

# GREENWAYS

Newsletter of  
Delaware & Raritan Greenway, Inc.  
Volume 3, Number 3  
Summer 1995

## In Perpetuity

### *The Stony Brook Greenway: Another Jewel is Added*

In early August, Delaware & Raritan Greenway added another jewel to the string of emeralds that make up the Stony Brook Greenway. Since 1987, D&R Greenway has worked to preserve nearly 900 acres in central New Jersey. Six hundred seventy-five of those acres are along the twenty-one mile long Stony Brook Greenway stretching from the Amwells to Lake Carnegie in Princeton.

The newest addition is a boot-shaped, forty-one acre parcel of land in Hopewell Township. At the heel, it's a stone's throw from Kunkle Park. At the top, it stretches north nearly to the Baldwin Lake Wildlife Management Area. Primarily wooded, the property is bordered by the Stony Brook on the east and the more narrow trickle called Lewis Brook on the south.

In late afternoon, after the heat of a simmering summer day had somewhat subsided, we followed one of several paths that meander through the property. The warning cries of several blue jays announced our presence.

Scattered throughout the woods in damp areas, patches of wild leek flowers brightened the ground with their creamy-white blossoms. The leaves of wild leek, also known as ramp, disappear before the flowers bloom in June and July, leaving a naked stem topped with a ball-shaped cluster of flowers.

The begging cries of fledgling blue jays called our attention to a large oak. From our vantage point we watched as the adult bird stuffed the beak of its young in a flurry of blue and white feathers.

We made our way toward the Stony Brook. Sensitive fern, spice bush, garlic mustard, and jewelweed thrived under the canopy of maple, oak, hickory, ash, walnut, and beech trees in this wooded wetland area. Where we brushed against the oblong, dark green leaves of spice bush, a spicy fragrance filled the air. The green berries forming along the branches promised a feast to the wood thrushes and veeries in the area. The slightest touch set hundreds of tiny garlic mustard seeds loose from their pods. With a soft rain-like patter, they fell and planted themselves on the fertile woodland soil.

Jack-in-the-pulpit were scattered throughout the woods. Nearly each pair of knee-high long-stemmed leaves held a spadix topped with a cluster of bright may-green berries. By fall, the berries will turn bright red and add color to the woodland floor.

The sunlight dappled the quiet waters of Lewis Brook. Where the light penetrated the canopy, we watched waterstriders dart across the water's surface, creating brief ripples of concentric circles with each move. Further downstream, in a deeper area, we startled a school of small fish, who swam from the shaded shelter of one overhanging rock to hide beneath another.

As evening advanced, the beautiful song of several wood thrushes filled the woods. Where Lewis Brook empties into the Stony Brook we sat under the shade of a large white oak tree. A kingfisher left his perch in the shade and carried his rattly cry downstream with the water.

Nature's quietness settled in as we sat in the tranquility of the gently flowing Stony Brook dappled by sunlight and reflecting the soft blue expanse overhead. The wood thrush called us back from the stream and our

*Continued on page 7*

## Inside

- New Trail at McBurney Woods
- Conservation Easement
- Volunteer Spotlight
- A Ride With the Tide
- Marsh Events

## Hamilton Township Calendar Features Marsh

The 1995-96 Hamilton Township calendar may have a familiar look to those who have joined us for events at the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh. The calendar features photos of these beautiful wetlands throughout the year. Many thanks to Hamilton Township Mayor Jack Rafferty for his ongoing support to protect and preserve the marsh and its abundant natural and historical treasures. 🌿

## Canal Tour Planned

Mark your calendar! Our second annual Delaware & Raritan Canal tour is planned for Saturday, November 4. This year we will begin in Princeton, travel through Rocky Hill and Blackwells Mills to Griggstown. Lunch will be served at the Griggstown Muletenders Barracks. Join us to learn more about the rich history and colorful stories of this historic waterway. 🌿

## PSE&G Supports Marsh Preservation

D&R Greenway received a generous \$10,000 grant from Public Service Electric and Gas Company to support preservation and protection of the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh. Funds will be used to support the public outreach and education program at the marsh and to help meet the challenge grant received from the National Park Service to provide access and interpretive signage at the marsh. 🌿

## Common Ground

### New Trail Created at McBurney Woods

On June 4, National Trail's Day, thirty-five hard-working volunteers joined forces to clear a new trail at D&R Greenway's McBurney Woods Preserve on Mountain Road in East Amwell Township. This 178-acre preserve atop the Sourland Mountain stretches to Mountain Church Road in Hopewell Township.

