



# On The Shoreline

A publication of Friends of Hammonasset, Inc.

Winter 2010

## Vice-President's Note

Dear Friends,

I am filling in for our vacationing President, Deanna Becker, who migrated to warmer climes for the winter! Both Deanna and I wish to thank Don Rankin and all of our stalwart members who worked so hard (often in cold and adverse conditions) on the most successful Christmas Tree sale ever!! Even without cooperation from the weather, we managed to sell a record number of trees and raise additional funds for all of our projects at Hammonasset Beach State Park.

FOH is gearing up for a late winter/spring packed with programs and activities. Please see the calendar of events included in this newsletter and mark your calendars. Some programs at the Meigs Point Nature Center are still in the planning stages so you will also need to check out our website at [www.hammonasset.org](http://www.hammonasset.org) to be sure that you don't miss anything.

FOH was recently notified that we are the recipients of a grant from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation for a new project entitled "Educational Signage on trails at Hammonasset Beach State Park". The new interpretive signs will be similar in appearance to the signs placed on the 3 bath houses last March. They will be placed at the head of the Moraine, Willard Island, and Cedar Island Trails as well as the bike path. This will be a 2 year project, and we are excited to begin the work. We are also grateful to the Madison Jaycees who continue to be very supportive of our efforts and recently awarded us a generous check from their own fundraiser, the November "Turkey Trot" road race.

We do have a Board position open. Former President and current recording secretary, Kirsten Walker is resigning to spend more time with her new job and planning her daughter's wedding. Kirsten will remain involved but in a reduced capacity. She has been invaluable to our growth and bringing us to where we are today. Thank you Kirsten!! This position entails attending monthly Board meetings (held on the second Tuesday of each month at Park Headquarters at 4:00), taking meeting

notes and then distributing them before the next meeting. If you are interested, please contact me at 860.347.8464. You are more than welcome to attend a meeting to get to know everyone better and learn more about us. I have never served with a more dedicated and enthusiastic group of people.

We are looking to fill chairmanship positions in Volunteer Coordination and The Butterfly Garden. Eunice Arnold has very capably filled the Volunteer Chair position for the last several years and is willing to help a new chair. We are grateful for Eunice's generosity in time and commitment. Again please call me if you are interested in either serving on a committee or chairing one.

Finally, members Sallie Sperling and her husband Peter Goldberg are chairing a newly formed Trail Maintenance committee. They will be working closely with Park staff on various trail projects. They are looking for volunteers to assist. We do have a list of people who expressed an interest in the past and welcome anyone else who would like to help out. Please contact Sallie or Peter at 203.453.9301 or through email at [GoldSpurs@comcast.net](mailto:GoldSpurs@comcast.net).

I hope to see many of you at our annual meeting on March 16th at 7:30 at the Old Memorial Town Hall in Madison. Our guest speaker is Kirby Stafford III, PhD, Chief Entomologist and Vice director of the CT Agriculture Experiment Station in New Haven. After a brief business meeting, he will present a very timely topic covering the double threat to our forests by the Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Longhorned Beetle. We need to get to know them and be vigilant. See you there.

Marcy Klattenberg  
Vice President

## Meigs Point Nature Center

*By Russ Miller, Nature Center Director*

### *Nature Center Wish List*

Ranger Russ and the FOH Board thank you very much for your past and future contributions which serve to enhance the environmental education provided by the Nature Center Programs. The Nature Center currently has a need for:

Craft Supplies  
A Small Refrigerator  
Quality Lumber (for repairs and carpentry)  
Boating Supplies  
Office Supplies  
Hand Tools  
Gardening Supplies  
Candle Wax & Old Candles  
Air Conditioner & Fans  
Printer Paper  
Paint (indoor, outdoor & craft)  
Microscopes  
Magnifying Glasses  
Binoculars & Scopes  
Nature Books  
Field Guides  
Nets - Butterfly or Fish  
Animal Mounts  
Mounted Fish  
20 Gallon or Larger Aquariums  
Garbage & Freezer Bags  
Cleaning Supplies  
Pet Bedding (wood shavings)  
Ceramic Heat Bulbs (75 watts)  
Fishing Supplies (poles, nets, traps)  
Heated Water Bowls - Large  
Sand Box Play Sand  
Freeze Dried Meal Worms  
Astro Turf  
Bark Chips  
Rope  
Office Chairs  
Pressure Treated 2x4's, 4x4's, 2x6's  
Pressure Treated Plywood  
Bead Board (wainscoting)  
Plastic Greenhouse Roofing

