

The Rookery

Journal of Eastern Neck



The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

Volume 22, Number 3

Fall 2016

Summer Butterfly Garden Saga: Disaster and Salvation

By
Cheryl Cadwell

A Thug invades the garden

June and July are great times in the Butterfly garden. A dozen different species of butterflies dance in a wonderful display. But this year there was a fear that we might not have enough plants to attract the butterflies.

Last fall a botanical Thug made an appearance in the garden, but the amount of damage it caused wasn't obvious until this spring. We haven't identified the culprit, but its huge roots and massive leaves were so aggressive that it crowded out or shaded out almost a third of the good, butterfly-attracting plants.

Who is this guy? And why did he invade our garden?



The Garden Crew to the rescue!

Something had to be done. As we want to stay organic, the only option was to dig. Several weeks of exhausting labor (➤) by the garden crew, bolstered by our hired landscapers, were needed to start to remove the invader.

Unfortunately, while digging out the Thug's roots, many good plants were dislodged. The crew transplanted as much as possible, but more plants were lost.

This means that it is going to be necessary to replant some of the lost specimens. The replanting will have to wait until the fall (or whenever the heat lets up). During the rest of the summer the crew will keep busy continuing the fight against the Thug and deciding what plants need to be replaced.

One positive sign was that once the Thug was dug out, some of the tougher native plants reappeared. While the garden is still lacking the variety of plants needed to attract some butterfly species, there are enough plants to make a beautiful display and keep the resident butterflies around. (➤)

Very special thanks are due to the crew who resolutely put in sweat and tears to get the garden back in shape. Thanks to Lou Cadwell, Beth Huntington, Simon Kenyon, Elaine Maugham, Les Palmer and Mary Lou Troy.

**Come visit the garden
and think about helping to continue the battle. ☞**



President's Message**Fall 2016**

August and September are the showy months for Swamp Rose Mallow and Marshmallow plants. I love to drive the Eastern Neck roads and count the number of blooms in the marshes. I find it enjoyable to think, or say, "Marshmallow." It makes me smile.

As we prepare for our annual volunteer dinner (see page 6), another thing that makes me smile is thinking about the many volunteers at Eastern Neck. Their enthusiasm and dedication is contagious. Bookstore/visitor center desk staffers, butterfly garden workers, grass cutters, bluebird box caretakers and people who pick up trash are just a few of the jobs being done each day. To name names is dangerous because I do not want to miss anyone. You know who you are. You are the face of Eastern Neck. That kind word that you said to someone may brighten his or her day. That little bit of information that you shared may peak their interest in birds or Refuges. You all do such a good job I am constantly impressed. I hope you enjoy your volunteer time as much as I do.

I do want to introduce you to three volunteers who do yeoman's work behind the scenes. We could not function without Kay Snelson, Jackie Cicconi and Leann Miller.

Kay Snelson, originally from Betterton, has now moved full-time to Florida. From there, she continues to serve as the scheduler for the Visitor's Center bookstore volunteers. She does this via phone each month. This is no easy task, people's schedules being what they are. I am amazed that she is able to accomplish this task month after month.

Jackie Cicconi has been the manager of the bookstore for quite a few years. Not only does she know the history of what sells and what does not sell, she deals with inventory, vendors, ordering and shipping. She consistently orders the right merchandise so that The Friends makes a profit to use for projects on the Refuge. The time that she spends marking merchandise, stocking shelves, decorating and so much more is amazing.

Leann Miller does it all. As the Friends treasurer, she prepares reports, deposits money, reconciles accounts, ensures that bookstore volunteers have the correct cash for making change, keeps all the books for the Friends and the bookstore, and reports monthly to the Board of the Friends with a detailed explanation. She also edits this newsletter. She does all this with a nod or a smile.

Kay, Jackie and Leann -- please know that you are very much appreciated. *And again, thank you to all the volunteers at Eastern Neck. You are all very much appreciated.*


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

*Published Quarterly By
The Friends of Eastern Neck,
Inc.*

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REFUGE UPDATE

CINDY REPORTS:

► The June Fishing Derby was a great day for young kids and their families. The State stocked the pond with very active sunnies, pumpkin seeds and catfish that gave everyone an exciting challenge. Friends volunteer Ed Hatfield remarked that “it was a pleasure to see parents working with their kids to show them how to catch the fish and the kids laughing and in general the families having a great time.” The Friends donated T-shirts, food, as well as volunteers to help with releasing the fish. Blackwater provided equipment, a speaker system and staff who showed the kids how to make fish prints. The day was beautiful and the event was a special summer experience.

