

Mid Year Update

Through September 2016

The Messenger

On March 8th, we were delighted to partner with Cinema Arts Centre in Huntington to host a screening of the documentary, **The Messenger**. We were even more delighted when 165 people showed up to see the film! Stella Miller, Chapter President, gave deeply personal remarks about how birds came to her life, and why she believes they matter. After her remarks, the theatre darkened for the viewing of this powerful film. Since the film portrayed a stark portrait of the dire threats that birds face, we felt it critical to follow the film up with a panel discussion that offered hope and empowerment to the audience. We wanted to convey the impact that our actions can have on the bird community. Thank you so much to HOBAS Board members Coby Klein and Stella Miller, and Diana Ngai of Audubon NY, who led the panel as we provided an optimistic outlook of a future still filled with bird song. Many thanks to Cinema Arts Centre, and most especially Rachel Hart and Raj Tawney, for their strong support in this endeavor. We hope to partner on other events in the future.

Conservation Through Art: Sharing Our Seas and Shores



On Friday, April 15th, Brendan Fogarty, artist Lilith Jones and Stella Miller hosted an enthusiastic Girl Scout Troop 3570 (of Syosset) at their clubhouse for a **Conservation Through Art** workshop. These incredibly engaged young ladies created beautiful posters that were then turned into signs for a beach nesting bird area. Before we turned artsy we sat down with the Girl Scouts to talk to them a bit about beach nesting birds. This is normally the part of the workshop that kids want to rush through—who wants to hear about birds when you can be wielding pastels and crayons and creating masterpieces? Well, what is typically a 15 minute program morphed into over an hour, as the girls peppered us with questions, displaying an interest in the topic that just blew us away. The far-reaching conversation ranged from shorebirds and

the migratory feats of songbirds, to the Endangered Species Act and other wildlife like wolverines. Never have we encountered such an interested group of young people. We finally had to remind them that they now had less than an hour to create their artwork and promised to come back for another program. After calling all of the parents to let them know that we were running late, the girls went at it and created beautiful posters with terrific messaging. These signs are posted at Centre Island Beach. Go check them out!

Volunteer Efforts

Caumsett State Park



Originally scheduled for April 9, with 45 volunteers signed up, our Early Earth Day Event at Caumsett canceled due to inclement weather. While only 12 of the original 45 could make it the next week, these hardy volunteers raked and bagged thatch in the restoration field and also strung up string fencing around Butterfly Hill and Bull Pen to protect grassland birds and Baltimore Checkerspot butterflies.

Shu Swamp Preserve



On April 21st we held an Earth Day English Ivy Pull at Shu Swamp. As the starting time loomed over us, it began to pour buckets of rain. We were startled and thrilled when 22 volunteers still showed up to demonstrate their love of our natural areas by



working to pull this insidious nonnative from the preserve! By the way, ivy is super easy to pull when the ground is drenched!

Invasive Species Awareness Week Event



Our annual Invasive Species Awareness Week event took place at a different spot this year-Sagamore Hill National Historic Site. By 9:30am it was already 89 degrees out and getting hotter, but our 17 volunteers sweated their way through two hours of pulling bittersweet and porcelain berry from the meadow at the Site. We usually do this event at Stillwell Woods, but decided to switch it up and head to Sagamore Hill. We will be back at Stillwell next year as this event typically kicks off our volunteer season at the preserve. Thank you to the National Park Service, who hosted a private tour of Sagamore Hill for our volunteers!

Stillwell Woods Preserve



Due to the extreme heat and humidity this summer, our efforts in Stillwell Woods Preserve began a month later than usual...mid August, rather than mid July. Thus far we have hosted three events-including one on August 24th where we partnered with the International Youth Fellowship and hosted 148 volunteers! Thanks to our loyal volunteer base, the missionaries of the Church of Latter Day Saints of Jesus Christ, we were able to break into smaller groups throughout the field. The missionaries supervised the groups and made life so much easier for us.



On September 3rd we were thrilled to observe 16 monarch butterfly caterpillars in one small ¼ acre area, demonstrating that our efforts are bearing fruit (or in this case, butterflies). We also documented a fledgling

savannah sparrow in July and found a baby Eastern box turtle during one of our pulls, as well as numerous woodchucks.

Native Demonstration Gardens



As part of a Bird Friendly Communities Initiative, we have installed or sponsored several native demonstration gardens, as a way to educate the public about the importance of landscaping for birds, bees and butterflies, while making a conservation impact at the same time. These gardens aren't just for show: they provide a critical service. Whether you have a container garden, a small yard, or a property with many acres, you can help protect wildlife. Conservation isn't just about protecting wildlife habitat in parks, preserves and

wilderness areas. It's also about creating a network of pocket habitats and refuges for wildlife that provide food, water, shelter and a place to rear young, right in our own backyards!

