

The Rookery



Published Quarterly by The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

Volume 11, Number 3

Fall 2007

**OUR
10th
ANNIVERSARY!**

THE REFUGE GROWS BY TWO ACRES!

PLANTING GRASSES TO RESTORE SHORELINE INVOLVES
LOTS OF STAFF, VOLUNTEERS

by Cindy Heffley

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Help Wanted!

In an attempt to arrest erosion along Eastern Neck's western shoreline, breakwaters were installed in the 1990's. As in years past, this site recently offered an opportunity to demonstrate beneficial placement of clean dredge material and to involve the community in a Chesapeake Bay shoreline restoration project.

In a cooperative effort with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a two-acre tidal marsh was constructed utilizing 21,266 cubic yards of clean material dredged from the Kent Narrows navigation channel project. Then, continuing a tradition from prior years, refuge staff once again partnered with the National Aquarium in Baltimore to construct the tidal marsh habitat. Under the direction of staff from The Conservation Department of the Aquarium, approximately 100 volunteers, ranging in age from 10 years old to senior citizens, planted 40,000 cordgrass plants at the site on July 10 -14.

Sunny skies and light Bay breezes provided an enjoyable experience for young and old alike. Aquarium staff not only supplied instructions for properly planting the cordgrass, they also imparted valuable educational information about the importance of the work that was being done during the more than 800 hours donated by the volunteers.

Other partners included the Friends of Eastern Neck, Queen Anne's County, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Ecological Restoration and Management, Inc. Volunteers came from the western shore of Maryland as well as local groups representing Ayers Saint Gross Architects, Radcliffe Creek School in Chestertown, the Maryland Conservation Corps and Tuckahoe State Park. In addition to staff, interns and volunteers from Eastern Neck and Blackwater NWRs and staff from the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Chesapeake Bay Field Office also assisted with the project. Quite a week! ☞

Volunteers looked out on two acres of sand (below left) then got to work (below). Right, 40,000 cordgrass plants later.....



President's Message**Fall 2007**

Friends:

I receive a number of newsletters from other Refuges and nonprofit organizations, and I have never once seen verbiage indicating that the organization has too many volunteers. The same is true of the Friends--we are always in need of more volunteers. This is especially true in light of the Refuge personnel cuts that have been made in the recent past. As we anticipated, we are being asked to do more than ever before to support the Refuge. We are currently devising means to recruit more volunteers; to that end, we have enclosed a membership sign-up form in this newsletter. We are asking current members pass this issue along to their friends in an attempt to recruit others to join our organization, especially in the local area. We review each new membership and contact the new member to determine his/her interest in volunteering with us. In addition, we pass these names on to Cindy Heffley, the Refuge staff member in charge of volunteers, so that she can contact them for purposes other than Friends' activities.

It is the policy of our Board of Directors to never pressure volunteers and to have them work to the level at which they feel comfortable.

Because of the work being performed by our current dedicated volunteers, I can report to you that our organization is doing well. (In fact, we will have a report in the next newsletter about our finances and membership numbers.) Our cadre of volunteers drives this organization and I thank them for their dedication.

We invite any member who is not a volunteer and who would like to test the waters to contact the Refuge at 410 639-7056 to give volunteering a try. I promise that we will not burden you by demanding too much of your time.


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**Editor**

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*Published Quarterly By
The Friends of Eastern Neck,
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Friend: \$25

Patron: \$50

Eagle Society: \$100

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Gren Whitman: Membership

Jackie Cicconi
and Kay Snelson:
Bookstore

REFUGE UPDATE

by Cindy Heffley, Refuge Visitor Services Specialist

New Refuge Manager named for the complex: As of September 16, Suzanne Baird will be the new Refuge manager for the Chesapeake Marshlands NWR Complex. Suzanne is transferring from Great Dismal Swamp in Virginia. She plans on spending time at Eastern Neck in order to get to know everyone. Watch for more information in the December newsletter.

