



# 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

*Friends of Hammonasset strives to provide environmental education, preserve the integrity of the park's natural resources, increase public awareness and serve as an advocate of the park.*

PO Box 271 Madison, Connecticut 06443  
[www.hammonasset.org](http://www.hammonasset.org) [info@hammonasset.org](mailto:info@hammonasset.org)

Friends of Hammonasset  
2010 Annual Report

**President's Report:**

Submitted by: Marcy Klattenberg, Vice President

Dear friends, 2010 marked a year of change and transition for both Friends of Hammonasset (FOH) and Hammonasset Beach State Park (HBSP). Last April, we lost long time park Supervisor Roger Kinderman to cancer. This past fall, another valuable FOH member, Paula Schiller, also died of cancer. We will miss them both very much.

HBSP is now under the direction of new park Supervisor, Bill Mattioli. We all look forward to continue working for the benefit of HBSP with both Bill and Maintenance Manager, Jack Hine.

Once again the past year was marked with many programs and events that reached thousands of people. Both the 2010 Schumann lecture series in the fall and Bauer series in the winter have been filled to capacity and were met with enthusiastic response. FOH enjoyed huge success with our two major fund raisers – the Plant and Christmas Tree Sales. We again offer our sincere gratitude to the following people and organizations for their generosity in making these two events such a success: the Richards family and Clinton Nurseries, JC Farm and Greenhouses LLC, Hartike Tree Farm, and Murphy Moving and Storage (for providing that wonderful big truck to transport all of our Christmas trees). We also recognize the dedicated effort brought forth by FOH members who volunteered their time to help, especially Don Rankin (Plant Sale) and Jean Russman (Christmas Tree Sale). The Madison Foundation and Madison Jaycees once again provided support for FOH and HBSP projects. We our major benefactors in 2010 including Liberty Bank, Bob Schumann, The Bauer Farm and Duo Dickenson.

FOH assisted Russ Miller at the Meigs Point Nature Center with volunteer man-power at many special events that were held throughout the year including an Owl prowl, Fireside Stories, CT Trails Day Walk, 14 Hours of Nature Programs, Owl-O-Ween, coverage in the nature center while naturalists are doing programs and many others. On the first weekend in October, FOH held its “off year” special event at West Beach that included The New England Atlatl Society Championships, a smudging ceremony by Allan Saunders (Mohegan), a concert by Nicole Frechette and a special and moving ceremony honoring CT's Service men and women. Displays were set up by the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Friends of CT State Archaeology and the Museum of Natural History. There was also a very interesting demonstration dig by State Archaeologist Nick Bellantoni.

FOH continues to fund, maintain and oversee Mutt Mitts, the Commemorative Tree Program, The Butterfly Garden, Meigs Point Nature Center, and HBSP Campground activities. We are now on Facebook, thanks to Butterfly Garden Chair, Michelle Kiley. Our new revamped website is up and running under the direction of member Michael Greene.

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Finally, in December, we learned that the DEP is planning to build a completely new Nature Center at Meigs Point near the existing facility. FOH has agreed to raise funds to furnish the inside including exhibit areas.

These are just highlights of another very involved and active year for FOH and HBSP. Please read further details of our involvement in the body of this report.

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**Treasurer's Report:**

Submitted by: Jean Russman

The Friends of Hammonasset 2010 Profit & Loss Statement is shown at the end of this report.

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**Recording Secretary's Report:**

Submitted by: Maureen Egan

I am completing my first year in the role of Recording Secretary. Kirsten Walker, one of the founding members of Friends of Hammonasset, was the previous Recording Secretary, among other leadership positions she has held with the Friends. It's been a challenge to "fill the shoes" of someone with that amount of experience.

For me, this past year has been one of familiarizing myself with the many names, places, facts, and stats that encompass Hammonasset. I sincerely enjoy working with the Friends and the Park staff and especially love that this opportunity gives me a chance to give back to a Park that gives me so much joy. I am looking forward to serving as Secretary for another term.

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**Environmental Education Committee's Report:**

Submitted by: Alison Guinness and Marcy Klattenberg

The Environmental Education Committee began working on the new signage with funds from the grant from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. These signs will replace the printed brochures for the Cedar Island Trail, the bike path, the Moraine and Willard Island Trails. This project will be completed next year.

Members of the committee also remained active during the year assisting in the development of programs at the Meigs Point Nature Center.

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**Volunteers Report:**

Submitted by: Gay Butler

In 2010 our volunteer list grew to 235 volunteers. These individuals were a combination of Friends of Hammonasset members and non-members. In 2010 these volunteers worked hard in the following categories for which we track:

Nature Center Docent	Events	Fund Raising
Beach/Trail Maintenance	Publicity	Photography
Web Site	Tree/Plant Sale	Grant Writing
Advocacy/Legislation	Gardening	Other

We have been using a successful combination of Constant Contact, newsletter and website requests and phone calls to contact volunteers about opportunities to help. New in 2010 was our use of Constant Contact software as a valuable tool for volunteer scheduling, especially for our bigger events. Volunteer needs for the current year include a Publicity Chairperson and additional grant writing people.

