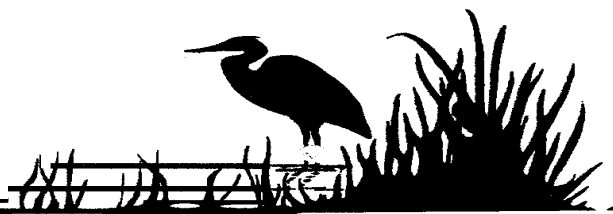


The Rookery



Published Quarterly by The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

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Summer 2012

*This year celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Friends of Eastern Neck
and
The 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge!*

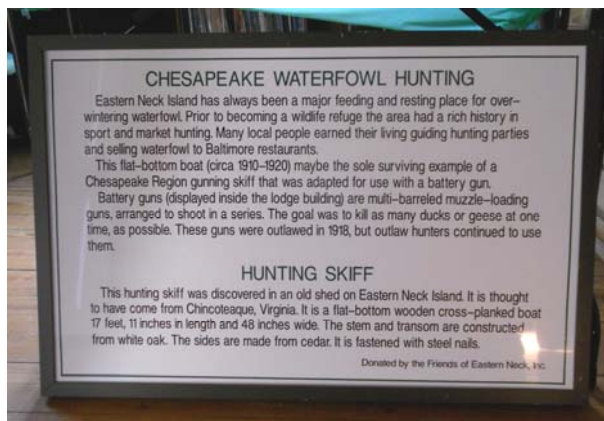


A Very Special Gift

The Friends of Eastern Neck is in the process of presenting a special gift to the Refuge to honor the 50th Anniversary of its establishment: the first new structure on the Refuge in many, many years. This is the Skiff Shed, which Friends President Gren Whitman talks about in his message on page 2. Weather delays and the builder's busy schedule changed the construction timeline considerably, so at press time the shed was only partially complete. (See pictures at right.)

We're so excited about this project that we want to show you the sign that will tell visitors about the skiff (lower right). We also want to acknowledge the work of John Donnelly, a friend of a Friend, who designed the shed for us at no cost. (John also designed the deck that graces the back of the Lodge.) We can't tell you how much we appreciate his donation.

Be sure to look for this wonderful addition to the Refuge when you visit over the summer. We're so pleased to be able to present this gift to the Refuge!



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President's Message**Summer 2011**

Friends:

Thanks to energetic board member Melissa Baile, and with big assists from long-time volunteer Terry Willis and the FWS staff, the gunning skiff project is moving forward rapidly. When completed, the skiff will be displayed in a special shed just outside the headquarters lodge and provide visitors with a peek into Eastern Neck Island's not-too-distant past. We expect the project to be completed by July.

According to Pete Leshner, curator of collections at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, the skiff may have been constructed "sometime in the 1940s" by Ira Hudson (1873-1949) of Chincoteague, VA who, according to Leshner, "was a highly respected decoy carver who also is known to have built boats." The skiff was discovered in 2009 in a shed on the island by former Refuge Manager Jonathan Priddy; the circumstances of how and why the skiff wound up at Eastern Neck remain a mystery.

In other Refuge happenings, every day these days is OspreyFest at the island, with these wild-and-crazy fish hawks seemingly everywhere. And, as previously reported, there seems to be an abundance of eagles on the island. (The reasons for this are still unclear.) Sibling fox kits have been spotted frolicking in several locations, looking especially cute as well as healthy. Many redwings and kingbirds have taken up residence between the bridge and Tubby Cove, joining our here-all-year mockingbirds.

Make a note: Provided the sky's clear at the next full moon, keep in mind that by standing on the Tundra Swan boardwalk, you can watch the sun set over the Bay, and turn around and watch the moon rise over the Chester, often within 10 minutes. And Mother Nature doesn't charge a cent for this great show! Check it out!


OUR MISSION

The mission of the Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc. is to provide support to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge through educational outreach programs and volunteer service on the refuge, including the operation of the refuge bookstore.

The Rookery

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Inc.*

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Friends of Eastern Neck

Memberships

Friend: \$25

Patron: \$50

Eagle Society: \$100

Blue Heron: \$250

Tundra Swan: \$500

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Jackie Cicconi

and Kay Snelson:


Bookstore

REFUGE UPDATE**What's Happening on Your Refuge**
by Cindy Beemiller, Refuge Manager

As the seasons change, we also must change. The osprey and song birds are nesting, the agriculture crops are planted and growing and the Butterfly Garden is blooming nicely. We have welcomed intern Bradley Gardner for the summer to spray the invasive plants. Bradley has worked at Cashe River NWR in Arkansas. Please say *hello* when you see him.

It's sort of bittersweet to report that maintenance worker Jon Beck has moved to a Refuge near Fredericksburg, VA. We wish him well, and we *will* miss his bar-b-que! But we also welcome his replacement, Dustin Murray. Dustin is familiar with refuges and is attending school. He arrived just a few days before Memorial Day.

