



Russet-tipped clubtail dragonfly
Photo by Bill Olson

Cove Currents

Greetings from the Executive Director

Through the window above my desk I'm treated to a view of an Eastern Cottonwood tree, its brilliant yellow leaves made more so by the backdrop of a cloudless blue sky. I do not need a calendar. I know that autumn has arrived.

The season has been filled with the usual: birds migrating, leaves falling, students visiting by the busload, and a fall favorite, Make A Splash Water Festival.

Palmyra Cove has hosted this Festival for nine consecutive years. For us, it has come to define the beginning of a new school year. The Festival, organized by former Cinnaminson educator Elaine Mendelow, revolves around the science of water. Ms. Mendelow describes the Festival as one "...filled with interactive activities that celebrate the important role of water in our daily lives, teaching children about the science and history of water, one of our most important natural resources." During the day-long event approximately 300 students rotate through learning stations with subject titles such as Mosquitoes, Mosquitoes; Seining the Delaware; The Eastern Oyster; Snapping Turtles of Pompeston; and Ground Water in New Jersey.

Palmyra Cove Nature Park lends itself to a range of educational possibilities. For the fourth consecutive October, for instance, students from the Design Department, University of the Arts in Philadelphia, tested shelters of their own design and construction during an overnight in the park. Approximately one half of the students in this year's design class are from countries that have experienced natural disasters in the recent past. Consequently, their assignment, to design shelters that are safe, economical, and easily transportable, is more than an

academic exercise; it has a real world application. Each year we look forward to discovering the imaginative and creative way these shelters are designed and constructed.

In addition to all of the predictable and comforting signs of the season, something new will help to define Autumn 2010 in Palmyra Cove Nature Park: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is overseeing the construction of a road through the woods, parallel to Park Drive, beginning at the Park Drive circle and ending at the 22.7-acre Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) surrounded by Red-winged Blackbird Trail. The road will be used to haul approximately 220,000 cubic yards of dredge material out of the CDF for a beneficial reuse project in the city of Camden.

You may remember that in the spring and summer of 2007 when there was a threat that NJDEP would permit the Army Corps of Engineers to clear-cut 50 acres of parkland adjacent to the 22.7-acre cell, which would have resulted in a 70.7-acre CDF, park supporters campaigned to "Save Palmyra Cove." As a result of that campaign, then NJDEP Commissioner Lisa Jackson crafted a compromise that allowed the Army Corps to use one-half of the established 22.7-acre CDF, protecting the additional 50 acres on the condition that the 22.7-acre cell be kept an active CDF. An active cell must be emptied and refilled periodically. As a result of the current project, material from this CDF will be used to cover the Harrison Street landfill, a former municipal dump in Camden, where the Salvation Army will construct the Ray and Joan Kroc Center, a 132,000 square foot community center.

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The Wild Turkey

One morning at the end of the summer, my wife and I were walking with our granddaughter along one of the wooded trails in the park when we saw a disturbance in the tall grass at the edge of the woods. Much to our delight, a flock of about a dozen wild turkeys came out of the woods and crossed the trail in front of us, seemingly oblivious to our presence. We watched the turkeys for quite a while until they slowly worked their way through the woods and out of our sight. It made me think

about how lucky we are to still have these impressive birds to enjoy. It wasn't too long ago that turkeys were all but gone in North America.

The wild turkey is a large, dark, ground-dwelling bird of the open forest with long powerful legs and a large fan-shaped tail. Male turkeys have a featherless head and neck which is blue grey in color with fleshy pink wattles. In mating season the colors on the head become more intense. Male turkeys sport a beard of modified feathers protruding from their chest. Females tend to be smaller with slight feathers on their head and neck. The beard, if present, is much shorter than a male's. Turkeys average fifteen to twenty pounds with some males weighing much more. Despite their great heft, turkeys are good fli-

ers and they can run quite fast as well. Turkeys eat mast crops such as acorns and beech nuts, also berries and insects. They will occasionally eat small reptiles as well.

The turkey was an important food source to Native Americans and early European settlers. The Unalachtigo Indians of the Lenape tribe made the turkey their totem animal. Benjamin Franklin told his daughter that he wished the turkey had been chosen to be our national symbol instead of the eagle.

By the early 1900s, however, the turkey had been pushed to the brink of extinction over much of its traditional range due to loss of habitat and hunting pressure. Only small populations in remote areas of the Appalachians were known to exist. In the latter half of the last century Game Departments in several states started transplanting some of these Appalachian birds to their own game lands with much success. Turkey populations are now established in every state except Alaska.

In New Jersey, the Division of Fish and Wildlife in conjunction with the Wild Turkey Federation reintroduced 22 turkeys in 1977. Since that time turkeys are now established throughout the state, wherever there is suitable habitat. Turkeys are even turning up in suburban neighborhoods. It is estimated that there are 20,000 to 23,000 wild turkeys residing in New Jersey.