Equipped with gloves, wheelbarrows, chainsaws, clippers, shovels, and rakes, the trail blazers created the meandering trail laid out by John Rassweiler, a D&R Greenway board member and chairman of our land management committee.

The new trail is just over a mile long and extends in a loop to the west off of the original trail. Following a shaded walk through traditional hardwood forests, it skirts a field filled with wildflowers and butterflies and threads a path through large boulders left by the glaciers as they moved through the area thousands of years ago. A short distance beyond, the path connects with the original loop trail.

Special thanks to Dyersburg Fabric, Eastern Mountain Sports, and all of the volunteers for their participation in, and support of,

D&R Greenway and National Trails Day.

The trails at McBurney Woods Preserve are open to the public and we invite you to enjoy them. A map is located at the parking area on Mountain Road. ❦

### McBurney Walk

September 18, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

D&R Greenway is sponsoring a guided walk of the preserve. Curtis Helm, forester and wetlands biologist, will lead the walk and help us better understand the importance of forests and wetlands. Cost is \$2/person for members, (\$4/family); \$4/person for nonmembers, (\$8/family). For more information or to register, call (609) 924-4646. Register early, space is limited.

## Conservation Options

### The Conservation Easement

BY KATHERINE BUTTOLPH

If you wish to continue to own your land *and* to protect it, one advantageous and flexible option is a conservation easement. A conservation easement is a restriction created to preserve land, yet it is tailored to suit your needs, protect land as you wish, and allow activities you want on your land.

A conservation easement is a conveyance of a partial interest of real estate which allows the owner to retain control of the property and its use. You can continue to use, sell, lease, or convey the land, subject to the terms of the easement. The responsibilities and rewards of ownership continue and unless you specify otherwise, you retain full control over public access. In other words, there is no public access unless and until you choose to permit it.

A key advantage to the conservation easement is its adaptability. All activities which change the open or natural conditions of the property can be prohibited, while agriculture or forestry activities and the construction of roads and buildings necessary to carry them

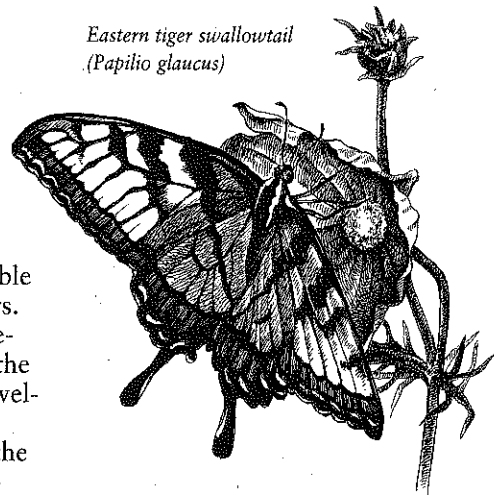
out are allowed. A conservation easement enables you to protect your land forever from undesirable uses and abuses by future owners.

The conservation easement decreases the fair market value of the land by limiting the potential development and use of the property. When the easement is donated, the donation may qualify as a charitable gift and the financial benefits may be significant.

To qualify as a tax-deductible charitable gift, a conservation easement must be granted in perpetuity to a public agency or a conservation or historic preservation organization. A conservation easement must also serve the public good, preserving significant wildlife habitat, open space, scenic vistas, farmland, or watershed. The terms of an easement must be tailored to the physical and ecological characteristics of the land, the objectives of the landowner, and the requirements of the State and local governments.

The timing of a conservation easement can be immediate, by bequest, or by a remainder interest

Eastern tiger swallowtail  
(*Papilio glaucus*)



with reserved life estate. Each vehicle has different tax advantages affecting income tax, estate tax, or both. By lowering the fair market value of your land, a conservation easement may also result in a reduction of property assessment and property taxes.

