



Quincy Bog Notes



Spring 2008

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Want to Get Involved?

Editor

Have you ever considered getting more involved with the Rumney Ecological Systems/Pemi-Baker Land Trust (RES/PBLT)? As a Friend of the Bog, you have already invested with RES (which owns and manages the Quincy Bog Natural Area and all that goes on there) through your annual donations. But, there are additional opportunities for those who would like to do more. The following is a description of activities that are open to all.

Docent Volunteer - Each summer during July and August the Nature Center is manned by individuals who meet and greet visitors to the Bog, and when no one is visiting get to spend quality, quiet time with Mother Nature and do a bit of bird watching, mammal watching, odonata watching, or flower inspecting. Most of the Nature Center volunteers spend just one morning or afternoon a week on duty (although a few do more), and there is a need for on-call volunteers. There is a short pre-season training session where you will learn more, not just about Quincy Bog, but also our adjacent holdings, the Baker Forest and Quincy Pasture Forest. Pat Barker, of Camp-ton, heads up the Nature Center volunteer program and would like to hear from you if you have an interest. See Pat's notice in this issue of the Notes. She can be reached at (603) 536-2401.

Newsletter Articles - Many of us like to put on record those adventures we've experienced or thoughts we've had. One place to do that and to share those experiences with others is in our semi-annual Bog Notes. The Notes go out to about 600 people and are posted on our web site for the world to read. As editor of the Bog Notes I invite you to submit an article that you feel would be of interest to our membership, and perhaps to the world. With enough articles we may well be able to expand the current issues, or perhaps, even, put more issues out each year. As you can see from past articles, e.g. *Backyard Sugarin'*, *Antarctic Impressions*, and *Bird-watching in Texas*, the subjects are varied. Submissions should be limited to a maximum of 1,000 words. If you have an article, or even just an idea, please give me a call at (603) 786-9002, or email me at a_ports@yahoo.com.

Land Trust - The Rumney Ecological Systems expansion into the field of conservation easements and the subsequent establishment of the Pemi-Baker Land Trust has opened up many new and different opportunities for folks to get involved. Involvement could range from merely walking a tract of land to determine that provi-

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Fifteen Minutes

by Christine Perron

It is a short distance from the cabin. I walk along the rocky driveway and turn onto a path through a tunnel of trees. The trail takes me across the top of an esker that rises between a marsh and a beaver pond. I can think of no other place I would rather spend fifteen minutes. I lean against a sturdy hemlock and close my eyes.

A red squirrel immediately greets me with its scolding chatter. My presence rouses a group of blue jays from a nearby hemlock and I can follow their loud, raucous calls around the pond and back again. I can see them in my mind without opening my eyes: flashes of agitated azure flitting from tree to tree. Nuthatches are chuckling in the distance and chickadees are coming closer with their inquisitive notes, curious about the intrusion.

A light wind stirs the hemlock branches around me. It quietly rustles through the expanse of three-way sedge that is just behind me, stirring the air and releasing the scent of the marsh. It is a smell that makes me think of sedges and cattails, ankle deep in murky water.

It is starting to rain. I can hear raindrops falling on the trees and in the water, but they do not reach me through the dense canopy. A fly buzzes past my ear. My mind starts to wander. Will I have time to do my laundry when I get home later? I start to think about a project I need to finish at work on Monday. Should I go to work earlier than usual? A bull frog kerr-runks loudly and the sound pulls me from my thoughts, back to my senses, and I am glad. These are the sounds, smells, and images that will sustain me through another hectic week, I think to myself.

I open my eyes when I guess that fifteen minutes have passed. Color explodes around me in the overcast light of the morning. The ferns are a golden glow among the bronze sea of sedges. The leaves of the lowbush blueberry are deep purple and the trunk of a white birch shines through the hemlock. Everything is seemingly illuminated from within. It is difficult to pull myself away from my morning reverie. I finally leave my spot on the esker after saying thank you to no one, to everything.

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Quincy Bog Natural Area

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Names in italics are founding directors.

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.

