



Quincy Bog Notes



Spring 2002

Volume 9 Number 2

Notes from the Chair by Bill Taffe

This year I drew a tough sabbatical assignment "forcing" me to spend four of the winter/spring months camping throughout the southwest United States. My wife Betty Jo, aging border collie Kip and I are traveling the entire US - Mexican border, from Brownsville, Texas to San Diego, California. As the saying goes, "it's a tough job, but somebody has to do it!" And what a difference from the Quincy Bog!

The contrasts are incredible. The visually dominant vegetation here in the sparsely vegetated Ajo valley of Arizona (where I'm writing this article) is the Saguaro cactus, which typically grows to a height of 15 - 20 feet. Low lying Creosote bushes, the dominant shrub, are commonly spaced 6 to 10 feet apart. Palo Verde trees, with their chlorophyll-filled green bark, reduce their moisture loss by shedding their leaves when there is no rain, regrowing them after a rainfall. We had 1/8" of rain last night, the first precipitation in Organ Pipe National Monument since early December. But, by noon today, evaporation had dried the surface and you couldn't tell that any had fallen at all. Sometimes it takes a dramatic contrast like this to remember the precious gems we have in our northeastern bogs like the Quincy Bog.

Biologists are becoming increasingly aware that diversity of plant and animal populations is critically important for a healthy environment. Regions that develop monocultures lose some of the robustness that allows plants and animals to cope with the natural variations in climate, food systems, disease and other threats to life. Just as a society is healthier when there is a lively interplay among a variety of political and social viewpoints, so too the natural environment is stronger when there is variety and diversity of environment and habitat. So we need both deserts and bogs--each offers a specialized niche for both plants and animals. We need saguaro cactus, and we need cinnamon fern. We are richer for having both the desert's century plant and bog's winterberry. Together they make a stronger ecosystem that we are lucky to enjoy and hope to leave undamaged for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

We have some great news to share with you. As you'll read in more detail later in this issue, working through The Nature Conservancy, Dr. James Petersen is donating to Rumney Ecological Systems, a 90+ acre parcel of land almost adjoining the Quincy Bog. Lying just above

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Tending the Petersen Forest by Nory Parr

The new acquisition of the 91-acre Petersen woodlot on East Rumney Road by the Rumney Ecological Systems (aka Quincy Bog), presents some opportunities, and challenges, that promise to be exciting over the next few years. Dr. James Petersen of Lexington, Mass, had been a responsible steward of this undeveloped woodland for more than 30 years. Recently he donated the property to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the same organization that helped local folks protect Quincy Bog more than 30 years ago. TNC has in turn donated the property to RES, under terms of a legal and perpetual Conservation Easement.

Significant easement stipulations include: 1) no buildings, subdivision, or motorized traffic will be permitted...ever; 2) the majority of the tract will be left to revert to "old growth" conditions, without human interference (current age of trees range from 50-100+ years; though forest structure is more indicative of old growth, this process may take 200+ years on the Petersen tract); 3) education about natural and management processes will consist of demonstration areas, self-guided trails and tours on the forest; 4) management will strive to protect and enhance the resources, including unique or fragile areas (such as vernal pools, and seeps in ledges), and demonstrate ecologically-based, sustainable forestry treatments; and 5) management, protection and utilization of the tract shall be guided by a comprehensive resource stewardship plan, to be prepared by RES, approved by TNC, and updated on a ten year cycle.

Silviculture is the art and science of tending stands of trees, from seedling establishment to harvest (whether by logging or other events). Sound silviculture seeks to mimic natural events that impact the forest within an economic parameter. For instance, thinning removes low-vigor, crowded or short-lived trees in a stand, just as (fierce!) natural competition does; if one can sell those trees as a useful product, good! A clear-cut represents more violent events, such as a fire or big windstorm; new seedlings - often "pioneer" species like aspen or paper birch - quickly colonize such heavy disturbances to establish a new stand. Selection harvesting - single tree or in small groups - resembles death of mature trees or insect/disease pockets...or ice storms like 1998.