► Our trails are very important to Eastern Neck, but due to weather and Ma Nature, July saw many of our trails closed. The Tubby Cove boardwalk had become dangerous and has been closed for some time. (This was reported in the Summer issue of *The Rookery*.)



Duck Inn Trail was closed due to large stands of poison ivy, small trees at eye height and exposed rip rap on the trail, which had been installed in deep ruts as a base to support a gravel trail surface. The trail is open again thanks to Cindy and Chad actually hand-shoveling in gravel to fill the path. And the Friends have provided a bench for relaxing at the end of the trail (as shown here ▼).



The Wildlife Trail remains closed until a large tulip poplar which is hung up in two other trees can be removed. This size tree and the situation are beyond our capabilities so we must wait for a contractor to do the heavy and dangerous clearing.

Boxes Point Trail was closed due to a large hanging limb over the trail. This has been cleared and the trail is once again open.

It was made obvious how important these trails are to our visitors by the comments we heard at the Lodge. Many of our visitors were very disappointed by the closings and told us how much being able to walk those trails meant to them.

► Some clearing was done, however. The “leaning” pine on the entry road and a dead tulip tree just past Bayview Road were removed by a contractor. These two trees might have presented safety issues in the future. *✍*



The ‘leaning pine’ is gone!

THE WINTER WATERFOWL WALKS WILL CONTINUE THIS YEAR!

The wildly successful waterfowl walks of last winter will be repeated this year between November and March. These walks guide participants in areas not usually open to the public. They are scheduled for November 5, December 3, January 7, February 4 and March 4. The walks are free, but donations to cover expenses such as the hot chocolate and scrumptious cookies that follow each outing are appreciated.

The walks are supported by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Friends of Eastern Neck, the Center for Environment & Society at Washington College and the Kent Count Office of Tourism. If you’re interested in registering for any of the walks, plan ahead, because at only 20 participants per walk, they fill up fast. To register, go to <http://bit.do/winterwaterfowlwalks> or if you have questions, email easternneck-walks@gmail.com or call Gren Whitman at 443-691-9370. *✍*

Editor's note: Phil Hoon, a Chestertown native and attorney, participated in the waterfowl walks last winter, which appears to have awakened a bit of nostalgia about the island before it became the Refuge. He sent us this story, written, as you can see, almost 50 years ago, about his family's trips to a summer bungalow located near Cedar Point. There are no accompanying pictures – you can see them in your mind as he vividly describes what he saw. Thank you, Phil, for sharing these memories.

THE DRIVE

The Reminiscence of a Young Man

Philip W. Hoon, 1970

Cedar Point Farm was a hunting club on the Chesapeake Bay, of which my Grandfather was President and the only living Charter Member. Exceptionally good for duck and goose hunting, Cedar Point was located with about seven other farms on East Neck Island in the northeastern section of the Bay. The 21 members of this hunting club used to come from a variety of areas between Washington and Philadelphia and leave the Island with their fair share of the wildfowl to be had. Cedar Point, to me, however, was of somewhat different importance

I, being too young to go hunting (this was about seven years ago, before Uncle Sam bought the Island to make it into a wildlife refuge), used to spend a couple of weeks in the summer with my family at this paradise. As I reminisce, I keep finding myself wishing that I could relive those times and adventures but knowing that I can only remember them. There is, however, one part of the annual occasion most vividly remembered. That was the ride I so often travelled on the way to and from the bungalow where we stayed. I would like to describe a typical ride to the house showing how it gave me such a great feeling for the nature encompassing it.

After travelling for 15 minutes, going south from Chestertown, we came to the bridge crossing from the mainland to the Island, an arced wooden structure about 150 yards long and wide enough for only one car to cross at one time. Almost every time we crossed the straits we could look out over the shallow, sea-weeded coves and see the crabbers with nets in their hands, searching for the Eastern Shore delights of Maryland Blue crabs and soft-shells.