Sagamore Hill



We partnered with the National Park Service and Audubon New York to install a native demonstration garden at Sagamore Hill National Historic Site. HOBAS designed and provided funding for 150 native plants and shrubs that were planted on June 17th by graduates of Audubon New York's *For the Birds!* environmental education program from Washington Rose School in Roosevelt. The planting day was overseen by the wonderful Julie Nelson of Theodore Sanctuary and Audubon Center. Funding for the plants came from a generous donation from an anonymous donor (but you know who you are, thank you!) as well as a Chapter Collaborative grant, with some matching funds from HOBAS.

According to Kelly Furhmann, Superintendent of Sagamore Hill, "The opportunity to work with community partners such as Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon, Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center as well as Audubon New York to promote and implement such an informative and ecologically beneficial project is a valuable opportunity. The new NPS/NAS team can be twice as effective working together toward our common missions to promote natural resources awareness and education opportunities. The conservation awareness and stewardship partnership is a model that supports long term community engagement to address pressing local and global environmental issues." The garden is being watered each morning by HOBAS volunteers until the plants have established strong root systems.



Please be sure to visit Sagamore Hill to check out the garden. And while you're there, don't forget to take a house tour and wander around the property. There are beautiful hiking trails to enjoy!

Milleridge Inn



Many of you know the iconic Milleridge Inn in Jericho. The structure was originally built in 1676 for Mary Washburn Willets, a Quaker pioneer, as a two room house. Over the years, it expanded into a sprawling mansion and was said to have hosted British and Hessian officers during the Revolutionary War. In 1961, the property was sold and began operations as the Milleridge Inn, which continues to this date. The Inn recently changed owners and is currently undergoing renovations which includes landscaping. Because this is such a well visited spot, it seemed like an ideal location for a demonstration garden and so we asked if they would consider incorporating native plants into the landscape. We received an enthusiastic yes and with that we offered to design and sponsor a native demonstration garden near the cottage. The Inn's own landscapers planted the garden (no volunteers needed!) and are maintaining it. Approximately 150 or so

native plants, including inkberry, New Jersey tea, winterberry, spicebush, wild columbine, goldenrod, two species of milkweed, blue false indigo, cardinal flower, purple coneflower, asters, and red bud are now planted beside the cottage.

Many thanks to Anthony Capetola, operator of the Inn (Tony is also an attorney and is the owner of Carlton on the Park in Eisenhower Park), whose enthusiasm for this project has helped propel it forward. He and his staff, especially Keith, have been so generous and supportive. The Milleridge Inn is home to a flock of chickens and some peacocks, who are already enjoying strutting around our garden! Funding for this garden came from generous donations made at the end of 2015. Please pay a visit to our Garden at The Cottage. Say hello to the chickens (especially a little rooster named Galavant) and be sure to stop by the restaurant and shops-the cinnamon bread from the bakery is divine!!!



A quick note about the gardens: Both gardens are “works in progress”. Please note that these plants do not establish as quickly as traditional perennials, as native plants are not generally available in larger sizes. During the first year, the plants must establish their root systems rather than above-ground biomass – which is also known as the “ugly duckling” phase. A phrase to remember is, “with deep-rooted native species, the first year they sleep, the second year they creep, and the third year they leap.” You can see this at the Exxon Mobile site in Cold Spring Harbor, where we funded native plants last year. The

plants are already filling out beautifully, and it's only the “creep” year! Wait until “leap” year, it will be a true beauty!

Bird Friendly Communities Day Event



On May 29, 2016, we hosted, in partnership with the NPS, a “Bird Friendly Communities Day” at Sagamore Hill. Activities included a program about making lifestyle changes to help birds, a beginner bird walk, a live bird of prey program with Volunteers for Wildlife and activities for kids. Much thanks to Simone DaRos, Cathy Fitts, Brendan Fogarty, Sonia Garrido, Coby Klein, Stella Miller and Charlotte Miska (all HOBAS) and

Scott Gurney of the NPS. As this was the inaugural year for this event, we kept it low-key, but we are happy to report that next year the event will be expanded! In addition, on this day, we coordinated a Birding Blitz in order to compare data to President Theodore Roosevelt's personal bird list of 1879. We scored 48 species and 246 individual birds!

As an extension of the event, we also hosted a wonderful program on native plants on June 4th at the Christ Church of Oyster Bay Parish Hall. Kim Eireman, of EcoBeneficial, shared a wealth of knowledge with participants and will be returning for another program at CSH Library.

Making Our Communities More Welcoming to Birds and Pollinators

We are working with real estate developer to incorporate more wildlife friendly features into a proposed assisted living facility in Jericho. These features would include more native landscaping on the site, as well as bird safe windows and lighting. In April we submitted a proposal and as of this writing, the landscape architects are working on ways to incorporate our suggestions into the design of the facility. We also hope to host bird related activities with the seniors residing at the facility.

We have also submitted a proposal for a Bird Friendly Community at the Syosset Park Town Site, formerly known as the Cerro Wire property, as well as to the owners of an office park in Jericho which will be undergoing renovations. Thus far we have not received responses, but we are crossing our fingers!