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**Newsletter Report:**

Submitted by: Dave Rathbun

The seasonal publication of the Friends of Hammonasset, *On the Shoreline*, was produced and mailed to the membership on four occasions during 2010. To my delight, we've begun to build a growing list of members who have asked to receive the newsletter electronically. This format not only allows for viewing in color but also guarantees the receipt of each issue sooner than if it had been mailed through the United States Postal Service. Just as important is the fact that the electronic version is saving Friends of Hammonasset money on printing and postage charges.

Topics covered in the 2010 newsletters included events hosted by Friends of Hammonasset as well as programs offered at the Meigs Point Nature Center, a listing of events and activities for Hammonasset Beach State Park's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Days, a growing Ranger Russ "wish list" of materials that would benefit the Nature Center and, with much sorrow, a eulogy and remembrance of Park Supervisor Roger Kinderman.

The newsletter strives to inform and enlighten our members with articles that address Native American history, traditions and recipes. Nature Notes, a documentary on our natural world, continues to amaze us with insight on topics such as the reproductive swarming of clam worms, specifically Dumeril's clam worm. And what of Hammonasset Beach State Park? Thanks to a column written by the Park Supervisor, we learn what it takes to maintain, improve and showcase Connecticut's premier State Park.

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**Membership Report:**

Submitted by: Landa Freeman

Friends of Hammonasset is an energetic organization composed of a volunteer membership. We offer programs and activities in and around the Park for families as well as for individuals of all ages. This past year, these included programs at Meigs Point Nature Center as well as throughout the Park. Members and others participated in bird walks, a seal search, owl prowls, star gazing, and beach and trail maintenance. We sponsored the Bauer Lecture series in February and the Hammonasset Beach State Park's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Days in October. We gave a member's \$5.00 discount on Christmas trees. We offer many opportunities for volunteers. These range from being a docent at the Meigs Point Nature Center to assisting with grant writing, publicity, or the tree/plant sales.

Our total membership is approximately 260 individuals or families. Membership dues, contributions to the Mutt Mitt program and funds from the tree and plant sales are used to help maintain and enhance Hammonasset Beach State Park. We would love to have you join the Friends of Hammonasset. You may do so by downloading the membership form on our website, [www.hammonasset.org](http://www.hammonasset.org) or by emailing your name, address and phone number to [info@hammonasset.org](mailto:info@hammonasset.org), today.

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**Nature Center Development Report:**

Submitted by: Don Rankin

The 2010 plant and shrub sale was, once again, a resounding success, presenting us with a net income of approximately \$40,000 – one of our best years! The annual Christmas Tree Sale, spear-headed by Jean Russman this year, netted Friends of Hammonasset approximately \$17,000. Separately, the Bauer and Schumann Educational Series, which covered a wide variety of nature and wildlife programs, drew over 1,000 participants. At the Guilford Fair we interacted with thousands of folks, showcasing live birds and creatures from the Nature Center. A separate fund raising event in Guilford gave us yet another opportunity to showcase Hammonasset Beach State Park. Gary Nolf conducted an atlatl program for participants, and Ranger Russ Miller brought the new Meigs Point Nature Center trailer to showcase animals and exhibits from the Nature Center. The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Days of the Park, held on October 3rd and 4th, featured an atlatl event and archaeological exhibits. On Sunday the celebration included a tribute to Connecticut's Fallen Heroes. It also served as an opportunity to honor our military men and women for their service to our country. The moving ceremony, with the participation of the Madison Color Guard, was highlighted by the playing of the National Anthem. When the Black Daggers, a U.S. Army Special Operations Command Parachute Team, were unable to present their aerial demonstration, Nicole Frechette graciously stepped in and performed a concert that was well received.

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**Gardens Report:**

Submitted by: Michelle Kiley:

The Garden and Pond were created 10 years ago as a joint project between the Madison Garden Club and Friends of Hammonasset. This year responsibility for care and maintenance became the sole responsibility of FOH as the Garden Club moved on to new projects. I, a UConn Master Gardener, assumed the position of Garden Chairperson. Our first year as caretakers was a good one. We started off with an organized work group to cut back the Buddleia (Butterfly bushes) and clean up the beds. From June through September, members met at a regular weekly time to tend the garden. Chores included weeding, trimming and raking and general cleanup. We had a generous donation to Ranger Russ' compost pile each week. The park maintenance staff takes care of the pond fencing, and Ranger Russ tends to the pond pump and filter if it needs attention other than during the weekly tending. The pamphlet containing information about the garden, butterfly facts, and how to create your own was updated and reprinted.

The area continues to be popular with kids and adults. Some Nature Center classes take place in the garden, and outside groups organize activities in and around it. These include plein aire painting groups, butterfly societies and school groups. It was featured in both Connecticut Magazine and Yankee Magazine as a suggested destination. For 2011, we hope to include some more educational opportunities centered on the Butterfly Garden and Friendship Pond.