I will be on maternity leave from June through August. During that time we have made plans to have at least two experienced Refuge managers fill in for me. Please stop by to say *hello* and make them feel welcome.

I must also tell you that Colby Hawkinson, our Visitor services Specialist for the past two years, is also leaving us. Many of you have talked and worked with Colby on one or more projects. He has successfully introduced many school children and adults to the Refuge system and Eastern Neck. As you know, Colby is energetic and personable. He has organized and led many successful programs and events, from the annual Open House to the Arctic Movie night at Washington College. His success earned him a promotion in 2011. Success can be a hard thing to keep contained! He has accepted a position with the Bureau of Land Management near Grant's Pass in Oregon. The move will bring him closer to his family. He will be with us through the end of June, so please come in and wish him well on his new adventure. 

2012 Spring Eastern Neck Events Recap
And Summer Preview
by Colby Hawkinson

Spring is a time of renewal for the birds and other wildlife at Eastern Neck. It is also the time of year when the refuge programs and events begin to ramp up. March wrapped up with Cindy, her husband Chad, and I hosting a youth archery range at the Kent County Parks & Recreation 'Spring Festival' on the 31st. A total of 62 children participated in the archery activity. With the help of one-on-one instruction, many kids were able to see significant improvement their accuracy over the course of the afternoon.

Later that same day was the very popular annual event, the Kent County Bird Club 'Owl Prowl.' Before an amazing crowd of 70 people, Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin began the program in the refuge conference room with a multimedia presentation that covered a wealth of information, including the ecological niche that owls occupy, adaptations they have for silent flying, eating meat, seeing at night, and basic field identification including vocalizations of owl species currently active at Eastern Neck. The participants then went outside to experience evening on the refuge. The group traveled to various locations where Ellison and Martin produced owl calls in order to try to elicit a response from owls inhabiting the refuge. Unfortunately, no owls produced vocal responses. However, Ellison was able to get two different rails to vocalize in response to his calls.

April got started with more fun for local kids. Cindy, Chad and I hosted another youth archery range on the 7th, this time at the Rock Hall Parks & Recreation Easter Egg Hunt. Sixty-five kids had the opportunity to shoot at least three arrows at a target. As with the earlier archery event, all the archers received individualized instruction, with the result that many of these kids also saw great improvement in their accuracy.

(Continued on page 4)



2012 Spring Eastern Neck Events Recap and Summer Preview (*continued*)

The shorelines of Eastern Neck NWR are typically the focus of cleanup efforts during spring, and this year was no exception. Four volunteers helped me remove debris from the beach near the butterfly garden. In all, they removed approximately eight cubic yards of debris from a quarter mile of beach. The debris ranged in size from bits of plastic the size of peas to 55 gallon plastic drums. We'd like to thank Kent County Public Works for agreeing to accept this debris free of charge.



Earth Day provided multiple opportunities for refuge volunteers and visitors. The Kent County Bird Club led an Earth Day Beginners Bird Walk at the refuge, spotting 47 different species. I spent the day coordinating the cleanup of Garrett Island, a division of the Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex that sits near the mouth of the Susquehanna River, adjacent to Perryville, MD. Thirty people walked the shorelines of Garrett and bagged and removed debris. Approximately 30 cubic yards of debris was removed from Garrett during the cleanup. Following the cleanup, I gave an interpretive talk on the history of Garrett Island to all volunteers.

April ended with the first Youth Turkey Hunt at the refuge. All three of the young hunters had an excellent experience, and two managed to harvest nice birds.

Refuge events continued in May with the second of the Youth Turkey Hunt dates. One young hunter was successful that day, but all three had an excellent hunt and enjoyed learning new skills from their volunteer National Wild Turkey Federation guides. The 12th of May saw another exciting event, the International Migratory Bird Day ('IMBD') celebration at the National Aquarium in Baltimore. The National Aquarium is a very important partner of the refuge. Eastern Neck NWR Volunteers Meg Parry and Joe Bodell joined me, Eastern Neck NWR Seasonal Bio-

logical Technician Bradley Gardner, and two staff and one volunteer from Blackwater NWR to provide refuge outreach and children's activities at the event. Sunny weather drew huge crowds to the IMBD celebration, and the refuge outreach booth contacted over 500 members of the public! The refuge 'touch table' with pelts, skulls, antlers, skins, etc., available for people to pick up and examine was a big hit with families at the event!

