

# River Talk

Newsletter of the Carantouan Greenway



Spring 2020

## Grassland Birds To Be Topic at Annual Dinner Meeting

A naturalist, educator, and conservationist, **Charles Smith**, will be this year's featured speaker at the Greenway's annual dinner in March. The presentation, "**Importance, Status, and Management of Grassland Birds in New York State,**" describes the national, regional, and local status for a group of birds that require open, grassy areas for nesting and raising their young.

Twenty-five years ago, Charles Smith was senior author for the first published paper reporting the declines of grassland birds in the Northeast. At least nine different kinds of grassland birds still occur in New York State, some of them



*A bobolink enjoying a sunny moment perched in a field.*

now among the rarest of breeding birds in NY.

Charles retired from Cornell University in October 2012, after nearly 40 years of service. At Cornell, he worked with graduate students in avian ecology and science-based conservation and taught undergraduate courses in field biology and conservation of birds. Charlie has been active in research  
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*A meadowlark sending out a characteristic clear whistle.*

## Make your reservations

for the annual dinner meeting Tues. March 31, 6 p.m. at Tomasso's Restaurant in Waverly. Cost is \$25 per person. Pay online or mail check to Carantouan Greenway, P.O. Box 441, Sayre, PA 18840.

## Fall Color

We are always looking forward to the greening that Spring brings us. Next we look forward to the warming days and breezes of summer. In the fall we look for color. The dominant color is the green chlorophyll-laden foliage that continues to lessen with each passing day. As the green dissipates the yellows and oranges of the carotinoids take over, as one can see in the three leaflets of poison ivy.



The lessening of the green also allows the cell's saps, red anthocyanin, to become visible as one can see in the fruiting maple-leaved viburnum and the seedling red maple. The browns on the forest floor are due to the resilient tannins that we associate in particular with oak trees. Irrespective of season, each day on the trail is a gift.

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## Grassland Birds ...(continued from page 1)

and conservation related to the birds of New York State and the Northeast for nearly 50 years. From 1992 through 2002, he coordinated the New York State Gap Analysis Project at Cornell. In that capacity he managed all aspects of the project and created habitat association models for more than 350 species of terrestrial vertebrates. He has managed more than \$2.8 million in research grants and contracts, and directed more than 25 projects to successful completion and within budgets, since 1992. He is author of more than 100 technical papers, popular articles, and book chapters relating to birds and other organisms, including vascular plants, butterflies, and mammals. He contributed several species accounts and two chapters on conservation and bird habitats to the revision of *Birds of New York State*, published by Cornell University Press in 1998, and co-authored a chapter and wrote several species accounts for the *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*, published by Cornell University Press in 2008. In 2005 he was invited to become Co-regional Editor for New York State for the *Annual Counts of the North American Butterfly Association*, published each year, for which he served until 2017.

## Greenway provides tree signs on Diahoga Trail

Recently John Palmer, president of the Carantouan Greenway, along with Marilyn Palmer and Marty Borko installed signs on some of the trees of the newly created Diahoga Trail that runs along the west side of the Susquehanna River in Athens and Sayre boroughs. Trees are tagged with a number. That number corresponds to the number found in the Carantouan's tree identification guide. The second sign on the tree describes instructions for downloading the Carantouan tree guide on one's smart phone. The posting project is supported by the Bradford County United Way. Later this spring the Carantouan Greenway will post Joyce Kilmer's poem trees, and install a bench along the trail.



## Indian pipes

Indian pipes are flowering plants with a scientific name of *Monotropa uniflora*, the latter of trivial name *uniflora* referring to the single flower on each stalk. The plant is a parasite on fungal threads that are fairly universal in the forest floor. All flora parts are present; roots, stem, leaves and flowers, but they are all white and non-photosynthetic. Since it is not dependent on light it is found in the shady understory of forests and woods.

## Upcoming Events

### Annual 4K run scheduled for Sunday, April 26

Plans are underway for the annual Fun Run at the Wildwood Nature Preserve. The event starts at 10 a.m. with the run coarsing through the many trails the preserve has to offer. Following the run there will be refreshments and drawings for prizes. Each registrant will also receive a t-shirt. Registration is \$20. The nature preserve is located on Shepard Road, Waverly NY.

# Holy Mosses

Mosses are the initial plants in the natural process of succession. They are considered to be primitive plants, without roots, clearly exhibiting two generations of life. You probably are not aware of the fact that as you walk in the woods and see trees, shrubs and flowers, all of which are Sporophytes. Sporophytes are plants that are diploid, meaning that they have resulted from the fusion of sperm and egg and have two sets of chromosomes. The greater amount of genetic material means that you have more



*Green moss covers the forest floor.*

adaptability to survival. The tree-like green carpet of mosses represent the gametophyte (plants that are haploid) having only

one set of chromosomes, some of which are male and others female. The male plant will produce sperm, which will swim down and search out the female, locating and fertilizing the egg at the top. Resulting from this fusion is the moss sporophyte (diploid) which will produce spores. The stalk of the sporophyte supports a cylindrical capsule with a lid that pops off and exposes an inside rim of teeth that project into the capsule. As moisture levels fluctuate the teeth dip into the capsule and bring up the spores



*Moss sporophytes above the snow.*

which are caught by the wind. Moss spores travel the globe as they are wafted up for distribution air currents. The moss depicted is our common moss *Polytrichum*.

## Wetlands and Woodland Hike at Greenway

Fat, fluffy flakes flittered from above as an enthusiastic group of hikers energetically made their way through the wetlands and woodland at the Carantouan Greenway's Wildwood Nature Preserve on Sunday, Feb. 2nd in homage to National Wetlands Day. The hike halted at times as the Greenway's naturalist, Marty Borko, described subtle nuances in nature that can easily be overlooked by the undiscerning eye, particularly in a mostly monochromatic winter. Many birds were seen and discussed; questions answered about which



*A guided hike on a winter afternoon.*

ones stay for winter and which ones migrate, and when we should start seeing the earliest birds return. For some it was the first time to see the newly installed deer enclosure and Leopold benches completed by Eagle Scouts. The open hayfields showed evidence of mice trails under the dormant alfalfa, which in turn attract eagles, hawks, owls and kestrels to the preserve.

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