

The Rookery



The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

Volume 20, Number 3

Fall 2015

Looking Forward to a “Ducky Day”

Over the summer, the Friends received an extraordinary and very generous gift from one of its longtime members. Dave Sorflaten, who has lived, worked and played in the Rock Hall area for a long time, donated to the Friends part of his collection of vintage duck (and one goose) decoys. These are very special decoys – they were carved by local carvers to be used in the field, not as decorative pieces. Dave recalls “shooting over” the decoys; that is, he actually used them for duck and goose hunting. Most of them are not the flashy, brightly-painted decoys we might see for sale in gift or souvenir shops in the Chesapeake Bay area. They *look* like they’ve been used for the purpose for which they were made.

In order to best display this collection, the Friends obtained a glass display case and set it up in the small room next to the bookstore. We are very proud to be able to present this unique collection to the public in this way. So proud, in fact, that we are planning a “Day of the Ducks” event in October to officially dedicate it and to have a few other fun ‘duck-related’ activities.

The date is Saturday, October 24, and everything will begin at the Lodge, getting under way at 1:00 p.m. Dave will tell the story of the decoys at a short official dedication ceremony, two current local decoy carvers will work at their craft, and Refuge staff will provide tours of areas of the Refuge where migrating waterfowl, primarily ducks, are stopping on their journey south. We will also provide light refreshments.

All this is free and open to the public. Signing up for the tours will be on a first-come, first-on basis, like previous tours during our Open Houses. So come on down and enjoy a delightful afternoon to help us celebrate this newest addition to the enjoyment of visitors to *your* Refuge!

A rectangular poster with a white background and a thin black border. At the top, it reads "THE FRIENDS OF EASTERN NECK AND EASTERN NECK NWR PRESENT" in black, followed by "“Day of the Ducks”" in a large, red, serif font. Below that, the date and time "October 24, 2015 1:00 p.m." and the location "Eastern Neck NWR Lodge" are listed. On the left side, there is a stylized illustration of two ducks, one above the other, in shades of green and yellow. To the right of the ducks, there is a red rectangular box with white text. The text in the red box includes "DUCKS ALL AROUND!", "FEATURING “Decoys of Yesteryear”", a paragraph about the dedication ceremony, "See two current-day decoy carvers at work!", "Take a tour of usually-closed areas of the Refuge to see migrating ducks on their stopover at Eastern Neck!", and "Free refreshments courtesy of the Friends of Eastern Neck". At the bottom left of the poster, it says "A Free Event!" and "Find the Refuge: 6 miles south of Rock Hall on Rt. 445. For more information, call the Refuge at 410-830-7086 or log on to www.fwn.gov/refuge/eastern_neck/".



The decoys are safe and happy in their new home!

President's Message**Fall 2015**

Friends:

I recently returned from a trip to Maine wilderness. It was remote and beautiful with many ponds and streams. I searched for loons and found none; a bit early although many stay year round. After three days of looking I found myself smiling and thinking that soon the loons will migrate to Eastern Neck and I will see them there.

When I returned to Rock Hall I drove to Eastern Neck and sat in the car and gazed out at the water and inlets. It was peaceful and as beautiful as Maine. I am thankful for this Refuge and the people who saved it and those who now maintain it: Cindy and her staff, the Blackwater folks who come to help, local volunteers, and those who contribute money in the form of memberships to the Friends or items bought at the store. Kent County has a good thing here.

Soon the migration of songbirds and waterfowl will begin. The privilege to view these treasures sets the responsibility to care for them. At minimum, society must maintain a mantra of "do no harm."

As we begin this exciting time please take a few minutes to reevaluate your role in that mantra. Our personal actions, or lack thereof, can make a difference between life and death of these national treasures. Here are just a few questions to ask yourself to get started. What do I do with old fishing line? (So many turtles, and even whales, lose their lives by getting tangled in line or by swallowing line.) How do I discard balloons? (Birds see balloons in the trees and do not understand the danger they cause when they swallow them. Balloons easily choke all animals that live in and near water.) Do I still use lead hooks and sinkers? (Lead poisoning is the primary cause of the death of loons.) Do I dim my lights in front of windows and put decals on big windows? (Birds get confused easily and fly into windows and die or get injured.) Am I still using pesticides? Do I take the time to cut the plastic rings that hold six-packs together? (These plastic nooses are proven to strangle animals of all kinds.) Do I carefully recycle plastic of any kind? (There are many horror stories of what plastic is doing to ocean life.) There are so many small things you can do to help. Thank you for thinking about this.

