

Cove Currents

MEETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Perhaps it's the chill in the air or the position of the sun in the sky, the long shadows on the lawn or the silenced call of the cicadas, whatever the sign, there is no mistaking the arrival of autumn at Palmyra Cove Nature Park (PCNP). Each season is beautiful here, but autumn may be the most picturesque. However, what is deceptive at this time of year, in spite of its apparent quiet, is the high level of activity in the Park.

There are songbirds migrating, ground hogs burrowing, snakes mating, turtles hibernating, insects spinning, and every living thing is eating, all in preparation for either a long sleep or the scarcity of food in winter. So while you hike your favorite trail enjoy nature's fall palette and look for the sights and sounds of nature's energy.

As for human energy, there is no scarcity of it at PCNP this autumn season. Birders are in the Park every day early morning and late afternoon to enjoy the annual spectacle of fall migration. School field trips for environmental education programs are keeping all of us alert and it wouldn't be September without Elaine Mendelow and her Cinnaminson students "making a splash" at the annual Water Festival. At this event, organized by Mrs. Mendelow and hosted by PCNP, 300 students, teachers, presenters and dignitaries participate in a fun-filled day structured around the science of water.

Fourteen artfully decorated Eagle statues landed at the Environmental Discovery Center (EDC) in mid-September. The statues had been on display along the Camden to Trenton Light Rail Line for three and one-half months this summer and needed a little freshening up. As the Eagles graced the exhibit hall, their artists had an opportunity to make minor repairs in preparation for the gala held at PCNP on October 1st. As artists worked, visitors watched and marveled.

In November, we will welcome Boy Scout Troop 18 for a weekend of camping and survival skills training. Please, remember that the classroom in the Environmental Discovery Center is available for meetings and seminars. Continue to check our website for the family events we offer, and be sure to visit the EDC and enjoy our current art exhibit.

As we plan and prepare for the hustle and bustle of the coming season, I believe that this autumn will stand out in our memory for its reminder that the beauty of nature must be contrasted with its potential for fierce destruction. As I write to you on this glorious autumn day, under a cloudless blue sky, my mind wanders to the image of long lines of vehicles leaving Galveston, Texas in the darkness of early morning. Tens of thousands of families are leaving their homes, for destinations perhaps unknown, just ahead of Rita, predicted to be one of the most dangerous hurricanes on record. The appearance of Rita a mere month after Katrina's devastating landfall on Louisiana and Mississippi must give us pause to consider nature as both a thing of beauty and order as well as one of destruction and chaos.

At Palmyra Cove Nature Park we teach the interdependency of nature; the delicate balance among all living things. As humans we must learn to ask ourselves which among our actions help to maintain that balance and which among them impact the balance in a negative way.

Certainly, by becoming more knowledgeable stewards of the environment, we can work toward minimizing the heavy human toll of these natural phenomena. This must be our collective goal.



Clara Ruvolo, *Executive Director*

Volunteering

Fall has arrived at PCNP, the air is getting cooler, and we need your help. Would you like to know the Park better? Why not adopt a trail to maintain or plan to help at a river clean-up? You can make your own hours or attend an organized clean-up. Bring the family or come by yourself. We need you. PCNP will provide all necessary training and supplies.

So, please consider lending a hand and experience the wonders of our Park and the reward of volunteering. We hope to see you often!

Terri Zinn
Assistant to the Executive Director
856-829-1900, extension 262
tzinn@bcbridges.org

CELEBRATE WINTER AT PCNP

Join Us For

Winterfest

December 10, 2005 – 10 am till 3 pm
Rain, Snow or Shine!

Support Environmental Education at PCNP

Join us for an Evening of Dancing!
November 19, 2005 at 7 PM.

Tickets are now on sale in the Environmental Discovery Center.

EDUCATION AT THE COVE

STAFF TRAINING

Our veteran teaching staff met on September 7 to continue training in watershed conservation. The activities focus on historical land use and watersheds, monitoring water quality, and the benefits and characteristics of wetlands. The training is preparation for a comprehensive watershed program we use with St. Joseph's Pro Cathedral School of Camden, NJ. This program was made possible by a generous \$2500 grant we received from the Telephone Pioneers. This will be the final year of the grant that will culminate with a watershed conservation project in the spring. In anticipation of our busiest fall ever, we are pleased to announce three new additions to our teaching staff. Our new staff members, Rosann Cross, June Emens and Nancy Steel participated in a training program on September 9 and began working with schools in October. The enthusiasm and cooperation of the entire staff at Palmyra Cove has been essential to our growth as a provider of environmental education.