Interpretive Panels: At last! Eight new interpretative panels will be going to production by the end of August. The panels will be placed in the kiosks at the Tundra Swan Boardwalk, Ingleside Recreation Area and Tubby Cove. Once the panels are installed, visitors will be able to learn about *Tundra Swan Migration*, *Birds of Prey*, *General Bird Migration*, *Blue Crabs*, *Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)* and *Good Swan vs. Bad Swan*. Visitors will also be able to see a large map of the island as well as a map of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Other panels may come if funding becomes available. A new interpretive panel will also be installed at the BayScape Garden. It is the same as the panel on the Tidal Marsh Trail which explains Bayscaping. In the near future, we will be creating a short path from the parking lot to the garden to encourage visitors to take a stroll through the garden and enjoy all of its beauty.

AND, (finally!).....

As anyone who has stepped into the Lodge recently will tell you, it is much roomier than it was. The contractor responsible for completing the interpretive exhibits in the Lodge has moved the cases to make the area handicap accessible. Within the next month, the contractor will be installing artifacts, background images and text in the cases. He will also be attaching a rail board to the diorama in the front corner so observers will have a better understanding of its contents. .

Refuge Events Calendar

Join Refuge volunteers and staff for the **2007 Big Sit!** on October 14. This fun event has been taking place for 12 years throughout the country. According to *Bird Watcher's Digest*, "Find a good spot for bird watching -- preferably one with good views of a variety of habitats and lots of birds. Create a real or imaginary circle 17 feet in diameter and sit inside the circle for 24 hours, counting all the bird species you see or hear. That's it." More information will be posted on the Refuge web site (www.fws.gov/northeast/easternneck) and at the Lodge.



Deer hunts will take place on the following dates: September 29, October 3, 12, 15 and 26, and November 5 and 16. As always, only permitted hunters will be able to access the Refuge on those days. If you are interested in helping out at the deer check station on the early shift -- from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. -- please contact Cindy at the office.

Saturday, December 8 is the date for the annual **Waterfowl Watch** at the Refuge. Join Howard McIntyre and others as they take observers around the Refuge to enjoy the beauty of the waterfowl visiting the Refuge. Hot beverages will be available at the Lodge. More information will be posted on the Refuge web site and at the Lodge.



BAYSCAPE GARDEN RECEIVES BAY WISE CERTIFICATION

By Cindy Heffley



Impacts of land development within the Chesapeake Bay watershed have had devastating effects on Bay ecology, evidenced by the loss of wetlands and the decline in water quality and submerged aquatic vegetation. Increasing public awareness of the need to restore biodiversity in the Chesapeake Bay area and of the individual's role and responsibility in contributing to a healthy ecosystem was the main objective of Eastern Neck NWR's BayScape Demonstration Garden which was developed in 2001.

Because the Refuge is surrounded by the Chesapeake Bay and Chester River, the way in which the landscape is maintained can affect the health of the bay and our environment. The Refuge's Bay-friendly garden includes native plants, a water garden and a living fence. It demonstrates practical and aesthetic alternatives to lawn-dominated landscapes while maintaining waterfront views.

The garden was certified on June 13, 2007 as Bay Wise by the Master Gardeners of Queen Anne's County. These Master Gardeners are associated with the University of Maryland's Cooperative Extension. Two of the interns involved with the group are volunteers at the Refuge and were instrumental in certifying the garden. (See the story by one of these volunteers below).

In addition to this garden being an example of a Bay-friendly landscape, it also proves to be a place of solitude and beauty for all who take time to visit. The Refuge is fortunate to have a small group of volunteers who nurture and cultivate the garden as if it was their own. They are always looking for others interested in helping with the garden. If you are interested, please call Cindy at 410-639-7056.