Finally, we grew and donated milkweed plants to a Nassau County property, the Elias Hicks House, which has a large, sunny expanse of property for these monarch favorites to thrive. Full disclosure...this happens to be Stella Miller's place of employment (yes she has a full time job in addition to Audubon!). Last year she noticed an abundance of butterflies, including numerous monarchs, visiting the nonnative butterfly bush outside her office window. Despite her pleasure in this butterfly bounty, she knew that this bush, while providing nectar, would not support monarch caterpillars. With this in mind, she asked the county for

permission to plant milkweed on the property. The plot, which was planted by HOBAS volunteers, now has numerous milkweed plants growing and is a favorite dust bath spot for the House chickens! Other natives will be added.

Summer Camp Scholarships



Attending nature camp, which offers a unique mix of fun and education, can be transforming for a child. Children develop appreciation for and love of nature as they explore the world around them through hands-on, outdoor experiential learning and creative play. Unfortunately, many families simply do not have the resources needed to provide this wonderful experience to their children. In 2014 Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon established the Bill Reeves Scholarship Fund in order to ensure that as many children as possible have the opportunity to connect with nature. This year

we again provided scholarships for 17 underserved children to attend camp at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay, and Sea Stars Marine Camp in Northport.

What a wonderful experience for children! If you are interested in contributing to our Bill Reeves Scholarship Fund to get a leg up on next year, please let us know. Remember how much fun we had

as children? Today's children deserve and even more importantly, need that experience also! For themselves and for the future of our planet! We again sponsored scholarships for 17 children to attend nature camp at TR Sanctuary and Sea Stars Marine Camp. If you are interested in contributing to our Bill Reeves Scholarship Fund for 2017, please mark your check "Scholarships".

News from the Board of Directors

Welcome New Board Member



Just two months ago we welcomed Brendan Fogarty, former Youth Outreach Committee co-chair, back to the flock as a volunteer. We are thrilled to announce that Brendan has joined the board, as the youngest board member in chapter history. Brendan recently graduated from the Cornell University College of Engineering, from which he has both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree. He studied energy systems and has a passion for renewable energy integration. This interest stemmed from his lifelong love of nature and planning for a more sustainable world. Brendan has been active with HOBAS since 2007, as a member of the Youth Outreach Committee, where he helped lead field trips and public programs. Brendan is an avid outdoorsman, birder, bicyclist, and musician, playing Irish bagpipes whenever his neighbors aren't home. Brendan brings to his position a wealth of avian knowledge and we are honored that he has chosen to demonstrate his commitment to the chapter by taking on a director position on the board!

Congratulations, Babies on Board!!



Many congratulations to Board Director Tess Copa-Todd and her husband Jason, who are expecting twin boys this fall! We are so excited and cannot wait to welcome these future conservationists into the HOBAS family! After her maternity leave, we are thrilled that Tess will be returning as our Children's Program Chair, and hopes to expand the Young and Little Naturalist Programs.

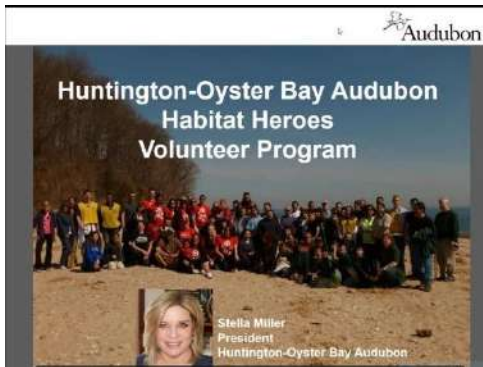


And while we're at it, a belated congratulation to Tess and Jason, who tied the knot last October at Seatuck Environmental Center in Islip. As befitting a bride who absolutely adores birds of prey, we couldn't resist sharing this photo of the lovely Mrs. Copa-Todd with a very special guest on her very special day.

Audubon New York Council Board

Congratulations to Stella Miller, who has been nominated to serve on the Audubon NY Council Board. The board members' chief duties consist of planning twice yearly State Council Meetings, which are held in Saratoga Springs each spring and various state locations in the fall. The two annual council meetings each year are a wonderful way to connect New York staff and chapter leaders in order to connect chapters, share ideas and resources, be educated on important issues and facilitate our work as we work to protect wildlife and preserve habitat. The Fall 2016 meeting will be held on Long Island!

HOBAS Goes National



HOBAS had the honor of being chosen to lead the first in a series of “Chapter-to-Chapter” webinars, which highlight and showcase chapter successes. Stella created and hosted the webinar, “Chapter to Chapter Webinar Recording: How to Recruit and Cultivate Volunteers”. As you know, Stella runs a very successful volunteer program with HOBAS activities supported by her volunteers year round and was very happy to share tips and ideas on how to not only recruit volunteers, but how to retain them.