Thank you for your support of Eastern Neck and the Friends organization. Several walks and rides are planned for this fall and winter to give you an opportunity to view areas not normally open to the public, and hopefully to see some birds. It is, however, nice to know that you can stand in a blind, sit on a bench, or take a walk any day of the week. Come visit this fall.


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.

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Friends of Eastern Neck
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Patron: \$50

Eagle Society: \$100

Blue Heron: \$250

Tundra Swan: \$500

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REFUGE UPDATE
What's Happening on Your Refuge

Editor's Note: Refuge Manager Cindy Beemiller and Maintenance Professional Bruce Dempsey have been so busy trying to keep the Refuge above water (sometimes literally – tides have been high!) that Cindy just didn't have time to write a full report for us. We'll make sure she catches us up on the inner workings of the Refuge in the next issue. In the meantime, there is one very big happening that will affect the Refuge right now:

**COMPLEX MANAGER SUZANNE BAIRD
TO MOVE TO NEW POSITION**

Refuge Complex Manager Suzanne Baird announced that she has accepted a new position as manager of the National Wildlife Refuge/Wetland Management District Complex in North Dakota. In fact, by the time you read this, she will have begun her new duties. We think Suzanne will feel a little more at home there than here since she has friends in the area and will be able to do more of the outdoor activities she prefers, especially hunting.

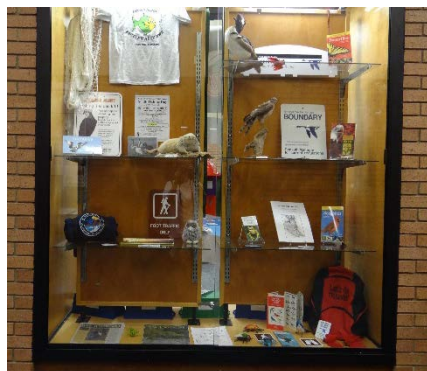
Suzanne arrived at Blackwater in 2007 when she took over as complex manager. In her time here she has been a staunch supporter of Eastern Neck as part of the complex, and she has also worked closely with Friends groups including The Friends of Eastern Neck. She always projected a positive message and often helped us to achieve our goals. Many times she found time in her busy schedule to attend outreach functions of the Refuge, even distributing t-shirts to the kids who participated in the Fishing Derby. We will miss her very much, and we wish her every happiness as well as success in her new position.



Good-bye, Suzanne – Good luck!

**County Library Display
Features ENNR**

Refuge Manager Cindy and Friends board member Carol DeGennaro took the Refuge to town in June with a display in the main library in Chestertown. It showed just about everything imaginable about the Refuge and its attractions. Well done!



A REFUGE GALLERY

Fishing fun
for the kids!

The 2015 Fishing Event was held on June 13. The Friends of Eastern Neck once again distributed t-shirts to all the kids as well as providing bait (for the fish) and lunch (for the people). Although the crowd was small, it was still a memorable day, as shown by these pictures.



Phil and Ed signed everybody in.



They came in all sizes!



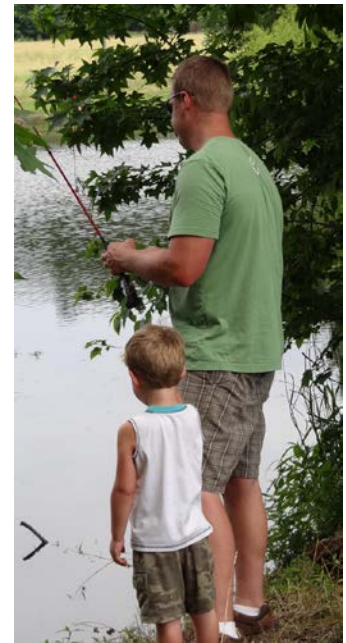
John helped a lot!