Wall Sheets  
Corrugated Roofing (blue sheets)  
Merrick's Puppy Plate Dry Dog Food  
Tarps  
Unsweetened Apple Sauce  
Frozen Vegetables (Corvid Food)  
Plastic Wrap & Aluminum Foil  
Heat or Drop Lamps  
Light Bulbs  
Bird Seed & Suet  
Native Non Releasable Animals  
Pet Food  
Sheets & Towels  
Kitchen Cabinets & Counter  
Shelves  
Carpet & Door Mats

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### **Friends of Hammonasset**

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affiliated with Friends of Connecticut State Parks

#### **Officers**

President ..... Deanna Becker  
Vice President ..... Marcy Klattenberg  
Treasurer ..... Jean Russman  
Recording Secretary ..... Vacant

#### **Committees**

Environmental Education ..... Alison Guinness  
Gardens ..... Vacant  
Grants ..... Paula Schiller  
Hospitality ..... Caryl Anderson  
Membership ..... Landa Freeman  
Nature Center Development ..... Don Rankin  
Newsletter Editors..... D. & J. Rathbun  
Publicity ..... Matt Lubanko  
Volunteers ..... Vacant  
Website ..... K. Walker & S. Schiesser

**Hammonasset Beach State Park** ..... (203) 245-2785  
Park Supervisor ..... Roger Kinderman  
Park Maintenance ..... Jack Hine

#### **Friends of Connecticut State Parks**

President ..... Eileen Grant

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## Nature Note

*By Marcy Klattenberg*

### The Sounds of Spring

Even though we are still locked in the deep cold of winter, there are signs of approaching spring. The sun is stronger, there is more daylight each passing day, the trees are sending sap upward to new leaf buds, and there are sounds of spring. In early morning, Chickadees are occasionally singing their spring song “phoebe”, the white throated sparrows sing “Old Sam Peabody Peabody Peabody” and the Carolina Wrens are exuberant in their loud melodious song. As the weather warms just a little more, many others will join in the daily concert of sweet song - including the tufted titmice, cardinals and mourning doves.

Often overlooked is the courtship and territorial drumming by woodpeckers. Woodpeckers tap trees for several reasons: searching for insects, excavation of roost or nesting cavities, and for communication – through drumming. Pecking for the first two is slower than and not as loud as drumming. Excavation for food and shelter results in falling wood chips; drumming does not. Drumming is loud and fast, and an individual woodpecker often returns to the same “signal post” (usually a dead hollow limb) each day. This noisy display ushers in the beginning of a new breeding season. Some woodpeckers (often flickers) find areas on our houses like gutters or stove pipes to their liking - much to the displeasure of the home owner who is awakened at daybreak each day! So even though winter has not released us and the ground hog saw his shadow, there are signs of change coming, and I for one embrace them!

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### Electronic Version of FOH Newsletter is in Production!

FOH has begun to give members access to its newsletter electronically. In an attempt to reduce expenses associated with printing and mailing of our newsletter, the FOH Board is asking our membership to consider receiving this publication via electronic mail. Many other organizations only publish electronically, but we realize that not all of our members have access to email.

For those of you who wish to receive the newsletter electronically, please send an email to [info@hammonasset.org](mailto:info@hammonasset.org) with "FOH E-Newsletter" (without the quotes) in the subject field. In the body of the email, please provide your name and mailing address as it's shown on the mailing label of your hard copy newsletter. Your email address will not be sold or shared with a third party. This is a voluntary request but one we hope a majority of our members will consider. Thank you.



The FOH Board currently has 3 positions open: Secretary, Volunteer-Coordinator and Butterfly Garden Chairperson. The Secretary takes minutes at the monthly FOH Board Meetings, held on the second Tuesday of each month from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Park Headquarters. The Volunteer-Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that FOH events and Sales (i.e. Plant and Christmas Tree Sales) are staffed with volunteers. The Volunteer-Coordinator should be familiar with Excel and have Excel on his/her PC since the Volunteer Interest List (maintained and distributed by the Membership person) is an Excel file. In addition, we are in need of someone to help out with and oversee the maintenance of the Butterfly Garden. (The Madison Garden Club is handing off this responsibility to FOH in the Spring and will assist in the transition.)