After crossing the bridge, our car came to the dirt road, barely wide enough to permit two cars travelling opposite directions to pass without one of the two falling into a ditch. For several hundred yards of brown road we could look over the marshlands, with their cattails extending majestically onto the sky and their countless muskrat domes. Soon the marshes ended and, after passing through a small grove of pine trees, the road was lined with countless rows of beautiful

green corn. In the distance, over the corn, we would be able to see the green foliage of the woods surrounded by a field of almost continually cloudless blue sky. Soon the entrance of Cedar Point Farm was upon us, a rickety wooden fence held closed only by a loop of rope and a "No Trespassing" sign. Quickly the fence was opened and we entered God's grounds.

On the right, as we continued our slow drive down the dusty road, was a hedgerow so thick that only at certain intervals could we catch a glimpse of the frequently white-capped bay with its sails in the distance. Our experience continued as we passed the mock-orange trees with their greenish-yellow fruit scattered across the road, and the tall old dead tree where five or six buzzards could often be seen meticulously perched. The corn fields lining the left side of the road soon came to an end with a thick head grow surrounding a barley field on three sides. This was a field we always observed with the greatest concentration so that the observer might see the deer which so commonly could be found munching the tender leaves. Across the road was a thicket of the densest honeysuckle I have ever seen, infested with a great number of bees in search of its sweet nectar.

Our short excursion had almost ended by the time we entered the grove of elm trees, where so many times we saw rabbits nibbling the greenery along the edge or a turtle making his seemingly endless crossing. After leaving the shady area, we arrived at a small group of farm buildings, the tenants' house and our dark brown bungalow.

This journey along the "long driveway," as a small friend of mine called it, was a trip through the real nature which is almost lost today. I made this journey countless times where for a short period of time the only signs of civilization were the vehicle I rode in and the telephone lines which followed the road. This excursion was an experience in itself and one which, unfortunately, too many people have never had the chance to see. Often taking only a short 15 minutes, it was a time I often find myself dreaming about. *✍*

"Find us on Facebook"

By
Simon Kenyon



Eastern Neck's official Facebook page is a great place to post your photos and comments about the refuge. The page is managed by Cindy and is a resource for all the users of the Refuge. It fields questions about sightings of birds and other wildlife, is a notice board for Refuge happenings such as the Youth Fishing Event and hosts pictures posted by visitors, such as this magnificent image of a bald eagle floating on ice near the bridge, posted by Charlie Lister of Rock Hall.

To access the refuge's Facebook page enter Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge in the search panel on your home page or enter the URL <https://www.facebook.com/Eastern-Neck-National-Wildlife-Refuge-128168840595671> or use the much simpler address <http://tinyurl.com/jlw68fu>. Make sure that the page you find looks like the one at the top of this article with the small Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge logo panel in the lower left-hand corner of the banner picture. There are a few other sites that people have put up but they are not official Eastern Neck sites, although they may link to it.



What can Friends do to improve the content and bring traffic to our Facebook page? It's simple! "Like" the official Facebook page and invite your friends to like it too. And if you have a photo to share of the beauties of Eastern Neck, do post it!



Visit the Friends website at www.friendsofeasternneck.org.

Another reminder: We'll send you *The Rookery* through cyberspace (in .pdf format) if you want to save the Friends a little paper and postage. Just send an email to wkrl@verizon.net with the subject "Rookery" and tell me that you would like to have the newsletter sent to your email address rather than in hard copy through the mail. I'll add you to the "Rookery group" and you'll get your copy in your Inbox instead of your mailbox.

VOLUNTEERS!

This one's for you!

Cindy's invited all Eastern Neck volunteers to the
Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

To be held on Wednesday, September 14
at the Refuge Lodge.

Things will get under way at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner, drinks and dessert are on the house! Come
and meet your fellow Refuge denizens for a lovely
evening of conversation and comradery. RSVP soon, if
you haven't already, so we can get an accurate count
to the caterer.

See you there!

The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.
P.O. Box 450
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**JUST A REMINDER...**

This year's deer hunt dates are –

October 1
October 5
October 14
October 24
October 31
November 7

**The Refuge is closed to all visi-
tors on these dates. Make
note!**