soon it will be time to put the gardens to bed for the winter. Wood-chip mulch donated by Palmyra Township will cover the beds. Seeds from the annual plants will be collected as well as cuttings made from the sages. The winter projects of planning and propagation will then begin.

If you would like to join us please call Pam at 856-829-1900 Ext 270. Gardeners of all stripes and abilities are welcome. The gardens are meant to be educational, and teaching gardeners about nectar plants is part of our charter.

*Pamela Reid, Assistant to the Executive Director*



## Upcoming Events:

Please call to inquire about prices and reserve your spot at 856-829-1900 x 264.

2008

11/1	Family Hike	9:00am – 11:00am
11/3	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
11/10	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
11/15	Beginning Birding for Adults	9:00am – 12:00pm
12/3	Seniors Hike	9:00am – 11:00am
12/6	Family Hike	9:00am – 11:00am
12/10	Seniors Hike	9:00am – 11:00am
12/17	Seniors Hike	9:00am – 11:00am
12/20	Beginning Birding for Adults	9:00am – 12:00pm
12/24	Seniors Hike	9:00am – 11:00am
12/30	Owl Prowl	6:00pm – 8:00pm
12/31	Seniors Hike	9:00am – 11:00am

## A Look Ahead to 2009

1/3	Family Hike	9:00am – 11:00am
1/15	Owl Prowl	6:00pm – 8:00pm
1/17	Beginning Birding for Adults	9:00am – 12:00pm
2/7	Family Hike	9:00am – 11:00am
2/21	Beginning Birding for Adults	9:00am – 12:00pm
3/7	Family Hike	9:00am – 11:00am
3/21	Beginning Birding for Adults	9:00am – 12:00pm

3/23	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
3/30	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
4/6	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
4/13	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
4/20	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
4/25	Earth Day Celebration	10:00am – 2:00pm
4/27	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
5/2	Burlington County Bird Quest	7:00am – 12:00pm
5/4	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
5/11	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
5/18	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
5/25	Cove Caterpillars	10:00am – 11:00am
6/8	Summer Vacation Family Fun Program	10:00am-11:30am
6/15	Summer Vacation Family Fun Program	10:00am – 11:30am
6/22	Summer Vacation Family Fun Program	10:00am – 11:30am
6/29	Summer Vacation Family Fun Program	10:00am – 11:30am
7/6	Palmyra Cove Summer Camp Week 1	9:00am – 12:00pm
7/13	Palmyra Cove Summer Camp Week 2	9:00am – 12:00pm
7/27	Summer Camp with Symphony in C	9:00am – 12:00pm



## Overnight Field Trip – The University of the Arts Industrial Design Class



# Water Fest



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Palmyra Cove Nature Park  
1300 Route 73 North  
PO Box 6  
Palmyra, NJ 08065-1090