There are three great events scheduled at the Refuge during June. On Saturday, June 2, Eastern Neck will celebrate National Trails Day by offering two special guided nature walks that explore 'behind the signs' areas not normally open to public access. On Saturday, June 9, the Refuge will host its annual Youth Fishing Day. Last year saw a tremendous turnout of 84 young anglers, and we hope to match that excitement this year. The event is free and runs from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Youth 15 and under may participate. A parent or adult must accompany all participants. Food, drinks, prizes and bait will be provided. Kids are encouraged to bring their own rod and reel but a limited number of rods and reels will also be available. The derby will be held at the Headquarters Pond, located on the road to the Bayview Butterfly Trail. For more information on National Trails Day or the Youth Fishing Day, please call the refuge at 410-639-7056.

The annual Full Moon Paddle will take place on Wednesday, June 20. Join the Friends of Eastern Neck and the Center for Environment & Society of Washington College for this kayak trip from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Bring your own kayak, lifejacket and paddle. Meet at Bogles Wharf. Group limit is 24 people. Register with jfairchild2@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7295.



July and August look to be quieter months at the Refuge, but of course, the bookstore volunteers will welcome you (and so will the bugs, unfortunately, so come prepared with your choice of insect repellent).

The Friends are sad to see Colby's departure and wish him the best of everything as he returns to the Northwest, where he'll be more "at home." It's been good to have him here!

FRIENDS' DOINGS

The Bookstore has Another First!

All of our bookstore volunteers know how popular our Wheel House socks for women are - they're consistently one of our best sellers. Great for gifts (and for getting comments from your friends: "How cute [neat, appropriate, etc.]"), they are decorated with everything from birds and birders to sailboats to foxes and more. So bookstore manager Jackie Cicconi and I decided that we wanted a pair of socks that spoke directly for the Refuge, and we worked with the Wheel House team to design our own ENNWR socks (see picture at right) that incorporates our familiar Tundra Swan logo. While they're not in stock as we go to press, they should be available any time now. We're hoping they sell well over the summer, and we'll always keep them in stock so you can get a pair (or two) when you come to visit. They're priced the same as the other styles at only \$8.95 a pair.



We've also found a treat for the many kayakers who love the waters around Eastern Neck. It's a kayak ornament that's perfect for that little stocking stuffer or a birthday or thank-you gift for a kayaker you know. And at \$6.95, it's not a wallet-buster! These, too, are not in stock as we go to press but should be available shortly.

Changing of (some of) the Guard



As we told you in the Spring newsletter, Bob Kramer resigned from the Friends board in January. Bob had been the board's recording secretary, and we're pleased to report that Carol DeGennaro agreed to take on that task. Carol has been on the board for several years and is a *very* valued bookstore volunteer as well. We appreciate her willingness to do this important job.

Bob's place on the board has been ably filled by Meg Parry. Meg lives in Rock Hall and has been a Friends member for quite a few years. Most recently, she has been assisting with the winter waterfowl counts. We welcome Meg and her enthusiasm for the Refuge.

In another move, Ed Hatfield also resigned from the board, and we're now in the process of finding his replacement. Ed still acts as a bookstore volunteer at least twice a month, so he'll stay in the thick of things as summer rolls around. We appreciate Ed's time as a board member, and his wry sense of humor will be missed.

Ed.

75th Anniversary of Wildlife and Sport Fisheries Restoration

by Colby Hawkinson



2012 marks the 75th anniversary of the most significant and successful partnership approach to fish and wildlife conservation in U.S. history: Wildlife and Sport Fisheries Restoration, (WSFR.) Between 1939 and 2010, Wildlife and Sport Fisheries Restoration provided over \$14 billion in grants to fish and wildlife agencies across the United States. WSFR is much more than a highly successful program of funding and implementing conservation work. The partnership approach that it utilizes is a cornerstone of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, an example that the entire world has emulated in conserving fish, wildlife and their habitats.

On September 2, 1937 Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, the first piece of WSFR that is also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act. It raises conservation funds through a dedicated excise tax on sporting guns, sporting ammunition, and related hunting equipment. In 1950 the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (also known as the Dingell-Johnson Act) was added to WSFR, creating a funding source for fisheries and boating conservation that originates from an excise tax placed on certain fishing and boating equipment as well as fuels. Examples of taxed items include fishing rods, reels and tackle, fish finders, electric trolling motors, motor boat fuels, and pleasure craft.



Fishing

Examples of fisheries and wildlife work funded by WSFR include acquisition of habitat, improvement of habitat, introduction of fish and wildlife onto suitable habitat, funding of fish and wildlife research, acquisition and development of access facilities for public uses, and hunter education programs including construction and operation of public target ranges. While WSFR provides a multitude of programs for sportsmen, the benefits extend far beyond that community. One definitely does not need to be a 'consumptive' user of fish and wildlife (someone who harvests through hunting and/or fishing) to benefit from WSFR funded programs. For example, considerable funding from these sources goes to watchable wildlife programs for nongame species as well as boating access facilities and aquatic resource education programs. WSFR-generated funds totaling \$71,089.32 have been used in Maryland to acquire 13,199 acres of land to establish county and state conservation areas, including 561 acres of the Millington Wildlife Demonstration Area right here in Kent County.