He didn't need help.



Success!



No words needed.



Fingerprint bookmarks were fun to make!



JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE REFUGE...

"HEY, GUYS! WHAT DIED? WHERE?"

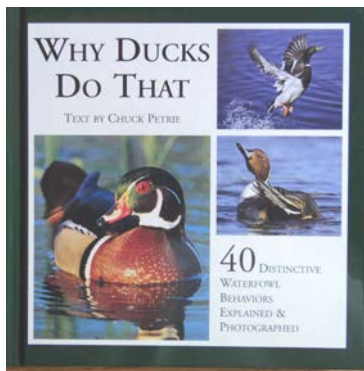
"UH...NOT SURE...OUT THERE...SOMEWHERE....."



Friends Doings

DUCKY STUFF AT THE BOOKSTORE

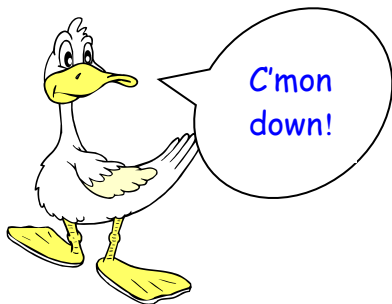
In honor of our 'Day of the Ducks' celebration, bookstore manager Jackie Cicconi has stocked the shelves with additional materials for the duck lover in all of us. In particular, many of us have trouble just identifying the ducks on our pond or flying overhead. So we'll have on hand three guides that may help to identify which fluffy fliers we're seeing. First, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology has a beautiful foldout waterfowl ID series, and we've stocked one of them - *Dabbling & Diving Ducks*. (\$7.95) It uses what the lab calls the first rule of ID - asking "Where is the White?" More detailed ID is the aim of *Ducks at a Distance* (\$3.00), a handy pocket-sized guide that's easy to read. It devotes two pages to each duck species, giving the reader several more means of identifying any unknown duck. *The LeMaster Method* (\$12.95) is the most sophisticated of all; it adds the use of beak shape and color to other ID tools.



The other book we've added is a little different. *Why Ducks Do That* (\$15.95) is, first of all, a charming hardback book for all ages. Its main purpose is to answer the question its title poses, and therefore the one- or two-page 'chapter' titles begin with "Why do ducks...?" The pictures are quite good and add to the understanding of the answers. A good wildlife library addition!



Our mallard tees are already best-sellers. (\$16.95)



HELP WANTED!

Would you like to help the Friends share the wonder of the Refuge with its visitors? Do you have an extra day a month? Are you a "local" who has an easy drive to the Lodge? Then we need you! We're looking for a few new bookstore volunteers. We'll train you, of course, and help you in any way we can to be the 'go-to' person at the front desk when visitors come into the Lodge. It's really a lot of fun, and it's also very rewarding. If you think you'd be interested, email me (Leann) at wkrl@verizon.net or call Kay Snelson (410-708-2318), our wonderful scheduler, for more information.



THE GARDEN LIVES ON!

In our Spring issue we reported that a new 'crew' had taken over the responsibility of maintaining the Butterfly Garden, one of the major draws to the Refuge. Their task this year was enormous, not only because many areas of the garden needed to be revived or updated but also because most of the plants in the garden are drought-tolerant, and this summer we definitely did not have drought conditions. So the garden did grow! It grew a lot, as you can see from the pictures on the right. But the crew accomplished much, especially in identifying the plants and putting new signs on them. They still have big plans and will continue to do their magic to keep the garden a special place to visit. Our thanks go to Elaine Maugham and Mary Lou Troy, the crew's leaders, who were ably assisted by Simon Kenyon, Deborah George, Linda Morgan and Cheryl Cadwell. Would you like to help? Give Cindy a call at 410-639-7056 and she'll pass your name on to them.



The garden entrance in early June (above) and in late August (below).



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