



My name is Alicia

I will be attending my second year at Kent State University studying Art Education.

My favorite things about working at the Palmyra Cove Nature Park are taking the kids out on hikes and learning something new about nature everyday.

Intern Corner



My name is Nick

I will be entering my sophomore year at Kings College. I am a History Major. This is my first summer at PCNP, and I enjoy working with my fellow associates everyday and discovering nature's secrets.



My name is Dana

I will be entering my Junior year at Rowan University in Elementary Education with a dual major in Math and Science.

This is my second summer at PCNP. My favorite things about work are taking kids into the ponds to look for tadpoles.

What Students are saying...Fourth Grade Baptist Regional School, Cherry Hill

Caleb: My favorite part of the trip was "when we saw a beaver handprint and then walked on the beach and found many clam shells. I learned that owls don't eat all of their mice. This was my favorite field trip!"

Kelsey: My favorite part of the trip was "the nature walk. I liked the falcon on the bridge. I liked learning about the watershed. Our scavenger hunt was cool too. The tadpole was so small."

Kayla: "Thank you for letting us come to Palmyra Cove!! I had a great time seeing nature and seeing skat and an owl pellet and walking on the beach and going on a nature trail. I really enjoyed everything you did with us. Thank you!!"

Cove Currents Palmyra Cove Nature Park

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COVE CURRENTS

GREETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"Energy and persistence alter all things." Ben Franklin

Summer 2007 has given those of us who value Palmyra Cove Nature Park a shared experience that will be remembered for years to come. For almost a year we have lived with the threat that NJDEP Commissioner Lisa Jackson would allow the US Army Corps of Engineers to use 70 to 90 acres of the Park as a dredge retention basin for material from the Corps' Delaware River maintenance dredging project. Readers who have followed this column in the Winter and Spring issues of Cove Currents know the story well.

Today, however, the story is no longer about a threat; it is about a promise.

What I will remember most about Summer 2007 at Palmyra Cove Nature Park is the tremendous outpouring of support for the "Save Palmyra Cove" campaign: over 2,000 signatures on petitions; 500 green and white yard signs displayed throughout neighboring communities; letters, e-mail messages, and phone calls from supporters to elected and appointed officials; generous institutional support from environmental organizations; and the formation of Cove Action Network (CAN).

Thanks to all involved in this effective and successful "Save Palmyra Cove" campaign, Commissioner Jackson judiciously presented a compromise plan for use of the Cove as a dredge deposit site to an audience of approximately 130 at a public meeting in the conference room of the Burlington County Bridge Commission Administration Building on Monday, August 13, 2007.

Commissioner Jackson informed the audience of concerned citizens, elected and appointed officials, and representatives of the press that she had issued an emergency permit to the Army Corps of Engineers allowing it to use approximately one half of its original twenty-two-acre dredge retention basin for deposit of material from two especially dangerous shoals five to ten miles upriver of Palmyra Cove Nature Park. The Commissioner emphasized that the Corps would be required to construct this new retention basin within the existing berm of the original retention basin and

that the established wetland within the original site must be protected, as well. Commissioner Jackson made it clear to the audience that as long as she remains the NJDEP Commissioner, she would not allow Army Corps expansion into the adjacent 50 to 70 acres as was originally proposed. Work, according to this plan, was to commence the following day, Tuesday, August 14, 2007.

That Monday and Tuesday were oppressively hot and emotionally charged. Commissioner Jackson had made her decision. The Army Corps of Engineers would begin work in Palmyra Cove Nature Park within twenty-four hours.

Early Tuesday morning, at the site of the retention basin, representatives of Cove Action Network with "Save Palmyra Cove" signs in hand, met representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The press, both print and TV, was on site to follow a story it had been covering for months. Charlie Myers, project manager for the Philadelphia District of the Army Corps, took the lead in patiently answering questions, attempting to put the minds of the protesters at ease, a challenge he accomplished with varying degrees of success.

The Corps spent the first week carefully constructing a dredge retention basin within a dredge retention basin site, doing its best to protect a wetland, trees and other vegetation within the area. Disposal of dredge material began the following week and continued twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for the next twenty-five days.

The dredging project has been the defining experience of Summer 2007 at Palmyra Cove Nature Park; the catalyst for the promise to protect the Park as a wildlife preserve, bird sanctuary, and outdoor classroom for future generations. Throughout the past year, concern for Palmyra Cove has expanded the number and increased the dedication of our supporters beyond our expectations. We are grateful for and comforted by this outpouring of support.

Clara Ruvolo, Executive Director



Education Corner



Summer Staff: The summer interns this year included one veteran and two neophytes. Dana Young, our veteran, was able to start working in early May and was an important part of our school programs. Dana's experience proved to be invaluable since she could lead many activities on her own. Dana is an education major and hopes to apply the skills and knowledge acquired at the Cove to a middle school classroom. Dana helped our new interns, Nick Strom and Alicia Biegun, make a smooth transition to working at the Cove. Nick was also available to work with schools in late May and early June. Nick worked with Al Shinn in our "Seining the Delaware" activity. By June, Nick had mastered the technique of seining and the presentation of the activity. Nick is also an education major. Alicia Biegun joined us in

late May and had a chance to work with the schools before our summer group visits. Alicia initially assisted other teachers, but by early June she was leading several activities. The interns and myself recently completed a 12-mile river kayak journey as a culminating activity for our summer together. The interns have forged a bond among themselves and the entire staff that has led to a most enjoyable summer. Many Cove interns have used their experiences here as a stepping stone to new opportunities. Matt Vetter, who was with us last summer, now has a "real job" (according to his father) working as a technician for an environmental consulting firm. Liz Pierson is presently working as a summer intern in Colorado Springs and Jessica Ruvolo is working with animals at the St. Louis Zoo. The summer intern

program has proven to be a mutually beneficial experience for all concerned parties. The Cove also added new educators, Christine Durante and Joanne Dunston. Christine is a teacher at Riverton School and has graciously offered to assist us during busy periods over the summer. Christine has attended teacher workshops on wetlands at Palmyra Cove and has also been involved with the monarch butterfly project through ERIC. Joanne is an experienced classroom teacher who is staying home to raise her son. We hope to utilize Joanne's talents this coming fall.