Clyde Croasdale, *Guest Contributor*



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The haul road construction began on October 20, 2010, and is expected to continue for thirty days. Upon completion of the road the excavation of the cell will commence. Dump trucks will be filled with dredge material, carried over the new haul road and out of the park to Camden. It is expected that approximately 200 truckloads of material will be carried out of the park every work day of the week for an estimated four months. As a result, for safety reasons, a few of the park trails will be closed to visitors. The trails that are closed will vary depending upon where the work is being done. I apologize for the inconvenience and ask you will bear with us.

A popular site for wetland lessons, Dragonfly Pond, will be lost with the excavation of the CDF. However, we are in the process of expanding Bullfrog Pond which will make an excellent wetland teaching site. It is situated between Park Drive and Red-winged Blackbird Trail. Also, we will be extending our trail system south of the footbridge over the Cove to open up the area near the Pennsauken Creek for birding and hiking. More about this at a later date.

Meanwhile, I hope you will visit often and take advantage of the beautiful autumn days at Palmyra Cove Nature Park.

Clara Ruvolo, *Executive Director*



News from the Gardens at Palmyra Cove

Congratulations!

Palmyra Cove Nectar Gardens, a Job Well-done.

The Philadelphia Horticultural Society (PHS) is most noted for its world famous annual flower show and its commitment to community based horticultural activities. According to Flossie Narducci, Education Manager of the PHS, “The Community Greening Award recognizes, individuals, businesses, community groups, municipalities, civic organizations, etc. that have been inspired to improve their communities by planting and maintaining public spaces. These can include traffic islands, train stations, main street planters, gateways, parks, schools, libraries, etc. The program was initiated in 2000 to recognize these greening champions in suburban Philadelphia, New Jersey, and Delaware. In 2007, the program was expanded to include the entire state of Pennsylvania. In 2010 eighty-four cites were nominated for the award. Of those, sixty-one were deemed worthy of PHS recognition.”

On November 7, 2010, PHS presented its “2010 Community Greening Award” to Palmyra Cove Nature Park for its Hummingbird and Butterfly Gardens. PHS rules state that no garden can receive the award two years consecutively. The “2008 Community Greening Award” was also awarded to Palmyra Cove Nature Park. It is an honor to be selected again for the 2010 gardens created and maintained by community volunteers. The Hummingbird and Butterfly Gardens in the park are located in three areas in front of the Environmental Discovery Center (EDC) and in the median on Park Drive. They are all designed, propagated, planted, and maintained by volunteers.

Two volunteers have been the driving force for the gardens. Ward Dasey, an avid birder and gardener, propagates most of the plants found in the gardens. He takes cuttings in the fall, pots and repots them, nurturing them through the cold winter months. Early in spring the volunteers repot the tender young plants again and get them ready for their final home in the park. Other types of plants are propagated from seed in early spring. Vicki Wozniak’s quiet steadiness is the backbone of the

group. Her dedication and commitment to the park gardens give all of us the will to work in the garden in the early spring cold through the summer heat and humidity. Her love of the hummingbirds and butterflies, nourished by our efforts, is contagious. Everyone who volunteered in the gardens this year is responsible for this award, because it was based on maintaining the garden as well as designing and planting. Every volunteer has a lot to be proud of.

The new “Rain Water Garden” located in the front of the EDC is a Burlington County Master Gardeners volunteer project, designed and built by Bridget Elmes and Valerie Hunt. It is designed to use the runoff water from the roof and surrounding areas to water the plants and filter excess water back into the soil. A barrel is used to collect rain water for use during dry times making the garden self-sustaining. This garden area will be used as a teaching tool to advance sustainable gardens in our homes.

Mike Haberland of Rutgers University provided invaluable help from initial design to planting. Mark Jendrzewski created the professional design schematics that can be seen on the bulletin board in the EDC. Mark was invaluable in the garden from moving and enriching the soil through planting day. Phil Kasperowitz and Rusty Adams of the Burlington County Bridge Commission Maintenance Team moved the soil and prepared the area for the garden.

Thank you all for your time and energy used to build sustainable garden areas.

Pam Reid, *Assistant to the Executive Director*





Education Corner

School News: The fall season began with a visit by high school students from the YALE School of Cherry Hill. The activities combined ecology activities with an emphasis on the kinds of skills and knowledge needed in environmental careers.

The YALE visit was followed by the annual Make A Splash Water Festival on Friday, September 24. Approximately 200 fourth and fifth grade students from Cinnaminson Township

Schools participated in a range of activities emphasizing the importance of water to living things. The event, planned and organized jointly by Cinnaminson Township Schools and the Burlington County Bridge Commission, was staged at Palmyra Cove.

