

Greenburgh Nature Center

E3 Newsletter - E-mailed, Economical & Environmental
JUNE 2010



Mission

Our mission is to educate and to promote conservation, research, and appreciation of nature and the environment while preserving the natural and historic character of our property.

Vision

The Greenburgh Nature Center will be the leader in nature and environmental education, igniting a lasting desire to preserve and protect the natural world.

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Quick Links

[Home Page](#)
[In The News](#)
[More About Us](#)

Green Tip of the Month

ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT

Moving your thermostat just 2 degrees up in summer and 2 degrees down in winter could save about 2,000 pounds of CO2 a year

Our Supporters



→ Native Butterfly Exhibit Opens!

Visitors to the Nature Center this summer will be in for an added bonus: our new Butterfly Exhibit has opened, featuring colorful native butterflies flying freely in our refurbished greenhouse.

Butterflies play an important role in nature, acting as pollinators, food sources and indicators of an ecosystem's well-being. They like sunny locations that provide nectar plants and host plants in close proximity. With the generous assistance of Sprainbrook

Nursery, our 500-square-foot, southern-facing greenhouse has gotten a plant make-over. Flowering plants such as asters, nasturtiums, marigolds, cosmos, butterfly weed, verbena, heliotropes, hollyhocks, daylilies, chives, sedum, spirea, and butterfly bush will provide bright, beautiful colors and supply the sweet nectar that butterflies use as foods. Host plants such as aster, fennel, parsley, viburnum, snapdragon, milkweed, and spicebush will provide the habitat for butterfly eggs and feeding caterpillars.



While enjoying the beauty of the exhibit, visitors will learn about the life cycle of a butterfly - from egg, to caterpillar, to chrysalis, to butterfly - as well as about the unique relationship between specific plants and butterflies. The exhibit will run through September 30th, so be sure to stop by! Thanks to our exhibit supporters, the Geraldine Stutz Trust, Bartlett Tree Experts, Sprainbrook Nursery, Cablevision, Hitachi America, Central Animal Hospital, and HSBC for their generosity.

→ Greenburgh Nature Center Serves as Staging Site for Injured Wildlife

Earlier this month, New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation called upon the GNC for assistance with responding to injured wildlife as a result of the toxic oil spill in the Bronx River. The DEC is responsible for the conservation, improvement, and protection of natural resources within New York State. About two hundred gallons of fuel oil had spilled into the river from a leaking heating system in a White Plains apartment building, and waterfowl

were immediately impacted. "Once inflicted with oil, birds have a natural reaction to immediately clean themselves, and when they do this, they ingest the oil," said Executive Director Kurt Hundgen, who worked with licensed wildlife rehabilitators (Suzie Gilbert, pictured above) assigned by the DEC. Following protocols for the care of oil-affected birds, the group treated Canada geese and mallard and wood ducks that were rescued from the spill area. "Time is of the essence in situations like this," said Hundgen. "We were happy to be a local resource for the state authorities."



→ President of Hitachi America Joins Volunteer Effort

Last month, the Nature Center hosted a team of volunteers from Hitachi America, including the company's new president and CEO, Mr. Chiaki Fujiwara (pictured on right with GNC Executive Director Kurt Hundgen). The group helped GNC staff remove invasive species and then plant native fruit-bearing shrubs at various locations on our property. Such actions improve the habitat for local birds and add to the property's





biodiversity. We are so grateful for the partnership that we've built with Hitachi America and with other corporate volunteer partners. This past spring, a group from Kohl's of Yonkers (pictured on right) worked on the barnyard area as part of Kohl's National Volunteers Go Green Initiative, and another group from Capital One undertook grounds projects as part of the company's "One Week" initiative to get associates volunteering in their local community. Meanwhile, Whole Foods of White Plains continues to send a team of regular volunteers to assist in our organic garden, in addition to providing funding that supports our gardening programs.



The GNC is a great place to reconnect with nature and see the immediate impact of your volunteer efforts. If you have a corporate group that might be interested in volunteering, contact Managing Director Penny Berman, e-mail pberman@greenburghnaturecenter.org or tel. (914) 813-1834.

