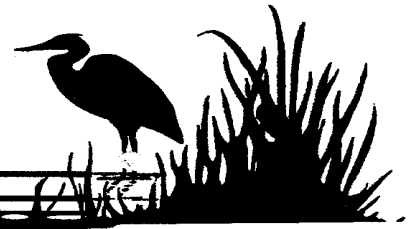


The Rookery



The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

Volume 22, Number 2

Summer 2016

Caring for Your Refuge

By

Cheryl Cadwell

EXTRA!!!

Late-
breaking
news!!

The
Tubby Cove
Boardwalk
has been
closed to the
public by
the USFWS
for safety
reasons.

See page 6
for more
details.

Trail Rehabilitation

Walking trails are an important part of the Eastern Neck experience. But time and weather have taken their toll. Because the Refuge maintenance budget simply doesn't allow for any projects other than the standard stuff of mowing, vehicle maintenance and repair, trash collecting and the like, most of the trails are in various stages of disrepair.

So this Spring the Friends board voted to fund a proposal by Refuge Manager Cindy Beemiller to compensate Chad Beemiller for time he would spend to rehab the trails as well as do other long-needed restoration projects on the Refuge. Chad has worked as a wildlife biologist and trail maintenance leader on Refuges in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and North Carolina. He also worked for state parks in Vermont before moving to Maryland in 2010.

Duck Inn Trail was the first project. It was a general muddy mess, either deeply rutted or completely submerged. >

In order to remedy the situation, Chad and his team packed the trails with medium-sized boulders, which were then locked in with gravel, creating a firm but permeable substrate. >



< The next step was to cover the trail with stone dust, similar to other trails.

A fitting conclusion to this project is the installation of a bench donated by the Friends of Eastern Neck. It is at the end of the trail and will provide a restful place to enjoy the hike and a view of the Chester River.

Working with Chad is Kyle Gerson, a 19-year-old home-schooled young man from Worton. For their next two projects, Chad and Kyle closed off an unsafe, illegal path to the beach near the old Headquarters house and completed the demolition of the small observation tower at Tubby Cove.

(Continued on page 4)

President's Message**Summer 2016**

Melissa waxes poetic:

Hugging the Chester River and the Chesapeake Bay with two outstretched arms, Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge has an important role to play in the nurturing of our ecosystem. Her embrace reaches farther than the birds, waters, grasses, trees and animals. It touches the souls of the humans who sit, walk, paddle, fish and ride on her waters and ground.

The peacefulness is undeniable. Taking the time to soak in this gift helps maintain balance in life. Everyday living is full of distractions, planned and unplanned. Our human ecosystem depends on nature to ground us and help us find a sense of peace.

We are fortunate to have this place where nature and humans can co-exist with respect. As our world continues to move faster and things constantly change, let us remain vigilant and protect our Island friend.



The sunsets are beautiful over our Island friend...

**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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**Friends of Eastern Neck
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Friend: \$25
Patron: \$50
Eagle Society: \$100
Blue Heron: \$250
Tundra Swan: \$500

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Membership

Cheryl Cadwell
Volunteer Coordinator

REFUGE UPDATE

CINDY REPORTS:

- A new project leader (the term the USFWS uses for complex managers) has been named for the Chesapeake Marshlands NWR Complex (that's Blackwater, Eastern Neck and several other island refuges in the Bay area). She is Marcia Pradines and she will be starting her duties here at the Blackwater headquarters outside Cambridge, MD in mid-August. We'll tell you more about her as soon as she settles in.
- This spring Eastern Neck was host to a very important program: The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection used Eastern Neck's variety of habitats and soil conditions to train students to identify the parameters of wetlands. As more and more construction is impinging on our wetlands, there is a growing need to have experts who can identify and delineate the boundaries of wetlands for both regulatory and environmental purposes. The three-day course gave students practical exposure to the parameters for defining a wetland. They learned how to survey for the presence and percentage of hydrophytic vegetation (vegetation that grows in water or in soil that is flooded often enough to produce an oxygen deficiency). As wetlands are not always wet year round, another parameter is to determine the presence of water and to test for hydric soils (soils that are permanently or seasonally saturated by water). A third parameter was to identify indicator plants on site. The information from these studies will supplement material in the state's Environmental Wetland Delineation Manual.

AND...

DON'T FORGET to bring the kids (ages up to 15) to the annual Youth Fishing Day on June 11. As usual, the fun begins at Headquarters Pond (just follow the "Event" signs) at 9:00 a.m. and runs until about noon. The Friends will help by offering free lunch to the participants and their parents, siblings, grandparents or whoever comes with them. It's all free, and as anyone can tell you, it's always fun!



WINTER WATERFOWL WALKS REPORT

The previous issue of *The Rookery* highlighted the series of five winter waterfowl walks between November 2015 and March 2016. Cindy and the Friends board received a final report on the project from Gren Whitman in which he made several recommendations. Cindy convened a committee to study these recommendations, and the first decision they made was to continue to offer the walks this coming winter. There will be new features for this second year, so stay tuned for updates in the September *Rookery*.

UPDATE ON VOLUNTEER RECRUITING

If you remember, this page in the previous issue of *The Rookery* was devoted to a plea for volunteers to help the Refuge fulfill some of its most pressing needs. We're pleased to report that some members did respond:

Our new *Rookery* reporter and gung-ho garden assistant **Cheryl Cadwell** volunteered more service to the Refuge by agreeing to be our **Volunteer Coordinator**. She's already working with Cindy on the best means of recruiting, contacting and engaging volunteers for future projects. A long-time Friends member, **Janice Plotczyk**, has taken over as the **Friends Membership Chair**. The next time your membership is up for renewal, look for her name on your letter. And new board member **Simon Kenyon** has begun working with Cindy to make the Refuge **Facebook** page more interesting and informative.