Hunter education

While the conservation funding and acreage figures generated by Wildlife Sport Fish Restoration are impressive, greater significance lies in its ability to bring different entities together in the name of conservation. This sense of shared ownership and resultant emphasis on partnerships is fundamental to the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. The North American Model has its origins in the 1800's, when the first wildlife conservation efforts in our country began to take root, despite an unrelenting tide of wanton destruction that swept 40 million buffalo to the brink of extinction and forced five billion passenger pigeons beyond it.



Partnerships

There were generally two schools of thought among early American conservationists as to how North American wildlife resources could be saved from ruin. A minority of conservationists thought this salvation should come by following the aristocratic European model of wildlife conservation. According to that formula, only persons of wealth and nobility own wildlife resources and may utilize them as they see fit. This model holds that wildlife must be 'protected' from the common citizens by barring their access. Fortunately, the majority of conservationists that prevailed forged a uniquely North American model, one that firmly established fish, wildlife, and

(Continued on page 7)



Volunteer Appreciation Dinner Much Appreciated by All Parties

On April 25, more than 50 people converged on the Lodge for the annual volunteer appreciation dinner. Appreciation was a two-lane street this year, with the Refuge staff not only thanking volunteers for the many hours served but also, for the first time in memory, treating them to a catered dinner rather than asking them to bring dishes for a 'pot-luck' supper.

The weather cooperated, too, with a perfect spring evening that only cooled off a bit after the sunset. But the back deck was filled with volunteers who love the Refuge and give willingly of their time to keep it looking and working at its best, assisting the very small but hard-working FWS staff. Volunteers who had reached certain milestones received gifts and/or certificates, and Cindy and Colby were profuse in their thanks for the help.



The back deck of the Lodge was filled with happy -- and hungry -- volunteers.

WSFR (Continued from page 6)

associated habitats as the property of all citizens, a commons to be enjoyed and utilized but also stewarded carefully in sacred trust for future generations. Once public ownership of natural resources in North America was established and the actual conservation work began, a solid funding source was necessary to pay for the projects and plenty of boots on the ground were needed to perform that work. Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized these needs 75 years ago. Wildlife and Sport Fisheries Restoration has maintained relevancy ever since, successfully enhancing our fisheries and wildlife heritage.



Hail Creek Platform Complete

For years, volunteers with Eastern Neck's winter waterfowl survey identified and counted the birds in Hail Creek (sometimes many species in the many thousands) by clamoring atop a large fallen log. Over the years, however, the log had deteriorated to well past OSHA standards; clearly, it was dangerous, and a more stable perch was needed.

Before he departed for Virginia in early spring, FWS employee Jon Beck started building a platform, emplacing four supporting posts and bolting on the beams and deck support stringers. The rest of the project, carried out by Gren Whitman, was completed in three weeks in April and May, in a mad race to beat the worst of the bugs.

This is no-frills construction: lay down the flooring using leftover non-wooden "boards" from the Bay overlook project; install footing for steps and the steps themselves; and install railings all around. The resulting platform is four feet off the ground with a 6' X 8' deck.

Completed on May 18, it provides a panoramic view of Hail Creek and far out onto the Chester River and will greatly assist in the waterfowl counts. It will also be appreciated by participants in occasional guided tours to areas of the Refuge not usually open to the public. Friends of Eastern Neck contributed \$227 toward the cost of materials. It's likely we'll need to install camouflaging material to prevent those clever and easy-to-spook birds from spotting us while we're spotting them!



Thanks, Gren!

THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS

Once again we are listing the names of members who contributed \$100 or more in the past six months. In these uncertain economic times, we continue to be amazed at their generosity.

And don't forget that we're grateful to all Friends members for continuing to support us and our work at the Refuge. You're *all* very special to us!

Blue Heron

Bob and Linda Kramer Michael J. Saxton

Eagle Society

Melissa Baile Allen and Arlene Katz Ted and Gretchen Knowles Russ Morrison
 Gerry Cohee and Jane Nitsche William and Barbara Noll Vic and Patricia Pfeiffer
 Gren Whitman and Janice Plotczyk Jim and Joanne Rich Heather Davidson
 Dr. and Mrs. William Rienhoff, III Alexandra Totten Thomas and Marian Wenger
 Dr. Clifton F. West Matt and Michele Whitbeck Ed and Karen Robison
 Cora Dickson and William Fielder Don R. Clemens Steve and Virginia Croker

Friends of Eastern
Neck

Memberships

Friend: \$25

Patron: \$50

Eagle Society: \$100

Blue Heron: \$250

Tundra Swan: \$500

The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.
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