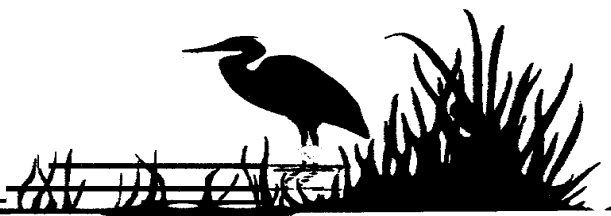


# The Rookery



Published Quarterly by The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

Volume 16, Number 4

Winter 2012

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



## Third Annual Open House Celebrates Refuge's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge is hosting its third, but special, Open House on Saturday, December 8, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to commemorate its 50<sup>th</sup> year as a National Wildlife Refuge. The community is invited to explore Eastern Neck Island and areas of the Refuge that are normally closed to the public. "This is a great time of year to bring your binoculars and learn about local wildlife and island habitat," says Gren Whitman, president of the Friends of Eastern Neck. The Friends group is celebrating too -- it has been helping the Refuge for 15 years.

Celebrating Eastern Neck's 50<sup>th</sup> year!



**Wildlife Refuge  
OPEN HOUSE**

Sat., December 8, 2012  
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge  
1730 Eastern Neck Rd, Rock Hall MD 21661

- Guided Tours of normally closed areas: Cedar Point, Green Tree Reservoir, Shipyard Creek, DU Impoundment/Cedar Pond
- Guided Bird Walk: Tubby Cove and Boxes Point
  - Music by Ben & Friends
- Light lunch provided by the Friends of Eastern Neck
  - Children's arts and crafts
- Variety of wildlife exhibitors, and much more!

Friends of Eastern Neck, Ducks Unlimited, Kent Co. Bird Club, Center for Environment & Society at Washington College, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are proud to be a part of the Eastern Neck NWR Open House 2012.

(410) 639-7056 • www.fen.gov/northeast/easternneck/  
Tickets for tours are free and will be distributed at the Refuge Office the day of the Open House.



This rain or shine event is free and open to the public. Tickets for the tours (see below) are free and will be available at the Refuge Office on the day of the event only.

Refuge facilities include several miles of hiking paths through woods and meadows, a visitor center/office, ponds, wildlife and waterfowl observation decks, a water trail with public access, a butterfly garden (pretty even in winter), a caretaker's house, relaxing picnic areas, bike racks, a small gift shop, clean restrooms and an ample visitor parking lot.

### Tour Schedule +

All the tours, talks and nature walks start at the Refuge Office. 9:00 a.m. – Tubby Cove & Boxes Point Bird Walk; 10:30 a.m. – Cedar Point Wildlife Walk; 11:00 a.m. – Green Tree Reservoir Tour; 1:30 p.m. – Shipyard Creek Wildlife Walk; 2:30 p.m. – Duck Impoundment & Pond Tour. The Open House will also feature live music, a complimentary light lunch, and activities for kids including crafts and archery (which was popular with both kids and adults last year). Come on out and have fun!

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**President's Message****Winter 2012**

Friends:

As I write this, the plentiful summer ospreys are long gone, Canada geese have returned in full force, and we've just spotted a handful of Tundra swans, precursors of hundreds in a few weeks. And so the annual wheel of seasons turns and turns, despite national elections, large storms and other sidebars to the Big Show!

As I try to do at least once a year, here's my heart-felt "Thank You!" to all the volunteers who quietly do so much for the Refuge, especially those loyal folks who staff the Bookstore, answer the phones and serve as "hosts" to Refuge visitors. And a special shout-out to Kay Snelson (patiently and seamlessly scheduling the volunteers who cover the desk), Jackie Cicconi (selecting, buying and inventorying materials for the Bookstore), and Leann Miller (Board treasurer and "Rookery" editor). If there are "key volunteers," they are! I also want to single out for another thanks Bill Burritt, our master mower, who's a practiced ace on that machine.

We are deeply concerned about cuts in the Refuge budget, mostly because that means that Colby Hawkinson's now-vacated position won't be funded for the foreseeable future. I've been authorized by the Friends Board to bring this situation to the attention of Senator Barbara Mikulski, and I am in the process of doing just that. I hope she will be able to help, as she has in the past.

Meanwhile, even budget cuts don't faze Mother Nature! She's busily at work, day in and day out, making sure the Refuge conforms to the proper season. C'mon over the bridge and enjoy some chilly hours looking at thousands of waterfowl as they winter with us.

And whatever your holiday this season, may yours be happy, and may your New Year be one of your best!