FALL PROGRAMS

Due to increased demand from scouting and educational groups, we will be creating a second orienteering course in the park. For those unfamiliar with this sport, it is basically a competition where groups use a compass and map to navigate to various points in a given area. Orienteering requires a combination of map reading skills, elementary mathematical applications, and teamwork. Groups aged 8 - 70 have had a positive experience orienteering at Palmyra Cove Nature Park. Orienteering is a year-round sport and one way to expe-

rience seasonal changes or to cure "cabin fever." Interested parties should call Palmyra Cove Nature Park and arrange a date and time for their visit. Allow three hours for the activity. There is a fee of \$10 for each participant.

SCHOOL VISITS

We are extremely pleased to have several schools schedule return visits to Palmyra Cove. Magowan School of Edgewater Park and Martin Luther Christian School of Pennsauken will be returning to Palmyra Cove in September. Moorestown Upper Elementary School will be bringing 350 fourth grade students over a 7-day period in October. Mansfield Township Elementary School will also have 100 fourth graders visit in October. New schools that have visited Palmyra Cove this fall include Philadelphia Mennonite High School and M'Kor Shalom of Cherry Hill.

SCOUTING

Fall has been a busy season for scouts. Scouts from Pine Hill, Palmyra-Riverton, and Cinnaminson have visited the park. Activities included plant identification, orienteering, bird identification, forest and wetland ecology, and night activities. We now have an orienteering course for younger children to help scouts meet badge requirements. Palmyra Cove welcomes all scouting groups and will work with scout leaders to create a program that meets their needs.

Edward Sanderson
Environmental Educator

Visit our website at www.palmyracove.org

New Nature Park Access Road Under Construction

For the past couple of months, many visitors to the Palmyra Cove Nature Park may have observed the construction activities related to the new 3,300 linear feet access road between Route 73 and the Environmental Discovery Center that is being built by Green Construction from South River, New Jersey.

The new bituminous concrete roadway will accommodate a twelve-foot wide travel lane in both directions. The majority of the roadway will have a grass median with a maximum width of fourteen feet. As shown in the photograph to the left that was taken on August 19, 2005, the contractor's vibratory roller is compacting the base layer of the new pavement. The final pavement topwearing course is expected to be placed in September 2005.

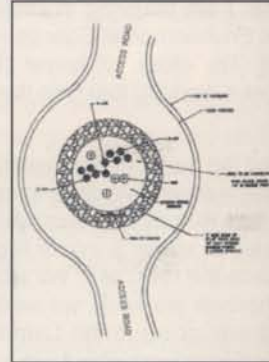


Also included in the project is the construction of a Keystone block retaining wall located close to the existing parking lot at the Park. The photograph on the top right shows the wall near completion. It should be noted that the



construction of this wall is necessary to avoid the encroachment of the road's embankment upon the Park's wetlands.

As shown in the sketch to the right, a very decorative landscaped circle with a welcome sign will be constructed just a short distance from the existing Flea Market, Route 73 entrance that will greet visitors entering the Park.



Palmyra Bird Census – Late Summer Report

Submitted by Frank Windfelder

September 2nd was a great day at Palmyra. I saw an immature Mourning Warbler in the open willow woods and a very early Lincoln's Sparrow in the big pit. Two Caspian Terns were flying downriver. Ward Dasey found lots of warblers and a Philadelphia Vireo. Paul Driver had Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Black-billed Cuckoo. Bill Tannery found another Mourning Warbler in the afternoon. I had been very skeptical of Ron Melzer's Orange-crowned Warbler report from August because of the early date, until I observed and carefully studied an individual of that species myself. Incredible!

The 3rd was another good day, with a Philadelphia Vireo, two Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, and two Mourning Warblers being reported. Bill Tannery had a "Brewster's" Warbler. But the best bird was an Eastern Bluebird heard by both Ward Dasey and Paul Driver.

On the 4th, Bobolinks were seen and heard over the big pit, and the first Red-breasted Nuthatch of the year was heard. Paul Driver saw a nicely plumaged Cape May Warbler in the open willow woods. I enjoyed my second Olive-sided Flycatcher of the season in the company of Tom Bailey and Steve Kacir. There were reports of another Mourning Warbler, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and a Philadelphia Vireo. Labor Day weekend produced 25 species of warblers.