Late September and early October brought much needed rain, but played havoc with our schedule. Moorestown Upper Elementary School has visited Palmyra Cove every fall since 2004. This year, there were four days of postponements, but they managed to get all their visits concluded. Oaklyn Elementary School, the Fine Elementary School, St. Joseph's Pro Cathedral, Westfield Friends, Rowan University, and Living Waters Home School group rounded out our October visits.

Staff Spotlight: Maryann Young has been an integral part of the Cove staff since we first opened in the summer of 2003. Maryann works in the medical field and was interested in volunteering at the Cove. The use of volunteer staff was short-lived due to the rapid increase in school visits, so Maryann was recruited as a paid staff member. Her interest in nature and her warm, friendly personality have made her a great advocate for our programs. Maryann cultivated her interest in nature by continuing to take ecology-related courses on her own time. We lost her services for a brief time due to increased hours at her other job, but we gladly welcomed her

return in the spring of 2010. Maryann lives in Riverton with her husband, Brad, and their two children.

Our other spotlight is aimed at Sally Hartman. Sally called to inquire about volunteering opportunities, but I encouraged her to join our staff due to her experiences in education, coaching, and officiating. Sally is an avid cyclist and hiker who enjoys nature and loves sharing her experiences. She has a contagious sense of humor and always seems to have an amusing story. Sally combines knowledge, enthusiasm, and humor on her insightful excursions into the park. Sally has been with us since spring, 2006. She lives in Moorestown with her husband, Bob, and two children.

Cove Cleanups: Our "Adopt A Beach" cleanup on Saturday, September 25 was highly successful. We had great participation from the following area schools: Palmyra High School Interact Club, Cinnaminson High School Interact Club, and Harrington Middle School Environmental Club. Of ninety-two participants, 80 were students from area schools. Sometimes we tend to think young people today are self-absorbed in their world of texting and social websites, but many, when given the opportunity, willingly contribute their time and energy to making the world a little better.

A second cleanup took place on Saturday, October 23. Members of the Cherry Hill Unitarian Universalist Church participated in their fourth consecutive October cleanup. Sometimes it may be discouraging to have to clean a beach area a month after it was previously cleaned. However, preventing this trash from reaching the ocean has far-reaching benefits. More than one million seabirds and one hundred thousand marine mammals die every year due to ingesting trash in our oceans. Preventing trash from reaching the ocean can reduce those numbers (Sources: Ocean Conservancy, NOAA). Individuals choosing to participate in coastal cleanups perform a service from which we all benefit.



Edward Sanderson, Director, Environmental Education



Naturalist Notes

Our 2010 Autumn Cove Caterpillar program has been our most popular, with a waiting list of children who would like to attend. The program started the week of September 13 and ended the week of November 15. The topics this season included: Butterflies, Nature's Rainbow, Delaware River, Turning Leaves, Ladybird Beetles, Eastern Goldfinches, Spiders, A Tree is a Home, Squirrels, and Wild Turkey. Some highlights this season included a ladybug release, butterfly catching, and seining the Delaware River. Thank you to all the Caterpillars who made this season especially fun!

Beginning Birding for Adults has also been very well attended with visitors who come back regularly as well as brand new birders. Some highlights observed this season have been: Wood Duck, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Blue-headed Vireo, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Parula, Blue-winged Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler,

and Lincoln's Sparrow.

In January, we will be offering a new program: Nature Craft and Story Time for preschoolers on Monday and Tuesday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The program is open to children aged two to five. The stories will be about nature around us and the wildlife you can find during a walk in the woods. The craft will go along with the story of the day. If there is time, and the weather is cooperative, we may even take a short walk ourselves around the park grounds. As with all the preschool programs, registration is required in advance.



Kristina Merola, Naturalist



Cove Caterpillar Program



Upcoming Events Winter 2011

(Registration is required to participate in Palmyra Cove Nature Park programs. For more information please contact Kristina Merola at (856) 829-1900 x 267 or kmerola@bcbridges.org.)

December 18	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Beginning Birding for Adults	Adults
January 1	9:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Family Hike	All Ages
January 3	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
January 4	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
January 10	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
January 11	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
January 15	9:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Beginning Birding for Adults	Adults
January 17	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
January 18	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
January 24	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
January 25	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
January 31	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
February 1	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
February 5	9:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Family Hike	All Ages
February 7	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
February 8	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
February 14	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
February 15	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
February 19	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Beginning Birding for Adults	Adult
February 21	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool
February 22	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Nature Craft and Story Time	Preschool

Families and small groups can reserve their own experienced guide to explore Palmyra Cove Nature Park by contacting Ed Sanderson at (865) 829-1900 x 263 or esanderson@bcbridges.org.



Photo by Bill Olson
Saddleback caterpillar

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