This article does not address all the details of valuation and deductibility. Should you be interested in exploring the benefits of granting a conservation easement, it is advisable to seek the counsel of several specialized professionals including a tax attorney or accountant, the proposed recipient of the gift, an appraiser, and surveyor. We are always happy to help you get started; call us at (609) 924-4646. ❦

## Volunteer Spotlight

In this issue we recognize a special group of Greenway friends—Tom Wilkins, Howard Davis, Dottie Dreas, Ruth Gibson, and Carol and Harry Turner—all members of the Mohawk Canoe Club. These folks not only help to make our canoe trips at the marsh very enjoyable, they also lend a hand with a myriad of other needs. Call, and if they can help, they will.

We met them through Tom Wilkins, who has been leading our canoe trips at the marsh since we began offering them. As is often the case, one good thing led to another, and soon, as our trips expanded, we had several members of the Mohawk Canoe Club accompanying us. All are experienced canoeists with a love of the sport, a good sense of humor, and a great appreciation of nature and the marsh. They lead us through the waterways, guiding and assisting as needed, and then 'sweep' the creek behind us to assure we all return safely.

We like them for the same reason they enjoy each other's company—they're simply nice folks who are a lot of fun to be with!

### Tom Wilkins

In my third week on the job as Director of the marsh project, and only shortly after the snow had melted, Tom called the office with an invitation, "So when are we going canoeing?"

Tall, friendly, and talkative, he arrived at the office a few days later with tide charts, a map of Hamilton Township, and a map of 'his' marsh.

"It's a great place to canoe—you just have to see it."

"Great," I said. "How about later in the spring—end of April or early May?"

"How about next week?" he countered. This guy's a serious canoeist.

I accepted his offer, and on an amazingly warm spring day before the end of March, we launched his canoe onto Watson Creek and toured the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh. He was right. It is a great



Tom Wilkins

place to canoe and you just have to see it.

Tom canoed as a boy scout growing up in Pitman and then again when his son was in scouts. Seven years ago, when Grop's Lake was being refilled near his backyard, he decided to try canoeing again and got hooked. From there, he became more adventurous and expanded to the marsh, the Delaware & Raritan Canal, and the Pine Barrens. He joined the Mohawk Canoe Club as a cruiser member, and took a ten-day, 204-mile trip on the Delaware River from Hancock, NY to Trenton.

Tom enjoys canoeing in quiet, out-of-the-way places where a canopy of trees stretches over the water and he can see a lot of wildlife. "The best thing about canoeing is the peace of mind, the mental relaxation. It's strenuous work and just eats the stress. It's nice to get out and just focus on the paddling strokes. I always come back in a better frame of mind."

He is eager to share his enthusiasm for canoeing with others and in addition to leading Greenway's trips, enjoys leading trips for groups of school children as well. Each year he guides a group of Hamilton students down the Oswego River in the Pine Barrens. He likes the idea of the kids getting out into nature and finds it rewarding to help them enjoy the experience.

Tom lives with his wife, Nancy and three children in Hamilton and is an active member of the community. A twenty-two year veteran of the Hamilton Township Police Department, Tom's a lieutenant in charge of the Identification Bureau.

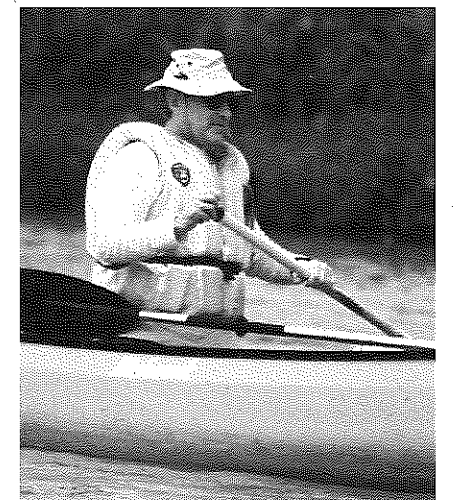
Tom is also serving on a task force to develop public access and recreation at the marsh. "I would like to see the marsh preserved. I believe in giving back what I'm going to use and want to see it protected—that's what Greenway is trying to do. Besides it's a great excuse to go canoeing at 'my' marsh."