Butterfly Garden is Certified as Bay Wise by Master Gardeners

By Alice Macnow

In June, the Master Gardeners of the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension visited the Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge Butterfly/Bayview (BayScape) Garden. With a *Bay Wise* questionnaire in hand, Annie Ittu, Vida Morley, Zeeger deWilde, Peggy Christie and Alice Macnow investigated garden practices to determine whether the garden followed guidelines that protect the Bay. Homeowners can also take the test to see if they are helping or hurting the Bay. (The questionnaire is available by phone and at the website below.)

The environmentally sound approaches include fertilizing wisely, watering efficiently, controlling storm water runoff, mulching appropriately, recycling yard waste, managing pests with integrated pest management, planting wisely, encouraging wildlife, and protecting the waterfront. The Butterfly Garden passed handily, with 61 points on the questionnaire. There, Friends of Eastern Neck and Master Gardener volunteers mulch heavily, plant mainly native plants, choose plants for butterflies and larva food, rarely spray herbicides on weeds (hand pull weeds instead), rarely water (only when planting new plants) and never use pesticides.

After three hours of looking over the garden and checking off actions such as use by-product mulches (shredded hardwood or pine bark), and designing and maintaining a landscape that, once established, will survive on natural rainfall amounts, the garden was certified as Bay Wise. A sign at the path entrance to the garden was erected (above). Brochures and more information about the Bay Wise program can be found at the Lodge or by writing or calling the Master Gardener home and garden information center at 1-800-342-2507 or online at www.hgic.umd.edu.



FRIENDS' DOINGS

Shady Buys at the Bookstore


Bookstore manager Jackie Cicconi has had many requests over the past few months for a ladies' version of our popular men's baseball caps. So she ordered some visors (below left) as alternative headgear. You have your choice of royal blue or black, both with white lettering. Remember, there are two versions of the baseball caps—the old standby with just the Refuge name and the newer "Kayak Eastern Neck" option. All three styles are priced at \$14.95.



And we ask why the kids should have all the froggy fun with their t-shirts when a spirited adult version is available from the Mountain T-shirt Company (below)? It's a lovely pastel green with a pocket full of frogs, tasteful enough for a discerning adult yet lots of fun. Another Mountain T gem for only \$15.95.



You Never Know Who's Watching

Cindy uses an 'alerts' feature of Google that allows you to enter words in a search box and automatically receive an e-mail any time they are used on any internet sites. She uses this to track Eastern Neck on the internet. Recently, she received a link to the blog of a person who had visited the Refuge in June. He reportedly had had a rough day until arriving at the Refuge and encountering a wonderful volunteer at the front desk. (Although the writer didn't mention the volunteer by name, some minor detective work revealed that Marie Beasley was on duty that day.) If you've worked at the bookstore over the past few weeks, you've already seen the kind words the writer wrote. If not, you can read them at this site: <http://dandelife.com/story/30434>. Not only did the writer give a pat on the back to Marie, he also put a link to the Refuge web site on his blog! This just goes to show that you never know who is watching---or where your actions might end up. 

UPDATE: Native Species are S-L-O-W-L-Y Gaining Ground

By Rachel Cliché
Invasive Species Specialist

Have you heard? Native species are moving to the neighborhood! Common three-square, marsh mallow and cattail are taking the place of *Phragmites*. Pine seedlings are poking through native grasses and herbs in areas formerly dominated by mile-a-minute weed, Japanese stilt-grass, Japanese honeysuckle, multi-flora rose and wineberry.

Don't get your hopes up yet! Invasive species may no longer dominate some of these areas, but they are still lurking in corners and hiding among the wildflowers. In some instances, the target invasive species were successfully managed, like wineberry and Japanese stilt grass, but new invasive species have moved into the area. Can you guess which invasive is the usual suspect? Mile-a-minute weed, of course!

Therefore, we will still need to be vigilant and persistent in our control efforts. Herbicides will be used once again to manage these invasives, taking care not to impact native species that are gaining ground.

In addition to spot treatment of areas managed last year, an additional 26 acres of shrub and forested habitat will be mechanically and chemically treated this August and September. A three- to five-year study will be conducted on approximately six of these acres by the Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage to determine the efficacy of management techniques on mile-a-minute weed, Japanese stilt grass, wineberry and princess tree.