Please consider taking on one of these positions. It will afford you the opportunity to help the organization, participate in decision-making and have fun! Please contact Marcy Klattenberg at 860.347.8464.

## Kinderman's Column

*By Roger Kinderman, Park Supervisor*

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Well, here we are once again braving the snow and cold temperatures. We await spring and firmly believe that summer is sure to follow, with warm temperatures and sunny skies. Great days for a walk in the park.

We will begin charging a parking fee at our main gate on the third Saturday in April. That's just 8 weeks from today – hard to believe! But before then, buildings will have to be serviced and opened, toilets put back together, showers and hot water heaters turned on, etc. It seems like after doing this for so long, we should be able to just push a button and have everything the same as it was when we shut down last fall.

Remember that the State Legislature voted last fall to double all State Park fees. This will impact gate fees, bus fees, camping fees, and picnic shelter rentals. I think we will need extra protection at the ticket booths on April 17<sup>th</sup> when we ask park patrons to pay \$14 for in-state and \$20 for out-of-state parking. Starting on Memorial Day, and on all weekends and holidays that follow, we will charge \$20 for in-state vehicles and \$30 for out-of-state vehicles. I don't believe that news of this new fee structure has been given wide distribution, and it will come as a shock to arriving customers who will be more than willing to share some of their feelings with us.

Latest reports in the newspapers say Governor Rell is looking to cut state spending by \$28 million from the already-approved budget. How this will affect us is not known at this time.

Camping will start the week before Memorial Day (May 21<sup>st</sup>, to be exact). The camping cabins are already booked solid through mid-September, and the rest of the campground is already booked for the Memorial Day and Fourth of July weekends.

The new beach services building located on the site of the old main pavilion is almost complete. We have extended the turnover date from November 2009 to April 2010. This seemed like the right thing to do, rather than taking possession of a building that would go into shutdown mode immediately upon our accepting it. We will take ownership in the Spring and

do a shakedown cruise, so to speak, all of this coming season. We're thinking of calling the new structure and the surrounding area "Middle Beach". It is between East Beach and West Beach, after all.

The crew has been keeping busy with various projects this winter. New picnic tables have been built to restock our supply for the campground and picnic areas, and three new lifeguard towers will grace the beach this summer. Our plumber, Jack Miller, oversaw the replacement of the water main to Meigs Point, restoring water pressure to the buildings at Meigs. The crew has also undertaken a rather extensive renovation at the Main Gate. They have removed the old "1970's rec room" paneling, and replaced it with new wood and dry wall, and installed new counters. It should be lighter and more cheerful in the building when they are done – a better greeting for the thousands of visitors who stop there every year.

Due to some union contract language, we were obligated to swap our Jason Bjornberg with Michael Dewire who comes to us from Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford. We welcome Mike and are bringing him up to speed in time for the start of the season. At least he'll have time to get used to Hammonasset before the summer crowds descend on us. Jason has been transferred to the Quinnebaug Valley Trout Hatchery, up north in Central Village. He is sorely missed. However, on a happier note, Jason and his wife just welcomed a new baby girl into their family – once there were three and now there are four. Lots of changes for that young man and his family!

I have no news regarding beach erosion, except that we lost additional sand this winter due to wind-driven high tides. We will have to see what the plan is for this beach season. I look forward to welcoming back our summer visitors – and hope that we'll have a beach for them when they arrive!

**FOH Contributions  
to Hammonasset Beach State Park & The  
Meigs Point Nature Center  
March 1999-March 2010**

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*The purpose of the organization is to provide environmental education,  
preserve the integrity of the park's natural resources and serve as an  
advocate for the park. FOH, Inc. 1999*