### Howard Davis

Howard, commodore of the Mohawk Canoe Club, is quiet and soft-spoken. Sixteen years ago, he bought a canoe to go fishing with his son but can't remember ever having a fishing pole in the canoe. Howard averages about 350 to 400 miles per year in his canoe and has canoed the entire Delaware in one year.

A native of the Pittsburgh area, Howard has lived in the area for about nine years. He is Executive Director of the New Jersey Landscape Association. It's a family affair of sorts, and Howard's wife, Doe and daughter, Amy, both work with the association as well. The youngest member of the Mohawk canoe club, Howard's granddaughter, lives in western Pennsylvania with her mom and dad.

To Howard, canoeing offers solitude, individualism, a unique



Howard Davis

## Volunteer Spotlight

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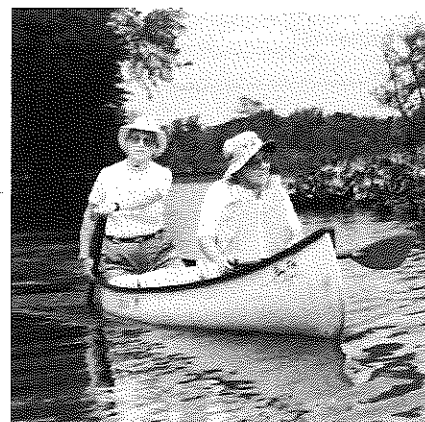
way to enjoy nature and the environment, good exercise and camaraderie. "And there are no phones in my canoe," he adds with a laugh.

"Both the Mohawk Canoe Club and D&R Greenway benefit through our collaboration. The canoe club members provide technical assistance, guidance and safety and Greenway helps to provide access to streams on which to paddle. I enjoy the marsh. It offers a place of diverse beauty close to home and is easy to get to. I am glad to do what I can to help preserve and increase awareness of this beautiful area. I want to encourage others to get involved, to canoe at the marsh and enjoy the same thing I do."

### Dottie Dreas & Ruth Gibson

After a quick tour of a well maintained backyard garden, Ruth and Dottie shared their story. These two women are a study in contrasts and had me in stitches as they related their canoeing experiences.

For them, it began in 1973 when they bought the "Flying Knockwurst", an inflatable rubber ducky for \$10 at Kmart. Ruth was the eager leader, Dottie the resistance, who didn't like water and



Ruth Gibson and Dottie Dreas

couldn't swim. Easing into it slowly, Dottie paddled in the 'Knockwurst' on the D&R Canal while Ruth and her mom chatted nearby. Fate had its way and one of the oars fell apart. Unknowingly

predicting the reality of what was to come, Dottie grumbled, "If I have to paddle this thing, I might as well have a canoe." Ruth jumped at the chance, heartily agreed, and four days later they bought their first canoe—the 'Yellow Banana'.

Since they now owned a canoe, Ruth suggested they learn how to paddle it. Dottie responded with an enthusiastic "Humph! I'm never going on the river," and then found herself enrolled in a Mohawk Canoe Club flat water class.

It's been upstream (not always intentionally) and downstream (sometimes backwards) since then—with new friends, new skills, and lots of laughs.

When asked what they liked about canoeing, Ruth quickly responded, "It forces me to step away from the frantic pace of everyday living and commit myself to the canoe and the river."

Dottie responded, "Like? I'm scared to death," and went on to laughingly relate the story about the time they were tossed from the canoe when passing through what looked like a simple chute. She ended up looking like a raccoon with two black eyes.

Today, these experienced paddlers average twenty-five trips and three to four hundred miles per year. They just returned from a three week stint on the St. Lawrence River—all smiles of course. They have two boats now, a river runner as quick and quiet as the pine fox for which is named, and a beautiful wooden canoe, the Cedar Stripper.

