

River Talk

Newsletter of the Carantouan Greenway



Fall 2023

A Message From Our President

I want to thank all of our members and friends for your continued support of Carantouan Greenway, which allows us to maintain and improve our properties, conduct environmental educational programs, and, most important, protect valuable habitat for wildlife and for human enjoyment. We have accomplished much this year: 1.) A diverse group of stakeholders worked with a Cornell University student organization called Design Connect to finalize a detailed plan for a Waverly Waterfront Access



Park, and we acquired the property along the Chemung River for future development, 2.) Marty Borko led several interesting hikes to investigate flora and fauna along the Wildwood trail, and he kept all the trails mowed and looking park-like.

As you read this newsletter you will learn about other activities. All of what we do is thanks to the hard work and dedication of our enthusiastic and talented board, who spend hours of

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Trail Maintenance

Keeping the trails clear and a pleasure to navigate is an ongoing task. It takes many hands to keep brush cut back, trails mowed, and trees and limbs in check. Above Dakota clears a fallen tree on the Forbidden Path.

Wildflower Walk

Aug. 5 turned out to be the perfect day for a hike at the Carantouan Greenway's Wildwood Preserve in Waverly. Making it memorable was Dan Spada, president of the New York Flora Association. As the group made its way through marsh, woodland and open fields, Dan accentuated visitors' enjoyment of being out in nature with his encyclopedic knowledge of wildflowers. Often overlooked plants that were brought to life with names and information describing their unique place in the environment. Some visitors were thrilled to have seen the parasitic plant, ghost plant (previously known as Indian pipe) for the first time. He pointed out a fine example of perforate leaves occurring on boneset. A special moment happened while discovering a rare threatened plant found at Wildwood. Dan explained how one could go about exploring on their own using field guides, personally favoring the Newcomb's Wildflower Guide. The Greenway often offers guided hikes. Find them on our website at carantouangreenway.org.



Sumac and Brown Thrasher

One can see what happened this May with a very late heavy frost that killed many young leaves of many tree species such as this staghorn sumac. It was only one week before the frost that Jim Cole took his photos of this Brown Thrasher that probably was feeding on its fruits. The Thrasher is one of three local species that belongs to the mimic family; the catbird, the thrasher and the mockingbird. They all can mimic other sounds, hence their family name. The catbird is our most common, the mocker the least and the thrasher somewhere in the middle. It is the thrasher that is the greatest protector of its nest site and one should always be careful around it if you are lucky enough to find it.



Eastern Pondhawk

This is a short note from a field trip to the Carantouan Greenway Wildwood Nature Reserve. I caught this insect near the pond on the property. The eastern pondhawk (*Erythemis simplicicollis*) is a relatively common dragonfly in New York and has been found in all of our counties except one. The green thorax, blue abdomen and white claspers (secondary sex organs at the tip of the abdomen) are sure identifying features for this species. Note that the green of the thorax is beginning to fade and the blue abdomen is covered with a whitish pruinosity indicating that this is an immature male becoming an adult. The adult male would be totally blue and covered with the white coating. Like all dragonflies, the pondhawk is an incredibly agile flyer capable of flying forward, backward, up and down, and hovering. Its eyesight is especially tuned in to movement and its prey catch percentage is near 95%. Netting these insects is a challenge and fun. Once I catch one, I photograph it from several aspects and post it on iNaturalist. I hope you can get a net and get outdoors!

~ Dan Spada

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personal time keeping the financials, editing newsletters, designing signage, seeking/writing grants, organizing cleanups, and on and on! As they say, "You are in good hands".

A final thanks to all our members and friends who contribute to making Carantouan Greenway a success year after year! With "Giving Tuesday" coming up soon this is a great time to renew your membership.

~ John Palmer, President

Wildwood Reserve Adds Vernal Pools



Engaging Support for Wildwood Projects

This summer, I attended Soil and Water meetings in Tioga County and attended wetland programs. I solicited their help as they are members of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.

The one pool created does go into a wetland, i.e., reed canary grass, but the creation of that pool is the recreation of a wetland so there is no net loss.

The USC did all of our pools when money is available from some granting or state source and costs us nothing but goodwill for all visitors to Wildwood due to an increase in habitat diversity and more potential habitat for breeding wood frogs and spotted salamander.

The agency will do vernal pools for landowners at no cost if money is available. ~ Marty Borko, Vice-president

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition excavator operator created three vernal pools at the Carantouan Greenway's Wildwood Preserve in the Town of Barton. Vernal pools, which are shallow isolated pools of water, are critical breeding grounds for threatened amphibians such as our wood frogs and spotted salamanders. These temporary pools provide reduced predator sites (fish) and a variety of solar exposure and developmental rates for the tadpoles and larvae. The project was only feasible with the cooperation of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Tioga County Soil and Water and the Carantouan Greenway. The Greenway invites the public to walk its trails and visit these newly seeded venues.

Indian Pipe

Monotropa uniflora, aka Indian Pipes, is a non-photosynthetic flowering plant related to our common blueberry. Its roots form an association with fungal threads in the forest floor from which they extract their nutrition. The fungal threads derive their energy from the canopy of photosynthetic tree roots. The most common mushroom Genus responsible for the fungal threads seen in Wildwood is *Russula*. The Generic name *Monotropa* means one bent head while the trivial name *uniflora* means single flower on each stem. The plants are perennial and usually show up after summer and/or fall rains, eventually releasing their seeds from an erect capsule.



Friends of the Carantouan Greenway

Yes! Count me in! I believe in protecting farm and forestland, wildlife habitat and watersheds in the Penn-York Valley. I want to become a member of Carantouan Greenway!

- Mighty Oak \$500/year Trailblazer \$25/year
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Carantouan Greenway

P.O. Box 441

Sayre, PA 18840-0441

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

GIVING TUESDAY

*...is only a few weeks
away. Please remember
the Greenway in your
giving.*