**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

**Board of Directors****Officers:**

Gren Whitman: President  
Phil Cicconi: Vice President  
Carol DeGennaro: Secretary  
Leann Miller: Treasurer

**Members:**

Melissa Baile  
Lew Halin  
Jolene L'Tainen  
Bob Parks  
Meg Parry

**Committee Chairs**

Gren Whitman: Membership

Jackie Cicconi  
and Kay Snelson:  
Bookstore

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

- It is that time of year again -- the Refuge Open House is scheduled for December 8 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 pm. Volunteers play a key role in making the Open House a success. The Annual Open House is one of our biggest events, welcoming old and new visitors to the refuge – nearly 200 people in one day! Information is on our web page and reminders are on our *Facebook* page. Dustin and I could use some help during AND before the big day. Displays need to be moved to make room for Ben Bennington's wonderful musical group, an archery range set up, a puppet art project for the kids arranged, tables for our invited table exhibitors and chairs have to be moved... there is so much to do. If you are interested and available to help with any of these tasks, please call me at 410-639-7056 or email me at [Cindy\\_Beemiller@fws.gov](mailto:Cindy_Beemiller@fws.gov). No experience necessary! Luckily Blackwater NWR staff helps with setting up the tent. We are looking forward to seeing you at the Open House! Also, check out this historic photo of Ingleside, just one photo among many that will be displayed at the Open House.



- Over the past year Cedar Point Road has incurred some erosion towards the end of the road. Over six months ago refuge staff installed a temporary measure to reduce if not eliminate the erosion. Currently we are waiting for a state permit to install a small living shoreline. The materials are onsite and with assistance from Blackwater staff, the project will be completed once we have the permit. The proposed project covers 115 feet of shoreline; the stone will rise up two feet, sand and *spartina* plants will cover about 15 feet. The stone "mound" parallel to the shore will reduce wave energy and thus reduce erosion. The sand will build up the shoreline

and the plants will hold the sand in place. We anticipate the permit to be approved in the next week and then we will coordinate with Blackwater staff on when to complete the project. Although the area is not open to the public, it supports our conservation plan and will protect larger refuge lands including Hail Cove. As you may already know, Hail Cove offers shelter for hundreds of waterfowl every winter. This year the volunteer waterfowl survey crew has already observed over 4,500 waterfowl on the refuge in one survey.

- The refuge is thrilled to add two new structures to our visitor experience. Both -- the skiff and a new panel summarizing the role of the island in the War of 1812 -- highlight wonderful parts of our history. The skiff was dedicated October 20, 2012 by the Walsh family. (See previous page) Harry Walsh's care of the skiff affords the refuge the opportunity to display a part of the island's cultural and natural history. The Eastern Shore lifestyle is intimately tied to the land as well as to the water. As technology and development spread, many people forget that we are still tied to the land for food, resources, natural vistas, relaxation, wildlife observation and so much more. In some small way the skiff helps us to remember that.
- The refuge hosted a successful deer hunt this fall. Seventy-six deer were harvested among the 342 hunters who participated. Last year we made efforts to reach new hunters and we did add a few, although our total number of hunters was a little less than last year. To further improve an already successful hunt we will provide closure information to the public through the refuge web page ([www.fws.gov/northeast/easternneck/](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/easternneck/)) and our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/pages/Eastern-Neck-National-Wildlife-Refuge/128168840595671](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Eastern-Neck-National-Wildlife-Refuge/128168840595671)). Check us out on both sites for ALL updates year-round, including the hunt!
- (Continued on page 7)

## The “Hudson Battery Skiff” story can only be called “Better and Better!”

By Gren Whitman

(A last look at our gunning skiff saga)

The story started in 2009 when former Refuge Manager Jonathan Priday stumbled across an old wooden boat stashed in the pole shed on Cedar Point. Pete Leshner, curator of collections at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, quickly inspected the vessel and offered his opinion: A gunning skiff built by a well-known boat-builder and decoy maker named Ira Hudson, of Chincoteague, Virginia, probably in the early 1900s.

Leshner suggested we move the skiff to a protected location, and also instructed us to do nothing to it --- no scraping, no painting, no anything, other than a cursory dusting.

So, the skiff was tenderly moved to an enclosed shed ... where she sat ... until FOEN board member Melissa Baile and long-time volunteer Terry Willis came to the board in early 2012 with a proposal to display it in a weather-proof structure for viewing by the public, and as another reason to visit the island.