As you can see, we had a lot going on this summer, and we certainly couldn't have done it without the help of our interns. Amy Preston and Colleen Sampson not only fought invasive species on Eastern Neck, but also monitored beetles on Garrett Island, which are, by the way, thriving. Amy and Colleen helped to brighten the summer with their enthusiastic smiles and positive attitudes. We are so appreciative of their assistance this summer!



Interns Amy Preston (above) and Colleen Sampson (below) were a great help to Rachel this summer in the continuing invasives war, but they took time out to assist with the marsh grass planting in July. Thanks for all your help!



GOOD NEWS!

Bald Eagle Officially Leaves the Endangered Species List

August 8 was the day the bald eagle officially soared off the list of threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). After plummeting to only 400 pairs in the lower 48 states in 1963, the population has rebounded to more than 10,000 pairs today. Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced the remarkable recovery of our national symbol in Washington, DC on June 28.

IMPRESSIONS OF A TEN-YEAR MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF THE FRIENDS OF ENNWR

By Joan Hasselquist

(Editor's note: This is the third in the series of four reminiscences about the early years of the Friends of Eastern Neck written by each of the original officers in celebration of our 10th anniversary.)

Towing our boat "On the Road Again" to the Chesapeake Bay area over and over prompted us to buy property and a little, old house on Herringtown Creek off the Chester River at Skinners Neck. We had a five year plan, but we knew after one year this was our place for retirement. Our youngest son, Leif, was a staff member at New York University and when a long week-end was available he brought his co-workers down for visits. A highlight of these trips was often a bicycling tour to Eastern Neck NWR. All of us grew to love the place!!

In 1995 we built a new home and became permanent residents here. In the summer of 1997, when visiting the Refuge, I noticed a request for volunteers, and I put "Ned and Joan Hasselquist" on the list. A week later we got a call from Lynne Smith to come to a meeting to help in the organization of a "Friends" group. We went from volunteers to members of the Board in one evening, and for ten years I have been filling this role as member, secretary and vice-president.

Those beginning years were full of tasks to enlist members, participate in flea markets to raise money and participate in Kent County activities with an information booth about this great place - ENNWR. We were excited with every new member and with making \$75 at the booth for a full day's operation. We moved from position of being under the wing of Blackwater in all we did to establishing our own identity, writing and being awarded grants for many projects, organizing and starting our Bookstore. We moved from cleaning and sweeping out the Lodge for group meetings to realizing the funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for restoring the Lodge to its old beauty. Marty Kaehny, Refuge Manager, gave us encouragement and guidance in becoming the Friends of today.



Joan (here with former Refuge manager Marty Kaehny) often helps at the annual Youth Fishing Derby.

Ned and I gained much from our service at the Refuge. We learned that the mission of the Refuge was not only for protection of its wild beauty, but the management of these resources. We identified bird populations; we walked and cleaned trails; we planned activities for the public to enjoy and to gain knowledge; we assisted with grass planting and monitoring; we worked at the booths at so many activities in Chestertown, Rock Hall and Kent County. It was most rewarding and exciting!!

The most constant positive factor in our success, in my judgment, has been the quality and dedication of the Board members who have served with me throughout the last ten years. Members today show the same enthusiasm, energy and respect for the natural beauty of this Refuge as those who met for that first time in 1997. *✍*

IN MEMORIAM: *It is with regret that we tell you that Joan's husband, Ned, died on June 8, 2007. The Board of Directors of the Friends sent a memorial contribution in his name to his favorite charity, the Esperance Center in California, which provides support to developmentally disabled adults. We miss his cheery outlook and unwavering support and wish Joan comfort in her memories.*

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD (NEW) VOLUNTEERS.....

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 the form below. Someone **will** be in touch!

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ E-mail: _____

Membership Type:

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.

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