



Restoration and Sustainability

By Joseph A. McLaughlin

Invasive plants and animals are considered one of the top threats to maintaining biological diversity around the world. Nearly half of the plants and animals listed as federally threatened or endangered are at risk primarily because of invasive species.

In the Fields. To date we have restored 32 of the 41 acres of our old fields, shrub-lands and invasive wood lots through a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The initial contact between the Norman Bird Sanctuary (NBS) and NRCS happened in 2001 with the first work done in winter of 2004. These restorations, as with all habitat projects, are conducted with long range goals in mind and are guided by Federal and State biologists.

The vegetation covering these fields was cleared in the fall and winter months. It is estimated that 91% of the vegetation was comprised of exotic invasive species including Oriental Bittersweet, Multi Flora Rose, Norway maple and Sycamore maple. After the vegetation was cleared, the field was plowed, tilled, harrowed and left until spring. Between May 1 and June 1, the seeding of native warm and cool season grasses was performed. An annual monitoring of the restored fields to remove any sprouting exotic invasives will help to ensure success. This is one of our community service projects involving local

high school students. Students perform a line search with shovel in hand, digging up any tenacious weeds in their paths.

NBS is a pesticide free organization (except for controlling poison ivy along the trails'

edges). With the completion of this grassland restoration project in 2010, NBS and our neighbor Sachuest Point will have over a 100 acre tract of grassland. This will provide nesting for several species of grassland birds that are experiencing declining numbers, including the Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus saviannarum*), Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) and possibly the Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*). Another rare bird species that feeds and nests in some of the grasslands is the Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), a bird that is often seen flying low over our open fields.

(continued on pg 2)



New Nature Programs at NBS - Explore, Investigate, Discover!

By Catherine Arning

Spring into the natural world with exciting new programs at the Norman Bird Sanctuary! From trekking through the forest to looking eyeball-to-eyeball with a snake, our new monthly programs will provide opportunities for all ages to discover ecosystems, local environmental issues, and native wildlife.

Family Nature Nights, held the first Friday of every month, feature hands-on explorations, animal presentations, and experiments. Don't miss the Woodcock Walk on April 4, or a chance to get up close and personal with nature's slimiest and scaliest critters during "The Untouchables" on Friday, May 2.

Our **Wildlife Lecture Series** begins March 20, and will be held every third Thursday of the month. In March, join Wendy Edwards from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to learn more about piping plovers, summer nesters along Rhode Island beaches. April and May will feature speakers on threatened and endangered sea turtles and the Narragansett Bay Coyote Study.

Beginning in April, NBS will also launch a new slate of **Saturday on-site programs**. "Amazing Animals" presentations will be held weekly at 11:00 a.m., spotlighting one of our non-releasable education animals. At 1:00 p.m., guided interpretive hikes will depart from the Visitor's Center, and a craft activity station will be set up throughout the weekend.

NBS Summer Camp, entering its 49th year, will feature yet another fun-filled season of outdoor exploration, animals, and songs! To meet the growing demand, NBS has added extra slots for the 2008 season. Parents will be notified of their lottery results on March 14. Following this first round, additional camp spaces will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information and to register, please visit www.Normanbirdsantuary.org.

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On Third Beach. In 2006 the nine beach cottages were removed from the secondary dune and moved to sites around the island. Immediately after the removal, a 500' stretch of wooden guard rail was installed along Third Beach Rd. Currently, we are in the middle of a Third Beach Dune Restoration project through a partnership with the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC). The goal is to move 150 yards of beach sand to the footprints of those structures. After the placement of the sand, 4000 sprigs of American Beach grass will be planted to hold the sand berm in place and complete the Third Beach Dune restoration project. The restoration will help to establish a more stable dune ecosystem. As in the past, we look forward to the return of the Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) in the spring. When the plovers decide on a nesting spot, we will rope off the area and signs will be displayed. We are always in need of Plover monitors, a volunteer effort that requires no previous experience. It does however require the completion of a 2 hour course given by the United States Fish and Wildlife, held at NBS on 3/20 at 7:00 pm with another class at NBS on 3/2 at 7:00 pm.