## **Hammonasset Beach State Park**

### **Materials, Infrastructure & Building Improvements**

- Developed trails; designing and funding trail guides for Willard Island and Moraine Trails with signage identifying native plants
- Implemented Mutt Mitt Program – Biodegradable dog waste pick-up bags; ongoing
- Developed the Butterfly Garden & Friendship Pond with the Garden Club of Madison; funding and providing for plantings, pond and pump, fencing and ongoing site maintenance
- Purchased New Bulletin Boards for information kiosks at bathhouses and in campground
- Provided funding to rebuild rotted Amphitheater Decking in campground
- Provided funding to rebuild Projection Screen backboard in campground
- Purchased Playground/Fitness Equipment for campground
- Provided electricity at Pavilion #4 at Meigs Point
- Initiated Commemorative Tree Program providing planting of trees throughout park; ongoing
- Secured Grant for installation of interpretive signage on Willard Island, the Moraine and Cedar Island trails and West Beach, East Beach and Meigs Point bathhouses identifying ecology, geology, etc.
- Landscaped Boulder Rock Monument, Indian Table Rock, Joshua Rock areas
- Funded fencing materials to stop erosion of West Beach sand dunes
- Erected purple martin houses
- Granite Trails Map Monument
- Provided Bullhorns to be used at events

- Provided financial support for the Camp Host program in campground; ongoing
- Developed and hosted website for FOH, highlighting the park and Nature Center
- Worked with Menunkatuck Audubon Society for purchase of materials and installation of osprey nest sites

### **Services, Events & Programs**

- Held Beach Clean-Up Days in Spring and Autumn to clear park of storm debris and other trash
- Planned and led various walks, hikes and talks educating the public about the environment, native plants, animals and habitats; ongoing
- Participated in removal of invasive plants from Willard Island with Menunkatuck Audubon Society
- Participated in Purple Loosestrife removal and workshop with IPANE (Invasive Plant Atlas of New England)
- Did Horseshoe Crab Identification Program with Sacred Heart College
- Provided FOH volunteers for DEP Great Park Pursuit event
- Participated in DEP water quality testing workshops
- Held Biennial Hammonasset Festival - “ A Celebration of Nature and Native Americans” in 2005, 2007 and 2009
- Offered the Bauer Lecture Series
- Offered the Schumann Lecture Series

## **Meigs Point Nature Center (MPNC)**

### **Materials, Infrastructure & Building Improvements**

- Provided additional funding for Director to enable year-round position; ongoing
- Donated \$2,500 annually to supply NC with needed educational supplies and consumable materials
- Winterized building with thermal windows, heat pump & air conditioning
- Funded new restroom and handicap accessible ramp and decking

(continued on page 6)

## FOH CONTRIBUTIONS 1999-2009

(continued from Page 5)

- Funded Nature Center Signage
- Provided computers and peripherals, (ongoing)
- Funded wireless internet access (ongoing)
- Purchased Lexan panels for porch area to extend usable season
- Purchased audible Alarm System to deter break-ins, theft
- Donated funds for photography matting and frames
- Secured Bauer grant for Minivan with shrink wrap to use for educational outreach programs
- Secured Bauer grant to add custom trailer to minivan for outreach and portable display area
- Secured Bauer grants for 3 canoes, life vests and waders
- Provided funds to mount bear and fisher for display
- Purchased Vacuum cleaner, freezer, large screen monitor, barbecue grill, LCD projector, spotting scope
- Secured a Nature Center exhibit from The Institute for American Indian Studies

### Sponsored Events & Programs held at MPNC during year and school vacations

- Owl Prowl
- Seal Search
- Tracks & Scat
- Reptile Shows
- Turtle Shows
- Birds of Prey Presentations
- "Star Nights", co-hosted with Astronomical Society of New Haven

### Note on Fundraisers:

- 100% of all proceeds from Annual Christmas Tree and Spring Plant & Shrub sales go to enhancing activities and educational experiences in the park and at the nature center
- 100% of all proceeds from Annual Carousel Days at Lenny & Joe's Fishtale Restaurant go to educational programming
- The Bauer and Schumann lecture series provide environmental, educational, Native American, geological, historical lectures; live reptile and birds of prey presentations; hands-on experiences

## FOH CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursdays, March 18; April 1, 15, 2:00—4:00 p.m. and**

**Saturdays, March 13; April 3, 24; May 8, 22, 10:00 a.m.—noon**

**DOCENT TRAINING SESSIONS** by Ranger Russ Miller on snakes, turtles, touch tank and leading groups to rocky shore, salt marsh, beach seining. Held at Meigs Point Nature Center- (MPNC) at Hammonasset Beach State Park. Call 203-245-8743 to register.