Silviculture will be applied within the parameters on-site (soils, species longevity, health, risk, etc.) more than economic objectives. This should allow the development of large and valuable timber on portions of the forest over

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**Quincy Bog
Bird Observatory
by Al Ports**

"Where are the birds?" was a question I heard frequently this past winter. I found myself asking, "Where are the *accipiters*?" as the previous winter goshawks, Cooper's and sharp-shin hawks were regular visitors. The answer to the first is also the answer to the second. Because the winter was so mild, the passerines did not need the largesse put out by humans, as they were able to find sufficient food in the wild. As a consequence of the mild winter, which extended well northward, we did not see the eruption of winter finches such as the common redpoll, pine siskins, or American goldfinch. And, since there were no birds at the feeders, bird-eating *accipiters* had no reason to hang out around them.

Dark-eyed juncos were in abundance throughout the area, and during the period November 30 -January 2 a fox sparrow was traveling with the flock that was feeding at our feeders. It stayed just along enough to be included in the Christmas Bird Count, and made me fill out the additional paper work required when seeing an unusual species during the count. Pine siskins and common redpolls were rarities this winter, with just a few of the former among the limited American goldfinch flocks, and the latter appearing on just one day in early winter, then again for one day in the late winter

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Looking for Volunteers

If you have 3 or 4 hours a week and want to spend it in a relaxing, enjoyable way, in a scenic and natural environment, why not look into being a docent at the Bog this summer.

**Call Pat Barker at 536-2401,
and learn more!**

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time. All applied silviculture treatments will be compared to control or natural stands to gauge results of management, for better or worse.

Board members Northam Parr, Bob Berti, Scott Bailey, and John Sobetzer have made preliminary examination of the Petersen tract, and will be writing the stewardship plan over the next year, following objectives in the easement that protects this property in perpetuity.

The delicate balance between environmental protection and thoughtful exploitation defines forestry - as it does land ownership. I believe RES will successfully demonstrate the art of conservation on the Petersen tract in years to come.

[Northam Parr is the University of New Hampshire Extension Service Forester for Grafton County and has been a member of the board of directors of the Rumney Ecological Systems since 1984.]

June 15th-Annual flower walk with
Sarah Schwaegler

September 14th-Third annual
mushroom walk with Faith Hunt

See details plus complete program
schedule for 2002 on Page Three

Quincy Bog Notes

Al Ports, Editor

(603) 786-9002

A twice-yearly newsletter of information, announcements and news about the Quincy Bog Natural Area and related concerns. Editorial submissions are welcome. Please send to: Editor, Quincy Bog Notes, P.O. Box 90, Rumney, NH 03266.

**Summer Programs
2002**

We are pleased to offer a full schedule of programs for the summer. Unless otherwise noted all programs start at 7:00 p.m. and are held at the nature museum on-site.

June 12th-Dr. David Switzer, Professor of History at Plymouth State College, and noted nautical archeologist, will share his adventures of exploring shipwrecks, and what they tell us about earlier times.

June 15th-Sarah Schwaegler will lead her always popular flower walk starting promptly at 9:30a.m. from the Nature Museum. Bring bug spray and binoculars, if you have them.

June 26th-Dr. James Koermer, Professor of Meteorology at Plymouth State College will tell us the secrets of forecasting and predicting weather. Check his web site at www.vortex.plymouth.edu, it's a beaut!

July 10th-Elise Lawson and John Severance owners of Watershed to Wildlife, Inc, an environmental consulting firm in Whitefield NH, will tell us about beavers and their, the beavers', accomplishments. We'll make short pre-program walk to Quincy Bog's beaver dam.

July 24th-Back by popular demand is Steve Sweedler, Horticulturist at Plymouth State College who is responsible for the wonderful landscaping one sees at PSC. Steve will talk about four-season landscaping.

August 7th-Peter Richardson of the Connecticut River Watershed Council will tell us about the history and attributes of this important neighboring river.

August 21st-"Rescued Animals", Mary Lee of the New Hampshire Humane Society in Meredith will come with some of her furry friends and tell us about her work.