BUT THERE'S STILL MORE TO BE DONE...

The Butterfly Garden always needs some primping, and even though Chad has done some marvelous maintenance work already (see pages 1 and 4), he can always use more workers for a Trail Crew.

If you'd like to help, PLEASE contact Cindy at Cindy_Beamiller@fws.gov!

(Trail Rehab – continued from page 1)

Chad's next project was to construct a split-rail fence at the Tundra Swan boardwalk parking lot to keep people off the sandy, vegetated beach in order to prevent erosion damage. Despite a sign prohibiting the practice, many people launched kayaks and other small boats from that lot. The Refuge staff is now working to add signs to direct people to our two dedicated kayak/canoe launch sites at Bogles Wharf and Ingleside.



Now it's on to the Bayview Butterfly Garden and Trail. The lower half of the garden is very wet and the paths are often muddy. Plastic grids will be laid into the paths creating smooth and dry walkways. A big job is to clear the plant-choked pond and replace the liner. It will be great to see the pond brought back to life! The Gazebo will be moved away from the parking lot and set on a site that will give visitors a better view of the garden and of the mouth of the Chester River.

Chad has enjoyed working on these projects and appreciated the Friends giving him the opportunity to be outdoors and helping get the Refuge back in shape. ***But he could use more help, not only with future projects but with very necessary maintenance tasks. These tasks offer an opportunity to enjoy the refuge you may never have expected. No experience necessary, no long term or even weekly commitments. Give it a try! If you are interested, contact Chad at ENVolunteer@gmail.com. If you don't have or prefer not to use email, call 410-639-7056 x222 and leave your name and number.***

JD

Butterfly Garden Special: The Purple Coneflower

By
Cheryl
Cadwell

Echinacea [ek-in-ay'-see-a], commonly called the purple coneflower, is a tough plant native to eastern and central US. The flower has a brown or bronze-colored central cone that contains hints of orange. A botanist, seeing the shape of this central cone with its prickly look, gave the plant the name *Echinos*, after the Greek word for hedgehog. For a bit of botanical silliness, no matter what color the flower petals are, all Echinacea varieties are called *purple coneflowers*. So there are white, rose, red, orange and yellow *purple coneflowers*.

Echinacea has all the characteristics of a good sustainable plant: disease and pest resistant as well as drought and heat tolerant. It actually grows best in lean soil. Echinacea is termed a short-lived perennial. If it is not divided every two or three years it may disappear from the garden. The plants are easily divided so it is a nice way to increase your supply and have plenty to give away.

Echinacea requires full sun for best growth. It generally grows three to four feet tall. The stems are very sturdy and work well as cut flowers. The blooms begin to appear in midsummer and after an intense summer bloom will produce intermittent blooms until frost.



Friends Doings

"STAYCATION" THIS SUMMER?

The Bookstore has some help!

If you've decided that a far-away vacation is out of the question this summer, the bookstore may be able to help you find - and enjoy - some shorter trips close to home. On the Delmarva Peninsula, in fact. We have just stocked up on the third edition of *Day Trips in Delmarva* (\$14.95), the perennial favorite for finding enjoyable trips just around your corner. And once you get there, two more books, *Butterflies of Delmarva* (\$12.95) and *Amphibians and Reptiles of Delmarva* (\$14.95), can make your explore time much more interesting. Have fun!



Calling all 'close-to-home' members!

We are in real need of a few new bookstore volunteers. If you want to be the face of the Refuge to our visitors and let them know how much we love it, please email me at wkrl@verizon.net. (Don't worry, we'll train you!)

THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS

Once again we are listing the names of members who contributed \$100 or more in the past six months. We are always so pleased and thankful for your continuing support. The Refuge has benefitted from your generosity in so many ways!

**And don't forget that we're grateful to all Friends members.
You're all very special to us!**

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- Blue Heron: \$250
- Tundra Swan: \$500

Eagle Society

Blue Heron

The Fordi Family
Louise Durocher
Laura Bankey

Melissa Baile Susan Reinsch Allen and Arlene Katz Dr. Clifton West
William and Barbara Noll Lou and Cheryl Cadwell Tom and Marian Wenger
Vic and Patricia Pfeiffer Gerry Nitsche and Barry Serviente
Bob and Barbara Brillhart Frank and Sandy Kheradi
Ted and Gretchen Knowles Bob and Linda Kramer Jim and Joanne Rich*
Valerie and Tom Hirsch John and Peggy Christie Matt and Michele Whitbeck
Steve Croker *Plus a \$100 match from a former employer

TUBBY COVE BOARDWALK CLOSED

On May 9, Cindy received notice that the USFWS had closed the boardwalk at Tubby Cove after an inspection revealed that much of the structure was in unsafe condition: many railings, stringers and pilings were split, rotted or not properly connected. The written report she later received stated that “the area of greatest concern is the failure of fasteners that attach the deck stringers to the pilings and the hand railing.” The conclusion was that temporary repairs could be made, but that “For the long term, replacement of the boardwalk will be needed.”

This closure is of great concern to the Friends and the Refuge staff because this boardwalk is one of the biggest draws on the island, especially for birders but also for visitors who are continually amazed to be walking over marshland only to end up at an observation tower that overlooks secluded coves as well as the Bay. At this writing, it appears that the boardwalk will remain closed for this summer season unless Cindy can quickly find some assistance to replace it. She’s working on it, but there’s a lot to be done before a definite plan can be put into place. We’ll be sure to keep you informed about any proposed solution. *✂*



The signs leave no doubt.....

*The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.
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