Summer Activities: Our summer educational programs are available to schools, home school groups, child care organizations, camp programs, and civic organizations. We are pleased to welcome back the San Miguel School of Camden for a fifth summer. San Miguel visited three times in July. San Miguel activities applied to wetlands, forest ecology and mapping skills. Camp Kingdom Builders, Hainesport Summer Recreation, Delanco Summer Recreation and Kindercare of Voorhees and Medford were return visitors. For the first time, we hosted the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences for their summer camp program. The Academy group was led by Sharon Angus-Smith, who is one of the facilitators for our free wetlands workshops. Scout programs continued through the summer. Troops from Cherry Hill and Riverside braved the heat and participated in evening programs that focused on wildlife in the park.

Pondering the Future: We anticipate offering more free wetlands workshops for teachers of grades 4- 8 in the fall. Dates will be determined in September and posted on our website. Additionally, we look forward to a busy fall schedule with schools. The cooler temperatures and seasonal changes make the fall a very special time at Palmyra Cove. We hope to see many of our past visitors and some new faces.

Edward Sanderson, Director Environmental Education

Naturalist's Notes

As a very busy summer comes to a close, we look forward to a brief time break to catch our breath and to take account of the passing season before our fall school groups start arriving and another school year begins.

Our summer started off with a bang with our new Summer Vacation Family Fun programs offered through the month of June. The bi-weekly, hour and a half programs presented families with hands-on activities including Meadow March, Wetland Wonders, and Delaware River Romp. Some highlights of the programs included butterfly catching and releasing; wearing waders to net tadpoles and invertebrates in Bullfrog Basin; seining for fish in the Delaware and discovering shells, animal tracks, and river rock along the shore.

In July we began our Cove Campers summer camp, which was extended to two weeks this year. During week one Cove Campers explored Palmyra Cove's wetland habitats and learned about watersheds and wetland conservation. Our daily hike destinations included Bullfrog Basin, Dragonfly Pond and the Delaware River. Activities focused on insect catch and release, and beach clean-up. Campers also learned about seining, the water cycle, frog and toad lifecycles, different requirements for animals, taxonomy, and journaling. During week two Cove Campers focused more on the upland habitats around the park. Hikes included map and compass use, insect catch and release, forestry inventory, fallen log exploration, tree identification, leaf prints, seining, Vernal Pool exploration, storytelling, bird migration, and camouflage. Also, flowers were planted in the bird garden.

Throughout the summer we continued our Family Hikes, on the first Saturday of the month. The highlights of June's Spring Family Hike included pickerelweed, spatterdock, yellow flag iris, bull thistle, stinging nettle, rabbit's foot clover, false indigo, and mimosa. During July's Wetland Family Hike, we looked at the similarities and differences in vegetation and animal habitats along the tidal ditch, Bullfrog Basin, Vernal Pool, Dragonfly Pond, Beaver Pond, Palmyra Cove, and along the River Trail. The Forest Explorers Family hike in August focused on the forested habitats throughout the park. Our species highlight was the Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*). The great crested flycatcher is found mainly in hardwood forest canopies. It breeds in open deciduous woodlands, riparian corridors, wooded swamps, and parks. It is a summer resident of Palmyra Cove Nature Park. Great crested flycatchers can be found foraging around their nesting



cavities, especially along Eastern Cottonwood Trail. Great crested flycatchers spend very little time on the ground. They do not hop or walk, but prefer to fly from place to place. It is the only eastern flycatcher to nest in tree cavities. The cavities are typically filled with trash with the nest placed on top. The nests are often made of leaves, hair, feathers, rootlets, string, small twigs, bark, paper, and shed snakeskin or some other crinkly trash materials in the nest lining. Nest boxes are also used.

Great crested flycatchers are medium-sized song-birds which look fairly heavy and have a large head. Males, females, and immature birds look similar, having a dark gray face, throat, and breast, bright yellow belly which extends to the undertail coverts, dark olive neck and back, and cinnamon rufous wing and tail feathers. The dark flight feathers have sharply contrasting white wing bars. The flycatcher bill is flattened with bristles at the base. It often erects a short, bushy crest when excited. The song is loud, with alternating phrases "quitta, queeto, quitta" and it has a distinct call, a string of clear, rising "wheeeep" or queEEEEEP.

Great crested flycatchers perch quietly on exposed branches, sally out after flying insects, hover to glean insects off leaves, and drop down from their perch to take prey on the ground. But, primarily, they hunt in the canopy.

Beginning Birding for Adults, the third Saturday of every month, is becoming very popular. June species highlights included yellow warbler, Eastern goldfinch, Baltimore oriole, and American redstart. July species highlights included great crested flycatcher, eastern wood peewee, and a great blue heron that flew to and landed in Beaver Pond. August was the start of shorebird migration and our wetland mudflats were the focus of our walk. We hoped to find foraging semipalmated plovers, killdeer, yellowlegs, solitary sandpiper, spotted sandpiper, semipalmated sandpiper, least sandpiper, and peck-toral sandpiper.

For a schedule of upcoming events, please consult our website www.palmyracove.org

Kristina Merola, Naturalist

"Congratulations and Best wishes to Kristina and Mark Marola on the birth of their baby daughter, Rosemary Erin (Rosey), born on September 25, 2007."

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 and Richard Merry

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