**Tuesday, March 16, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. ANNUAL FOH MEMBERS MEETING** at Madison Old Town Hall, Rte.1. Speaker: Kirby Stafford III. Topic: Asian Longhorned Beetles.

**Saturday March 20th at 10:00 a.m. LIVE RAPTORS TALK and WALK** with "A Place Called Hope"& Ranger Russ to see migrating hawks and falcons. Held at Meigs Point Nature Center. Call 203-245-8743 to register.

**Saturday April 10th at 6:00 a.m. GUIDED BIRD WALK**— led by Ranger Russ. Meet at Meigs Point Nature Center parking lot. Call 203-245-8743 to register.

**April - date to be announced. EARTH DAY activity.** Meet at Meigs Point Nature Center parking lot.

**Thursday May 6th – Sunday May 30th. 9:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m. ANNUAL SPRING PLANT/SHRUB SALE.** Rt. 1 – east of Hammonasset Beach State Park main entrance. Chair: Dr. Don Rankin

**June - date to be announced; 12 noon—8:00 p.m. CAROUSEL DAYS** at Lenny & Joe's Fish Tale Restaurant, Rt. 1, Madison. Chair: Kirsten Walker

**Saturday June 5th at 10:00 a.m. CT TRAILS DAY** – Ranger Russ and FOH VP, Marcy Klattenberg lead interpretive walks on Willard Island and Cedar Island trails. Meet at Meigs Point Nature Center parking lot.

*The following appeared in the Menunkatuck Audubon November 2009 Newsletter. Permission to reprint has been granted by the author, John Picard.*

## **BOD supports BOD...?**

The Board of Directors for the Menunkatuck Audubon Society (MAS) recently met to discuss a new initiative, Boards of Diversity, also referred to as Bio-Boards. Bio-boards are very simply, sheets of plywood that are positioned in strategic areas to provide shade and cover for reptiles, amphibians, insects and small mammals. Bio-boards are often used by Herpetologists to determine the presence of snakes in areas of interest. One area of interest is Hammonasset Beach State Park (HBSP), it has long been known



**Creation of a Bio-Board at MPNC**

that there are snakes within the border of the Park, however, determining how many and of what species has been a question. MAS consulted with friend, member and local Herpetologist

Chuck Annicelli and Russ Miller, Director of the Meigs Point Nature Center at HBSP. Coincidentally, both Chuck and Russ had been thinking of placing bio-boards within the Park to determine the presence of snakes. MAS provided the funding to purchase 14 sheets of 1/2 inch thick plywood and Russ Miller provided the paint and “painters”. All the boards were painted by the staff of the MPNC, brown on one side and white on the other. The idea is that during the cooler times of the year, the brown side of the plywood will be on top to absorb heat and during the summer months, the white side will be on top to prevent overheating.

In addition to the brown and white paint, attractive themes were hand painted by the children that attended the Outdoor Education program at the MPNC. The Na-



**Volunteers work on Bio-Boards**

ture Center staff set up all 14 boards and had the children paint different types of animals on the boards so the general public would know that the boards were placed there for a specific reason. After the paint dried, Chuck and Russ spread the bio-boards out in different locations throughout the Park; some were placed on Willards Island, Charlie’s Island, Sarabocci Island and the area behind the Park office building. Chuck and Russ began monitoring the bio-boards approx 1 month later and discovered garter snakes and brown snakes. Another area of interest is the Bauer Park in Madison. Ten more plywood boards were purchased, painted and distributed within the Park to provide habitat for small animals there as well.

Providing bio-boards does not necessarily increase the population of snakes within a given area but it does make it easier to locate them. Snakes are attracted to the bio-

boards in search of food in the form of small animals such as mice that tend to gather under the bio-boards for shelter and nesting. Snakes will



**Bio-Boards set out to dry**

also benefit from the bio-boards by using them for cover during the heat of the day and protection from predators; they have also been known to use them for egg laying. Look for the bio-boards at HBSP and Bauer Park but do not disturb them, Chuck and Russ have a schedule that they follow for checking the boards, they also check the temperature on top of and underneath the bio-boards and collect the data of what they find.

Anyone can place bio-boards in their backyard to provide habitat for small animals, the plywood does not have to be painted but it will last longer if it is. Even smaller pieces of scrap plywood or boards will do the trick; it can be an inexpensive and fun way to enhance your back yard for wildlife and wildlife viewing.