The board approved the design and the cost, and the Fish & Wildlife Service gave its go-ahead. Designed by John Donnolly and built by Jay Yerkes, the structure was completed in late June -- and that was that ... it was signed, sealed, delivered, over and done ... so we thought ... until Craig O'Donnell's report appeared in the Kent County News on July 5.

Seems there was much more to the skiff story! After reading O'Donnell's report, Joe Walsh phoned me from his Annapolis home to say that he thought the skiff was possibly part of his father's long-lost water-fowling collection of small boats, firearms and decoys. Harry Walsh, M.D., had donated his extensive and historic collection in 1969 to the Chincoteague NWR expecting that it would be displayed in a new museum there, but when the museum never materialized, the collection was inadvertently dispersed, to the lasting chagrin of the Walsh family.

Joe e-mailed me several photos of his father's battery gun skiff, and when I compared the photos with “our” skiff, sure enough! Identical scuff-marks and scrapes on the hull showed clearly that the boats were one and the same. Joe drove to the Refuge a week or so later and we agreed the boat was not only the same, but that it was also the same boat in a photo on page 116 of *Outlaw Gunners*, a book by Harry Walsh that's on sale at our bookstore.

One nagging question remained: How and why had this nearly 100-year-old skiff come to be stashed in a pole shed on Eastern Neck Island's Cedar Point?

As I happened to tell this story to Ron Fithian, Rock Hall waterman and county commissioner, he said, “I think I can help you clear that up,” and put me in touch with his father-in-law, Kenneth Fletcher Sr.

Lo and behold, Fletcher, then an employee of the Fish & Wildlife Service at the Refuge, had been instructed to pick up the skiff at Chincoteague (“probably in 1970”) and drive it to Eastern Neck. Fletcher added that the skiff was displayed in the lodge “for a few years,” and then he was told to store it in the Cedar Point shed.

Dedication of the skiff in its new display structure took place on October 20, (see page 6) and the event also celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Refuge. With about 50 people attending -- including Chesapeake Marshlands Complex Manager Suzanne Baird and Rock Hall Mayor Bob Willis -- we were especially pleased that so many Walsh family members were able to join us, in particular Joe and his sister, Mary B.

Joe gave us a nice account of his father and his collection, as well as his own experiences growing up in Easton, and then the whole Walsh contingent joined in a ribbon-cutting.

A big “thank you!” to committee members Jolene L'Tainen, Lew Halin and Meg Parry for planning the dedication, and again to Melissa and Terry for all their work in bringing this fascinating project to completion. Come see it!

✍

## FRIENDS' DOINGS

### Budget Still Hurting?

#### The Bookstore proves that quality doesn't need to break your budget

If your holiday budget still says "recession," you may want to check out the bookstore's "small" offerings. Usually, such inexpensive items are used as stocking stuffers or one of the eight-day treats that are part of many holiday celebrations. We have quite a few of these items, and you can be sure they're of high quality, and most are rather useful, too. Here are just a few you can get for under \$5.00:

- Bay Bio Cards (\$2.50)
- Book magnets (bookmarks) (\$1.99)
- All Aboard* books for kids (\$3.99)
- Giant bugs (scary!) (\$1.75)
- Wee Beans Key Chains (\$2.25)
- Tundra Swan refrigerator magnets (\$1.75)
- Nail files (\$1.85)
- Heather Davidson note cards (\$2.00)
- Eastern Neck NWR patches (\$4.00)
- Recipe Cards (\$2.25)
- Blooming ornaments (pictured at right) (\$1.85)
- ENNWR Kayak trail maps (\$2.95)

*The nail files are both practical and pretty.*



*This unusual paperlike ornament can have two lives: Once it's off your tree, it can be planted in soil and, with watering, will bloom into wildflowers. What a fun and lasting gift!*

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

As Gren says in his President's message this month, we simply can't thank our bookstore volunteers enough for their dedication to this (sometimes lonely) job. As our tribute, we're including their names here, so you can thank them when you see them as you visit the bookstore or wherever you may be. And thanks again to Kay Snelson for her efforts to keep the desk staffed every day.