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**HBSP Campground Host Coordinator's Report:**

Submitted by: Sharon Seckla

Our year started a little late this summer due to the fact that we needed a new movie screen. We had planned to show movies every weekend starting with Memorial Day weekend but finally got underway on June 27th. The 24 featured movies shown throughout the summer averaged anywhere between 250 to 300 people depending on the movie. There were a few movies that drew close to 400 people.

We held 18 Bingo Nights, drawing an average of 100 to 200 people. Each event lasted for two hours after which approximately 25 prizes were given out including 1 major prize.

We also held 9 Kid's Craft Days. They took place every Thursday, rain or shine because we were able to use the porch at the house in Mohegan. Each Craft Day averaged 25 to 40 children, depending how full the campground was.

For the first time in several years a pancake breakfast was held. For not knowing how many people might attend, we did very well, serving 152 people pancakes, sausages and orange juice. Unfortunately we ran out of food and had to turn people away.

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For our annual Christmas in July program we baked cookies and put them in individual baggies. Then we did something a little different, we had a parade. The idea was to reach out to everyone in the park by handing out cookies and candy canes. It was very successful with everyone enjoying it. We also held a Fourth of July parade with Ranger Russ after holding a bike decorating contest.

Our biggest event of the summer, as always, was Halloween in August. We turn the house in Mohegan into a Haunted House. Everyone who walks through it receives a 'trick or treat' bag full of candy for the young ones and a bag of popcorn for everyone else. The event ran for almost 4 hours, with 484 people taking part – a very, very successful occasion.

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**HBSP Supervisor's Report:**

Submitted by: Bill Mattioli

Another year has come and gone, and the park has seen a great deal of change throughout 2010. We accomplished a large amount of improvements at Hammonasset in 2010, and we look forward to implementing many other ideas, plans and proposals during 2011.

The largest change occurred this past spring with the passing of Park Supervisor Roger Kinderman. Sadly Roger lost his courageous battle with cancer on April 13, 2010. He had a 40-year career with the Connecticut State Parks Division, serving his final 18 years as park supervisor at Hammonasset Beach State Park. He will be sorely missed by one and all.

We also had another shift of full-time staff when Mike Dewire, who arrived in January 2010, transferred to Rocky Neck State Park in September. This paved the way for Jason Bjornberg to return to Hammonasset Beach from the Quinebaug Fish Hatchery. Although Mike's contributions were greatly appreciated, we are very pleased to have Jason return to us.

The last change in full-time personnel this past year is the addition of yours truly. I was very proud to join the staff here in November. I came from Gillette's Castle State Park, where I spent almost two years, and Sherwood Island State Park, where I spent three and a half years as park supervisor.

During 2010 the park had over 2 million visitors. This was the first time the park broke the 2 million mark in many years. Our revenue was a little over 1.3 million dollars, not including the campground reservations made through Reserve America. If that were factored in, we may have broken the 2 million dollar mark as well. Hammonasset also saw twenty three different large events ranging from athletic events to non-profit fundraisers. We are very pleased to be associated with the most popular park in the state park system.

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Many projects have been completed this past year. These include the completion of the Middle Beach bathhouse building, reconditioning of the interior at the Main Gate, continuing West Beach restoration, replacement of the movie screen at the amphitheater, installation of three volleyball courts and outdoor fitness area, re-roofing of four buildings in the campground, skylight replacements in the campground buildings and the beginning of the utility installation to all the campsites on Beach Road.

More was accomplished at the park with the assistance of volunteer groups. Projects included annual beach cleanup, construction of a lifeguard tower, memorial tree planting and various small painting projects around the facility. The Friends of Hammonasset also provided new fitness and playground equipment that allowed us to update the activity areas at West Beach and the campground. Many more trees provided by the Commemorative Tree program have been planted around the park. Participants in the annual "Free Willy" event cleared brush and invasive plants from the nature trails at Meigs Point.

The second season of the new camping cabins was a great success! Many eagerly waited for the day when they became reservable through Reserve America, and everyone wanted to be the first to be lucky enough to get a reservation. The cabins were booked solid for the entire camping season and are already booked for most of the 2011 season as well. The campground was booked solid for every weekend throughout the summer of 2010. Overall, camping for the 2010 season was very successful.

The Meigs Point Nature Center continues to remain open year-round thanks to the dedication of "Ranger Russ" Miller and John Picard, and the many docents and volunteers who assist them. Also, many thanks go to the Friends of Hammonasset for funding Russ's position during the months that he is not employed by the DEP. While the Nature Center remains an in-demand destination for school groups in spring and fall, Nature Center programs have also proven to be popular with park visitors year-round. Whether telling fireside stories in spring, leading a canoe trip in summer, conducting an owl prowling in fall, or spotting seals in winter, Ranger Russ and his staff can always expect a crowd of enthusiastic participants.

Things to look forward to in 2011 include the completion of the utilities on Beach Road, installation of solar panels on four of the campground buildings for solar-heated hot water, solar lights for the light towers, communication upgrades for the entire park and hopefully news on the construction of the new Nature Center. We'll all keep our fingers crossed for final word.

All the staff, including Jack and myself, is hoping for a very productive and exciting 2011 season.