➔ American Eel Study Project

This past spring, the GNC partnered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to help study local migratory routes of American eels. GNC Assistant Curator of Living Collections Brittany Burgio (pictured on right) and high school volunteers worked on the Saw Mill River in Yonkers, deploying and monitoring an eel fike net to determine just how many American eels come into this tributary off the Hudson River. All together, the DEC study encompassed nine different sites, with more than 250 volunteers participating and more than 10,000 juvenile eels counted.



"The Saw Mill location was very different and interesting from the other sites because of the water quality and the fact that most of the Saw Mill River runs underground through Yonkers," said Burgio. "We didn't catch any eels in the net, but we did catch about 50 eels at the mouth of the river with eel mops, which serve as temporary artificial habitats for the eels." In the last several decades, the worldwide American eel population has dropped enough to raise concern about the future of eels. Eels migrate great distances and therefore can reveal information about the health of aquatic life and waterways, which could be affected by pollution, habitat loss, overfishing and climate change. To further the GNC's commitment to watershed management issues in Westchester, we are planning to establish a permanent American eel exhibit this summer. The Bronx River Parkway Reservation Conservancy and New York City Environmental Fund have agreed to provide partial funding for this project.

➔ Girl Scouts and Others Support the GNC's Adopt-An-Animal Program

With more than 100 different animals to care for, our staff and volunteers have their hands full making sure that each species' special needs are met. Members and the general public can help with this task by becoming adoptive "parents" to the animals in our live animal collection through our Adopt-An-Animal program.



Recently, Girl Scout Troop #1743 from Crestwood/Yonkers (pictured above with GNC naturalist Greg Wechgelaer), participated in our "Animal Adventure" educational program. After the program, these first-graders were so enthralled with our animal collection that they decided to contribute funds from their



cookie sales to "adopt" one of our chinchillas. Meanwhile, Myles Dower became a second-time adoptive parent by asking his friends and family for cash contributions instead of gifts for his eighth birthday. He then combined those gifts to make a \$250 donation and sponsor Lemon, our Burmese python snake, and Big Foot, our yellow-foot tortoise.



For more information about our Adopt-An-Animal Program, go to the ["Get Involved"](#) section of our website. Adopt-an-Animal donations help feed and care for the more than 40 different species of animals in our care (including invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and insects). Thank you to all our adoptive "parents" for your generous support!



→ Upcoming Programs

Saturday, June 19th, 5:00 PM
THE FINDHORN ECOVILLAGE...WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Come hear Abbi Westwood, GNC Naturalist Intern, speak about her time living at this famous eco-village in Scotland while studying the "Human Challenge of Sustainability." Findhorn was established in the late 1980s with an energy-producing wind generator and one eco-friendly building; it has grown to include 90 ecological buildings and is at the center of sustainability education. The program will be followed by a potluck supper, for all who would like to attend. Please RSVP to Environmental Projects Coordinator Anne Jaffe Holmes if you plan to participate in the potluck supper (tel. 813-1812 or e-mail ajaffeholmes@greenburghnaturecenter.org). Free.



Saturday, June 26th, 1:00 PM
BUBBLES! A RECIPE FOR FUN

Curator of Living Collections Travis Brady delves into the science of bubbles. Come share the magic during this interactive program. Members-\$2, Non-members-\$6.

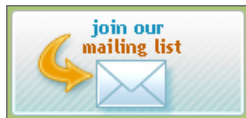


Saturday, July 10, 5:30 PM through Sunday, July 11, 8:30 AM
MEMBER'S FAMILY CAMP-OUT

Enjoy a night of nature on the grounds of the Nature Center as we host a family camp-out. Join us for an informal barbecue, then explore our moonlit trails with a GNC naturalist in search of owls and other night creatures. Reservations required; camp-out limited to ten families. Each tent must include a minimum of one adult. Fee: \$20 per person.

Sunday, July 11th, 2:00 PM
WATER OLYMPICS!

Cool, refreshing and fun...we all love water in the summer, but how much do we know about it? Join Brittany Burgio, Assistant Curator of Living Collections, in a series of fun, interactive experiments and discover more about water and all the amazing things you can do with it. Then stay for a water balloon toss! Recommended for children 6+. Members-\$2, Non-members-\$6 per person.



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