- |                  |                   |                       |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Melissa Baile    | Ruth Guthridge    | Nick Nicolls          |
| Marie Beasley    | Lew Halin         | Kathleen O'Connor     |
| Anne Bricker     | Diane Harris      | Bill Parks            |
| Joanne Coveney   | Ed Hatfield       | Cathie Reinbold       |
| Ted Cumings      | Judy Kelly        | Stan Rempuszewski     |
| Babs Danneberg   | Bob Kramer        | Linda Schwaitzberg    |
| Delores Davis    | Ted Kreamer       | Dave Sorflaten        |
| Carol DeGennaro  | Jolene L'Tanien   | Pat Weigman           |
| Pat Dillingham   | Jennifer McGovern |                       |
| Pete Dillingham  | Judith Miller     | (Please forgive us if |
| Juli Dulmage     | Leann Miller      | we forgot anyone!)    |
| Walter Ellison   | Linda Morgan      |                       |
| Nancy Martin     | Bill Noll         |                       |
| Christine Gibson | Barbara Noll      |                       |
| Bob Gibson       | Robin Nicolls     |                       |



## Skiff Shed Dedication October 20, 2012

Dedication of our Ira Hudson skiff in its new display shed took place on October 20, 2012 under a pleasant Chesapeake Bay sky. About 50 people attended the late afternoon gathering, including Chesapeake Marshlands Complex Manager Suzanne Baird and Rock Hall Mayor Bob Willis. But we were especially pleased that so many Walsh family members were able to join us, in particular Joe Walsh and his sister, Mary B. Friends President Gren Whitman greeted the group, and Joe was particularly eloquent when relating the story of his father, Dr. Harry Walsh, who had amassed a wonderful collection of early 20<sup>th</sup> century market gunning artifacts. Gren then presented Board member Melissa Baile and long-time volunteer Terry Willis with plaques thanking them for their work on the project. An official ribbon-cutting featuring all the Walsh family members present (see below) followed, and then the attendees retreated to the lodge conference room where they were treated to an amazing assortment of hot and cold hors d'oeuvres prepared by local caterer Linda Donnelly. All in all, a memorable afternoon. *LD*



*Skiff shed designer John Donnelly (left) and Friends President Gren Whitman relax before the ceremony.*



*Friends Board member Bob Parks and his wife Marilyn (left) listen as Rock Hall Mayor Bob Willis makes a point.*



*Project coordinators Terry Willis and Melissa Baile*

*Joe Walsh holds the rapt attention of the crowd with stories of his father's hunting activities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and subsequent collecting of artifacts from that time.*



*Members of the Walsh family cut the ribbon on the skiff shed (left).*

*Attendees enjoy food and drink on the deck of the lodge (right).*



**What's Happening on Your Refuge**  
 (Continued from page 3)

- Tundra Swans are back! Several swans have been observed flying over and landing at Eastern Neck. Up to 85 have been observed at one time. Swans that decide to move farther south than Eastern Neck can be found in the Carolinas. But do come to see them if you can. They are beautiful!
- The bridge to Eastern Neck was damaged by some kind of vehicle or piece of heavy equipment. The bridge has been inspected by a contractor set up by our USFWS Washington Office. At this time the damage does not affect the function of the bridge; however one of the large wooden guard rails was struck and weakened. As you can imagine, the bridge is not only imperative to having visitors but it is also an asset the refuge must protect. We ask all visitors, staff and volunteers to use caution when driving on the bridge and all refuge roads.

*Happy Holidays from Cindy, Chad and, of course, the twins, Logan and Zoey!*



*Tundra Swan Pair -- The iconic photo by Heather Davidson, printed with her permission. Thank you!*

**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 trying 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!**

**Tundra Swan**

George, Jean and Laura Bankey  
 Robert K. Stetson Family

**Blue Heron**

Bob and Bonnie Ford  
 Terence T. Finn

**Eagle Society**

Anne Bricker    Chester River Kayak Adventures  
 Judy Kelly    Ted and Gretchen Knowles  
 Don and Jolene L'Tainen    Joe Walsh  
 Robert Steinwurtzel    Michael J. Saxton

Friends of Eastern Neck <b>Memberships</b>  Friend: \$25 Patron: \$50 Eagle Society: \$100 Blue Heron: \$250 Tundra Swan: \$500
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## WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD (NEW) MEMBERS.....

As a member of the Friends of Eastern Neck, you already know the important role our volunteers play in maintaining the Refuge as a meaningful destination for thousands of visitors. Do you have a friend (or friends) who might be interested in joining us? Give them this copy of your newsletter and have them complete and return the form below.

Yes! I want to be a Friend of Eastern Neck. Tell me how I can help!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work or cell \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Type:**

Tundra Swan (\$500) \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Heron (\$250) \_\_\_\_\_

Eagle Society (\$100) \_\_\_\_\_ Patron (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_ Friend (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

Send this form to: Friends of Eastern Neck, P.O. Box 450, Rock Hall, MD 21661

***The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.***  
***P.O. Box 450***  
***Rock Hall, MD 21661***