September 14th-Mycologist Faith Hunt will lead us on the third annual Bog mushroom walk starting at 11:00 a.m. There will be a pot-luck meal to follow where we can sample what we found. Call Jody Young, 786-9053, or Al Ports, 786-9002 for details.

Errata

The author of the article "Do Dragons Fly?" in the winter edition of the Bog Notes was written by Bill Taffe. The editor offers his sincerest apologies for this oversight.

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Perhaps the most unusual winter occurrence was the almost daily visit by a brown creeper that fed at our suet feeders. Although they are a resident species, I had never seen a brown creeper at a feeder before. A red fox was a regular visitor throughout the winter looking for red squirrels and mice. I suspect there may be several since we saw them so often. In fact as I write this, one appeared in the yard. Although they look healthy and run when they see or hear us, rabies is always a concern.



fisher which property. One,

A more unusual mammalian visitor was (*Martes pennanti*), were sighted on the three times this winter. probably a female, was

nosing around the feeder and brush pile one day when I looked out; while the other, much larger than the first, was seen walking across the bog on the ice on two occasions. I also saw fisher on several times off the property, but not too far away.

Only the smallest patch of water to appear in early April was enough for the ducks and geese to begin arriving. Our resident pair of Canada geese arrived during the first week of April and the female was incubating her eggs beginning April 18th. As of May 9th she still is on the nest. There's been some concern as the water in the bog keeps rising as a result of the beaver activity and rain. What was once a high and dry nest was only a couple of inches above the water line for the past 10 days. The added depth of the water has attracted diving ducks such as common and hooded mergansers, and buffleheads, none of which stayed for more than a few days. An osprey has been hanging around and I watched as it took a fish from the bog and went off to enjoy it. For the past week an American bittern has been seen and heard, and a Virginia rail has been calling regularly. The Quincy Bog Natural Area is a wonderful place; please take the time to visit and enjoy it!

Meet the New Directors

Carolyn "Widge" Kent - Plymouth NH- has devoted her professional career to working with children with disabilities, and has taught at both Plymouth State College and Tufts University. In addition to keeping a busy schedule professionally, Widge still has found time to serve on the Plymouth Board of Selectmen, Advisory Budget Committee and currently is a long-standing member of the Planning Board and Chair of the Capital Planning Committee.

Doug McLane - Plymouth NH-has a long history of
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the Bog, on a flank of Stinson Mountain, this new property provides a wooded upland habitat that protects another part of the Bog's watershed and offers Bog visitors a new and different environment both for quiet walking and for nature study. We are most grateful to Dr. Petersen for this gift and to The Nature Conservancy for facilitating the process. The Board of Directors is developing a plan for a nature trail and other opportunities for nature study consistent with the goal of conservation and protection of the property.

Jody Young has organized a great series of Wednesday night programs for the summer months, and we'll have several bird and plant walks this spring, summer and fall. The Bog is open from dawn to dusk and the Nature Center is staffed by volunteers during July and August at the hours posted on the kiosk. We plan to have a great summer at the Bog and hope you too will enjoy the Quincy Bog this season.



On-going trail and bridge work. Details next Bog Notes!



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conservation and environmental awareness having been associated with the National Audubon Society as a docent in Damariscotta ME and Spooner WI. He shared this interest with others as a teacher of Biology and Conservation at Plymouth Area High School from 1975-1986, and a director of the Squam Lakes Science Center in the 1980's. He and his wife, Susan, presently own McLane Realty and Off Campus Rentals in Plymouth.

Alice King – Rumney NH-with her husband, Wayne, own Moosewood Communications, a communications and public relations company with social entrepreneurship at its core. Moosewood works with organizations throughout the world, particularly West Africa. Closer to home Alice and her company provide pro bono services for organizations such the Mount Mooselaukee Health Center, NH Community Loan Fund, NH Women's Lobby, Franklin Pierce Law Center and many others.

Please!

**Be a Friend
of Quincy Bog**