Notable Quotes

I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use our natural resources, but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob by wasteful use, the generations that come after us. Theodore Roosevelt, 1900

When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world. John Muir (1838-1914)

It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment. Ansel Adams (1902-1984)

Unless we practice conservation, those who come after us will have to pay the price of misery, degradation, and failure for the progress and prosperity of our day. Gifford Pinchot c 1907

Time and space - time to be alone, space to move about - these may well become the great scarcities of tomorrow. Edwin Way Teale, 1956

Optimism is a good characteristic, but if carried to an excess, it becomes foolishness. We are prone to speak of the resources of this country as inexhaustible; this is not so. Theodore Roosevelt, 1907, 7th Annual Message to Congress

The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe, the less taste we shall have for destruction. Rachel Carson (1907-1964)

It is our task in our time and in our generation, to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours. John F. Kennedy.

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land. Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, 1949

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sions of the easement are being met, to helping fund an easement for those landowners who require financial assistance in seeing that their land will remain, in perpetuity, as it is today. Between survey costs, legal fees, and easement monitoring donation, the cost of establishing a conservation easement can run as much as \$25,000. If you are at a level where you would like to make a difference in how the Pemi-Baker area can look 50, 100, 500 years and longer, please contact Charlie Chandler at (603) 989-9814

Director RES/PBLT - Do you have a skill, a knowledge, the interest in serving as a director of the Rumney Ecological Systems/Pemi-Baker Land Trust? We have a working 21-member, all volunteer board that has its fingers in all aspects of managing and operating the Quincy Bog Natural Area and our other land holdings, as well as operating and managing the Pemi-Baker Land Trust. The backgrounds of the present board include scientists, educators, surveyors, forestry and wildlife professionals, field naturalists, businessmen and women, lawyers, etc. Terms are for three years. Please contact me, Al Ports, Chair, Nominating Committee, at (603) 786-9002, or better yet, email me at a_ports@yahoo.com.

I'm sure I haven't covered all of the opportunities that are available for those interested in getting involved, so if you have an idea, and want to help, please don't hesitate to contact the folks cited above.

Errata

The article *Backyard Sugarin'* which appeared in the Winter Issue of the Bog Notes was written by RES/PBLT director Widge Kent.

Birdwatching in South Florida

by Al Ports

On a map draw a line across Florida from Boca Raton on the Atlantic Coast to Bonita Springs on the Gulf Coast, then go south to Key West, and out to sea to Ft. Jefferson on the Dry Tortugas. This with a few short forays over the northern boundary makes up South Florida for the birding community. South Florida along with Alaska, South Texas, and Southeastern Arizona, are the major "must visits" areas for folks birding in the United States. The area is intriguing in that it not only has unusual endemic species, but also unusual visiting and introduced exotic species. Only in South Florida are the introduced common mynah and red-whiskered bulbul - both native to southern Asia and China, but introduced throughout the world - treated as "trash birds" much like the house sparrow and European starling. On my last trip to South Florida we saw red-legged honeycreeper, mitered and red-masked parakeets, and red-crowned parrot; all exotics and not countable if you are a competitive "lister".

But South Florida has many species found there and nowhere else in the United States such as white-crowned pigeon, snail kite, mangrove cuckoo, smooth billed-ani, Antillean nighthawk, Florida scrub-jay, black-whiskered vireo, shiny cowbird, and spot-breasted oriole. Although found elsewhere in southeastern United States, the threatened Bachman's sparrow is most easily found in South Florida.

Like the other major birding areas in the U.S., the area is large and birders can put many miles on their car, although in Alaska it's miles in an airplane. The big difference is traffic; in my opinion, Florida traffic is horrible and getting around can be a bit of chore.

Interesting birds can be found just about anywhere in South Florida, but there are a number of destination areas that most birders want to visit. The Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, just north of my boundary line is one. Another is National Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary northeast of Naples. The Miccosukee Indian Reservation is another destination point in order to see snail kites, and, if you are so inclined, to take an airboat ride through the Everglades. And, of course, whether you're a birder or not, one must visit Everglades National Park. Two of my most favorite birding destinations in South Florida, both which I have been to only once, but vow to return, are the Wakodahatchee Wetlands located in suburban Delray Beach, and the Dry Tortugas National Park.

The Wakodahatchee Wetlands is a 50-acre wastewater reclamation facility for Palm Beach County. The county

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Quincy Bog 2008 Summer Volunteers

Greetings Quincy Bog Nature Volunteers! It's time again to mark your July and August calendars. This year, like last, should be very interesting vegetation-wise. Last year most of the beavers had left our pond, which drastically lowered water levels. This winter, with snow on the ground from Thanksgiving into April, we may see more changes.