Ruth and Dottie enjoy the camaraderie among the Mohawk Canoe Club members—"They're some of the best people you can meet—oh! are they patient teachers." They are also glad to share their enthusiasm for the sport with others. "The more people we make aware of the beautiful waterways and the joy of canoeing, the more chances we have of preserving what we love."

### Harry & Carol Turner

Harry and Carol started canoeing in 1963. They bought their first canoe to take their two young boys canoeing and to enjoy nature and the peace and quiet of the out-



Harry and Carol Turner

doors. They joined the Mohawk Canoe Club in the mid-1970's, took lessons and, as members today, still enjoy canoeing with the group.

Harry taught science at Lawrence Jr. High School for twenty-five years before retiring in 1987. His eyes sparkle and his voice is filled with enthusiasm. He is one of the 'very patient teachers' that Ruth and Dottie recall so fondly. He still loves to teach and often shares paddling tips with those who might benefit from such advice on our trips.

Carol is, at first, more quiet, but her eyes sparkle too, when she talks about making a difference in other people's lives. Her voice reveals a passion for protecting the environment and preserving it for our children and grandchildren. "If legislation can roll back the years of hard work, it will leave a terrible legacy for our children. We all need to be involved in some way because it touches us all."

They both agree, "Volunteering with Greenway is one way we can support land preservation and help to preserve the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh. It's so close to home and a great place to canoe."

With grateful appreciation, D&R Greenway gives a hearty THANK YOU to this great group of volunteers. We are glad to be working together. Many thanks for all you do!

*Editor's note:* The oldest continuous canoe club in the country, the Mohawk Canoe Club sponsors trips throughout the year. Club headquarters are in Griggstown, NJ. For more information call Howard Davis at (609) 291-7070 or Ruth Gibson at (609) 586-0588.

## A Ride with the Tide

Exploring the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh by Canoe

It was more than two hours before high tide and already the water lapped fairly high against the sloping graveled shore line. The rising sun was warming what promised to be a hazy, hot summer day. My canoeing partner, Tom Wilkins (see Volunteer Spotlight), and I met early to catch a ride with the tide.

Our plan was to let the moon do most of the work, even though it appeared as only a thin, white sliver in the early morning sky. Looks can be deceiving. We planned to paddle with the incoming tide as it filled the marsh and Crosswicks Creek to the head of tide in Groveville. Then, after the tide turned and gravity joined forces with the creek's current, we'd paddle back to Bordertown.

Bordertown Beach is one of the best public sites to launch a canoe at the marsh. It offers the convenience of no shuttle and the most flexibility in launch times. The tidal amplitude in the marsh is six to eight feet, and the slippery banks exposed at lower tides elsewhere in the marsh make it difficult to launch a canoe.

On weekends the beach site teams with human activity; boaters queue up to launch a variety of watercraft, and fishermen with several poles each, line the water's edge on either side of the boat ramp. Overhead, just a short distance from shore, cars and trucks rumble by on Interstate 295.

From a vacant spot shaded by the canopy of trees, we launched the canoe. With a gentle push on

the stern, the small gravel stones beneath us rolled and scraped against the hull, and the canoe was set free on the water.

With strong, easy strokes we paddled away from the interstate and the busyness of the other boaters, following Crosswicks Creek around the large boats docked at Yapewi and Bordertown Yacht Clubs. On our left, lock 1 of the Delaware & Raritan Canal appeared as little more than an interesting tidal channel, since the wooden walls defining the lock were hidden by the high water and abundant plant life. In other seasons, if you paddle just a short distance through the narrow waterway you can even see the deteriorating remnants of old canal boats.

Following Crosswicks Creek, we paddled through the center opening under the old railroad trestle bridge where nesting barn swallows

Continued on next page

## Hamilton/Trenton Marsh Events

Come out and enjoy these valuable wetlands! Unless otherwise noted, cost is \$2/person for members, (\$4/family); \$4/person for nonmembers, (\$8/family). For more information or to register, call the Marsh Hotline at (609) 452-0525 or complete the coupon on page 7. Register early; space is limited.