Bill Tannery and Brewster Young each had a male Golden-winged Warbler on the 5th, the year's 200th species. Still another Mourning Warbler was found. The first two Connecticut Warblers of the year were seen on the 10th, and a total of twenty-two species of warblers. It was a memorable day for me. I had crippling views of Cape May and Connecticut Warblers and Philadelphia Vireo.

The first Blue-headed Vireo of the fall was found on the 11th, and the first Ruby-crowned Kinglet on the 12th. A long overdue Yellow-breasted Chat was seen in the big pit on the 21st, along with a total of at least 21 species of warblers.

Tom Bailey produced the first seen Eastern Bluebird of the year on the 25th. Several Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen as well, bringing the annual total to 203 species. Another long overdue bird bites the dust. Finally, there was a singing Winter Wren in the big pit on the 30th.

Palmyra is famous as one of the best places to get rare passerines in the fall, and this year did not disappoint. There were multiple sightings of Cape May Warblers, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Black-billed Cuckoos, Philadelphia Vireos, and Lincoln's Sparrows. At least two Olive-sided Flycatchers, nineteen Mourning Warblers and thirteen Connecticut Warblers were present.

A total of 152 species were observed in September, capping a spectacular fall passerine migration. It's amazing to me that approximately 75% of the birds that have been seen at Palmyra this year were present in September alone.

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 Bennett Landsman • Friends of Palmyra Cove thank Ed McCabe for his assistance in editing *Cove Currents*.

INTERN CORNER – MY SUMMER AT PALMYRA COVE

Submitted by Liz Pierson

When you hear the words “summer intern” what first comes to mind? Pointless, boring tasks that fill a summer that seems to drag on endlessly? Not if you are a Palmyra Cove Nature Park intern! When I think of my summer job, I think of invaluable experience, fun jobs, and a summer that seemed to just fly by!

My name is Liz Pierson and this is my second season at Palmyra Cove Nature Park. I will be going into my sophomore year at Unity College in Unity, Maine. I am majoring in Parks, Recreation and Eco-tourism as well as Environmental Education. For me, working at the Cove is great. I'm close to home (I am a native to Cinnaminson), and I get a working look into the field which I hope to pursue.

One of the highlights of the summer was being able to work with Jessica Ruvolo. She was a co-worker close to my age, who shared similar goals to mine. She is from St. Louis, Missouri, so because of that we were only able to spend a month together. Despite her short time here, we made the most of it. We worked closely on all aspects of the job; wherever we went, we went together. One of the best things we did was going to the Camden County Library and teaching twenty kindergartners about nature in a different setting. The was the Cove's first ever Outreach Initiative. It was a different environment, but yet a great learning experience and teaching tool!

Another highlight of the summer was working with San Miguel School of Camden. For four weeks in July, we hosted approximately fifteen boys each day. This was great because after the first one or two weeks, a bond really formed between my group and myself. Every week you could see that they were eager to learn,

and they were having fun as well. The program culminated with the Orienteering Course. Each boy was given a compass, a map, and taken out into the woods. Each and every one completed the course successfully, and it was apparent how much they learned over their time at Palmyra Cove.



One of my other favorite activities was the creation of the “Plant Posse.” Every few days, Ed Sanderson, Jessica and I would head out to the park and begin to identify trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. In the beginning this was frustrating and difficult. Was that tree opposite or alternate? Is that a green ash or a white ash? What color is the bark? The questions were endless. But after a while, it started to become easier, and our list of identified trees grew. Thanks to the Plant Posse, I now know how to identify at least seventy different species of plants that grow in our park.

Throughout the summer, we hosted many children of many ages. This summer I learned that I love working with young kids. I was never really sure where I wanted to fit myself into the Environmental Education web of life, but after this summer the picture is becoming clearer. Thanks to working at Palmyra Cove, and to all of the different schools that we hosted, I know now why I love working in this field so much. One day while seining down the riverbank with a group of five-year-olds, a little girl reached up to tug on my hand. I looked down at her, and with the biggest smile on her face, she said, “This is the first time I've ever held a fish! This is so cool!” The look in her eyes as she peered into her little bucket of “her fish” will never leave me.

Cove Currents Issue #4 – Fall 2005

Palmyra
NATURE PARK

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

SUMMERFEST 2005



WATER FESTIVAL — 2005



THE EAGLES HAVE LANDED