We welcome any new volunteers who are able to donate 2 ½ to 3 hours a week for those two summer months. We are also signing up interested friends who are only able to donate several hours a month to fill in for vacationing volunteers.

A postcard will notify all interested would-be docents of the date and time of the orientation/planning meeting toward the end of June. See you soon. Pat Barker, Volunteer Chairman. Questions? Phone: 536-2401.

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We can never have enough of nature. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854

I am pessimistic about the human race because it is too ingenious for its own good. Our approach to nature is to beat it into submission. We would stand a better chance of survival if we accommodated ourselves to this planet and viewed it appreciatively instead of skeptically and dictatorially. E.B. White (1899-1985)

God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches, and a thousand tempests and floods. But he cannot save them from fools. John Muir (1838-1914)

[Forests are] the 'lungs' of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people. Franklin D. Roosevelt, 29 January 1935

Our ideals, laws and customs should be based on the proposition that each generation, in turn, becomes the custodian rather than the absolute owner of our resources and each generation has the obligation to pass this inheritance on to the future. Charles A. Lindbergh, 23 May 1971

For if one link in nature's chain might be lost, another might be lost, until the whole of things will vanish by piecemeal. Thomas Jefferson

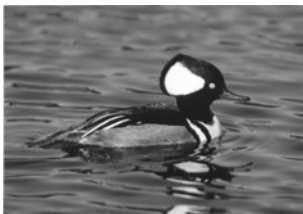
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pumps over a million gallons of highly treated water into the wetlands every day. The wetlands are a park with a three-quarter mile boardwalk with gazebos and benches throughout. Over 150 species of birds have been seen in the wetlands and I have never seen more least bitterns and purple gallinules in one place than I did there.

The Dry Tortugas and Fort Jefferson is the other "must return to" site. Fort Jefferson is a 70 mile boat or seaplane ride from Key West. Located on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas, Fort Jefferson was built in the mid-1800's and still remains America's largest coastal fort. Originally constructed to protect the Gulf of Mexico shipping lanes, Fort Jefferson was used as a military prison during the Civil War. During this time, it was "home" to Dr. Samuel Mudd, who was convicted of complicity in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Fort Jefferson is a sad place to bird as it is the only place that has fresh water (not potable for humans) for the birds that attempt to cross the Gulf Mexico in that area from their wintering grounds in Central and South America. There is some belief that most of the passerines that stop off at Ft. Jefferson never make it the breeding grounds. Nevertheless, for the birder it is an interesting place to visit, particularly during spring migration when flocks of passerines come to rest on their way north. During my trip I found 13 male indigo buntings in one small bush. Of course, the big news of the day was when a seaplane thought be Jimmy Buffett's landed at the key. It had as many binoculars on it as did the birds. Unfortunately it was not the singer's seaplane. Seabird colonies such as masked and brown boobies on the adjacent keys, and soaring magnificent frigatebirds were also major attractions.



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Birding South Florida is an experience that every birder should have at least once because there are so many species that only can be found there, and other species that can be found more easily there than anywhere else. I must admit, however, that I prefer to, and do, spend more time in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas and Southeastern Arizona where this year I added three new species to my life list: green parakeet (#680) in Texas, northern jacana (#681), flame-colored tanager (#682), and gray vireo (#683) in Arizona. Life is good!

More Notable Quotes

And Man created the plastic bag and the tin and aluminum can and the cellophane wrapper and the paper plate, and this was good because Man could then take his automobile and buy all his food in one place and He could save that which was good to eat in the refrigerator and throw away that which had no further use. And soon the earth was covered with plastic bags and aluminum cans and paper plates and disposable bottles and there was nowhere to sit down or walk, and Man shook his head and cried: "Look at this Godawful mess." Art Buchwald, 1970

Our children may save us if they are taught to care properly for the planet; but if not, it may be back to the Ice Age or the caves from where we first emerged. Then we'll have to view the universe above from a cold, dark place. No more jet skis, nuclear weapons, plastic crap, broken pay phones, drugs, cars, waffle irons, or television. Come to think of it, that might not be a bad idea. Jimmy Buffett, April 1990

See us on the web at:
<http://www.quincybog.org>