### Bonaparte Estate Tour

September 23, 10:00 a.m. - noon  
In August 1816, Joseph Bonaparte, exiled from France with his brother Napoleon, purchased property on the bluffs of Crosswicks Creek. Join D&R Greenway and the Bordertown Historical Society to learn more about the legacy that Joseph left behind. Ideal for historical buffs and nature lovers alike, this event includes a tour of the remains of the Bonaparte estate and the Gilder House, one of whose rooms is devoted to Bonaparte.

### Canoeing the Crosswicks

October 1, 8:00 a.m. - noon  
The rich colors of autumn provide a striking background for migrating osprey, songbirds, and waterfowl. Members of the Mohawk Canoe Club will lead our trip. Cost to rent a canoe

is \$20/member; \$25/nonmember; or \$5 registration fee if you bring your own canoe. Maximum per canoe is two adults and two children under 16. Children under 16 are free when accompanied by two adults. We will match singles with partners when possible.

### Migrating Bird Walk

October 7, 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.  
Autumn is one of the best times of the year to see a great variety of the more than 234 species of birds recorded at the marsh. Thousands of birds stop at the marsh to rest and refuel on their arduous journey to their winter habitat. Lou Beck and Eileen Katz of the Washington Crossing Audubon Society will guide us as we explore the marsh for migrating warblers, swallows, thrushes, sandpipers, heron, ducks, and geese.

### Armchair Tour of the Marsh

November 16, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Explore the mysteries and discover the magic of the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh—without getting your feet wet! D&R Greenway's slide presentation will introduce you to the natural world of the marsh. This

program will be held at the Hamilton Township Library, 1 Municipal Drive, Hamilton.

### Origins of the Delaware River and the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh

November 28, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.  
Calling all amateur scientists and detectives! With the help of Joseph E. Nadeau, Associate Dean of Sciences and Professor of Geological and Marine Sciences at Rider University, we will investigate the history and geology of the Delaware River. Join us to discover the origins of the Delaware River, Crosswicks Creek and the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh.

### Winter Wetlands Walk

December 9, 10:00 a.m. - noon  
Come out and share in the ever-evolving story of the marsh. Explore the man-made mitigation site—ninety-six acres of new wetlands created when the Trenton Highway Complex was constructed. Already, natural forces are modifying the system of eight islands surrounded by tidal channels and a tidal marsh. Drs. Mary and Charlie Leck will lead our walk and help us identify and understand the processes and activities at work in this new wetland area.



## Ride With the Tide

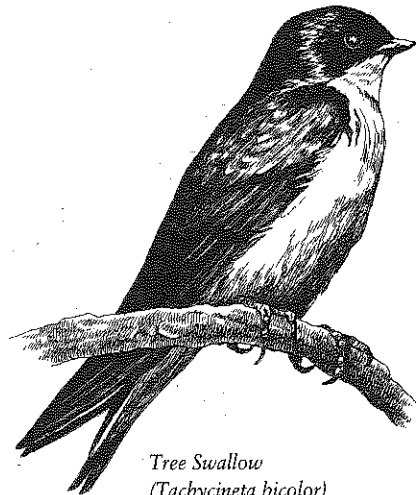
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swooped, rose, dipped and dove, all the while chirping at the two intruders riding the tide below.

On the other side of the bridge, the creek curved and widened and the marsh stretched out before us. On our right, through the trees lining the bluffs, we glimpsed the land on which Joseph Bonaparte built Point Breeze Estate in 1816. In front of us, the land flattened out, the sky widened, aquatic plants lined the waterways, and dead snags and a few trees pierced the pale blue horizon.

The traffic noise settled behind us. My breathing became deeper, my muscles more relaxed. For a while we escaped the clutches of the human race and settled into the nurturing embrace of Mother Nature at the marsh. It happens each time I paddle through there.

Earlier this spring, it was the call of the white-throated sparrow that triggered my awareness. Although I couldn't see the small songster, its voice calling from the hemlock and mountain laurel on the bluffs, lifted my heart, stirred my soul and I felt



Tree Swallow  
(*Tachycineta bicolor*)

myself settle into the marsh.

The act of paddling becomes a meditation of sorts. Muscles stretching, pushing, pulling, lifting, and then rhythmically repeating the same strokes, the sound of water trickling against the bow as the canoe moves in a smooth forward

motion and the deep breaths of cool morning air eased the previously unnoticed tension and drained the tightness from my scalp, my face, my lips, my neck, shoulders, arms, down through my body to my toes.

A soft blue sky filled the dome overhead and the occasional breeze refreshed and tickled my skin. As is my habit, I quickly surveyed the dead snags and branches, ideal places to look for heron, egrets, osprey, red-tailed hawks, and other birds. I hoped to see one or more of the several egrets and heron we saw at Spring Lake during the previous few days, but the snags were bare. I recalled memories of previous trips when I enjoyed the same bleached snags holding at different times, a pair of great-blue heron in full breeding plumage, several great egrets, an osprey, a red-tailed hawk, and another time nearly a dozen turkey vultures, their black feathers glistening in the low afternoon sunlight.

On this already warm summer morning, we paddled close to the shoreline on the right, seeking any shade the bluffs and trees might offer. Just ahead, from out of the shadows, a kingfisher flew low across the stream sending its ratchety call through the morning air, and then circled back to perch in the shade further upstream. Common at the marsh, kingfishers nest in cavities in the banks of the bluffs and feed on small fish. This was the first of more than a dozen we saw that day, including several fledglings.

On the marsh to our left, families of red-winged blackbirds fluttered among the thick vegetation lining the creek. Among the first to arrive in the spring, red-winged blackbirds nest among the reeds and cattails. In the fall, huge flocks can be seen feeding on wild rice and other seeds.

The kingfisher crossed our path again and the first of several marsh wrens fluttered up above the tall vegetation, gurgling a delightful melody, before floating down and disappearing again in the plants below.

Plant life throughout the marsh was abundant. Arranged like a chorus, with the shorter in front of the taller, the plants lined the waterways in varying shades and textures of green.

Large heart-shaped leaves of spatterdock, also known as yellowpond lily, were raised above the water on sturdy stems. The bright yellow flowers were hidden by the rising water or finished blooming and already developing into seed pods for the next generation.

The more delicate blue-green leaves of jewelweed stood behind, dotted with small, orange flowers. Towering in the back was giant ragweed, with large leaves and sturdy stems reaching seven feet in the air.

Scattered here and there along the edge of the stream, were patches of wild rice—a staple food of the Native Americans who, at one time, lived at the marsh. The tall graceful stems of this annual grass are topped with a delicate inflorescence of pale yellow flowers.

Intermittent blooms of creamy-white water parsnip, fluffy, white blossoms of tall meadow rue, orange Turk's-cap lilies and bright magenta loosestrife also dotted the shoreline.

From spring through autumn the marsh offers a progression of colorful blooms and foliage. In early April, the bright yellow blossoms of marsh marigolds contrast sharply with the brown, stubble mat of the previous year's vegetation. Later, delicate pink blossoms of the pinkster azalea highlight the waterways and Virginia Bluebells deck the woodland banks. In early June, the mountain laurel on the bluffs steal the show. In August, sunflowers bloom abundantly on the high marsh and mature wild rice lines the waterways.

Today the pickerel weed was in its prime. Four to five inch spikes of violet-blue flowers stretched skyward above thick masses of gracefully-veined, medium-green leaves that graced the edge of the creek for several miles. The air hummed with buzzing bees circling the spikes and climbing on the flowers to feed on the sweet nectar.

At the Route 206 bridge, we were delighted by the colony of cliff swallows nesting under the bridge. Similar to barn swallows, but without the forked tail, cliff swallows frequently nest on barns, bridges, and other human structures. This threatened species builds globular nests made of mud and clay and

lined sparingly with grasses, hair, and feathers. As we reached the bridge, the air erupted with cliff swallows. We sat in their midst, enjoying their chatter and the swishing of their wings as they flew around us and back to their nests. Many perched again, and peering from the round openings to their nests, watched us, watching them.

A mile or so east of Route 206, the habitat along Crosswicks Creek changed from marsh to woodland. Here sycamore, catalpa, maple, butternut, walnut, oak, and other hardwoods lined the banks, providing shade and dappling the sunlight on the water below. The ripples caused by our canoe reflected the light onto the peeling bark of a sycamore, where it danced merrily. Where the canopy opened, the blue sky now dotted with white, puffy clouds seemed to reach as deep into the water below, as it stretched high overhead.

As we rounded a bend in the stream, a great blue heron rose silently from the shadows, at once appearing both awkward and graceful, as its broad wings carried it around the next turn.

We stopped along the banks under a sycamore to enjoy the shade and a cool drink. It seemed all too soon that the tide turned and began to carry us back to Bordentown and the end of our journey. On the way back the sun was higher, the air hotter. It was the same stream, but a different view, offering more to investigate and enjoy.

Glimpses of wildlife are often fleeting and unexpected. We kept a relaxed but watchful eye for muskrat swimming along the creek, turtles basking in the sun, and other wildlife that might share our path. At a turn in the Crosswicks where tree swallows nesting in a hollow branch usually claim our attention, we caught a glimpse of a red fox watching us from the opposite shore. In a moment it disappeared into the thicket, its bushy tail in tow.

Last fall, on this same part of Crosswicks, a common loon swam and dove some fifty yards in front of us. Uncommon to this area, the loon had probably stopped to rest and refuel while migrating.

The tide and current together

carried us more quickly and in a short time we were again paddling along the bluffs. Earlier this year in this same area, we saw two osprey, one circling low enough to clearly see the sharp, unclenched talons this hawk uses to grasp its slippery prey, and a second osprey eating a dead fish draped over the top of a tall dead stump.

We watched the feeding hawk as the tide continued to carry us toward the bridge and then paddled with quiet urgency and excitement back upstream for a better look. It continued to feed, casting a watchful glance our way between mouthfuls. For a few minutes, we paddled against the tide and current, holding our position and drinking in the moment. When filled, we let the water carry us downstream, renewed and refreshed.

Today the snags were bare and we let the water carry us to the railroad trestle bridge. The water picked up speed through the narrow channel and we took care to swing the turn wide and approach the underpass with the canoe perpendicular to the bridge. In a blink we were through and the highway loomed ahead of us. Welcome back to the human race.

With a deep breath I gave thanks for the renewing respite. I could come again to this haven, paddle quietly, watch the swallows and osprey, relax in nature's quiet, gentle pace, enjoy the progression of seasons, catch the latest bloom, and listen—really hear the creek water trickling against the bow of our canoe. ☺

## Jewel Added

*Continued from page 1*

thoughts. It was time to go. Following another path, we made our way back to the car and with uplifted spirits, left the wood thrush singing into the night.

Editor's note: D&R Greenway is developing a management plan for this latest acquisition. If you would like more information about opportunities to participate or about preserving your land call our office at (609) 924-4646. ☺

## Yes! I'd like to help!

*Enclosed is my contribution to help D&R Greenway preserve vital stream corridors and wetlands throughout central New Jersey.*

- \$2,500 Greenway Donor
- \$1,000 Headwater Donor
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Contributors of \$50 and more will receive a set of wildflower notecards designed by Hopewell artist, Heather Lovett. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. (According to IRS rules, the value of this gift, \$6, must be subtracted when calculating the tax deductibility of your contribution.) Note: If you do not wish to receive the notecards, check here: \_\_\_\_\_

*I'd also like information about:*

- volunteer opportunities
- preserving my stream corridor lands
- D&R Greenway footpaths
- Hamilton/Trenton Marsh

## Event Registration

*Please register me (us) for the events indicated below:*

### Hamilton/Trenton Marsh

- Bonaparte Estate Tour, Sept 23  
#Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_
- Canoeing the Crosswicks, Oct 1  
#Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_
- Migrating Bird Walk, Oct 7  
#Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_
- Armchair Marsh Tour, Nov 16  
#Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Free
- Origins of the Delaware River and the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh, Nov 28  
#Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_
- Winter Wetlands Walk, Dec 9  
#Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

### McBurney Woods Walk

#Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (area code) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make check payable to D&R Greenway and mail to:*

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