Sustainability. We are proud to announce that we are in our second winter season of operating two of our four boilers with Biodiesel B99. The third boiler is run on B20 and the Administration building runs on home heating oil. Our supplier, Newport Biodiesel, provides us with a quality product made from local recycled vegetable oil at a non-profit rate. Their biodiesel meets or exceeds the national ASTM quality specification D-6751 and is EPA-registered. We have met with Solar Wrights of Bristol and Rhode Island Wind Power of Middletown to discuss a timeline for future partnerships to reduce the NBS carbon foot print.

A reminder that the Sanctuary offers over 7 miles of designated hiking trails for passive use with limited restrictions. No dogs, horses, bikes, kites, motorized vehicles or collecting of any kind. Please stay on marked trails to limit disturbance and enjoy your recreational time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my office at (401) 846-2577 ext. 12.

An Amphibian Adventure: Vernal Pools at the Norman Bird Sanctuary

By Lauren Miller

On wet warm nights in early spring, a fascinating natural phenomenon begins. Amphibians that spend most of the year on land migrate to vernal pools to breed. Walking through the Sanctuary on a moist, damp day in March, you may hear the quacking of the "poster-amphibian" of vernal pools- the Wood Frog (*Rana sylvatica*). Male wood frogs sit at the pool's edge calling to attract a female. Their call sounds like a repetitious hoarse quack.

Breeding takes place over a few weeks, and then they will return to the forest floor for the rest of the year. To hear wood frogs this Spring, walk towards Nelson Pond. The Sanctuary's most beautiful vernal pool will be on your right, just before the Red Fox Ridge. You may also hear wood frogs calling from the boardwalk trails, which are popular with the amphibians after heavy Spring rains.

To learn more about vernal pools and local amphibians, we encourage you to join us on our Vernal Pool Walk on Friday, March 21 at 6:30 pm (please call ahead to register, as space is limited). School groups may also enjoy our popular "Amphibian Adventure" program.

NBS 2008 EVENTS

Sunday, May 18- **Birds and Breakfast**

Join us for a delicious breakfast prepared by Bliss natural Grocer and Café with ingredients donated by local businesses. Guided bird walks and kids games round out this fun filled morning event.

Saturday, June 14- **2nd Annual 5K Run, Walk and Kids Run**

A 5K past some of the most beautiful spots in RI- down country roads, by breathtaking beaches and past the incredible Norman Bird Sanctuary property.

Saturday, August 16 - 7PM- **5th Annual Bird Ball**

Join us for an evening of delicious dinner, fun filled dancing, silent auction and breathtaking views at NBS.

Saturday, October 4 and Sunday, October 5

34th Annual Harvest Fair- the perennial favorite community event. Food, entertainment, games, crafts, country store, home and garden competition, pony rides, hay rides and more!!!

Saturday, October 25- **Volunteer Appreciation Party**

the success of NBS relies on the generous participation of volunteers. To show our gratitude NBS holds a thank you party with plenty of food and casual fun!

Events & programs

For more information visit us at www.normanbirdsanctuary.org

To register, please call (401) 846-2577

March - May

Tuesdays and Fridays 8:15 am

Tai Chi Ch'uan Practice Sessions

Student-led practice sessions are open to all backgrounds and levels. Please call for more information.

Mar. 16, 30, Apr. 13, 27, May 11, 25

Sundays 8-10 am

Bird Walks every other week with Jay Manning & Bill Saslow. Free.

Mar. 10, 17, 24, 31, Apr. 14 (5 weeks)

Mondays 6-7:30 pm

Gentle Yoga with Clara Morgan

Members \$40, Non-members \$50, Seniors \$25. Registration is encouraged.

Mar. 10, 17, 24, 31, Apr. 14 (5 weeks)

Mondays 4:30-5:30 pm

Yoga for Young People with Clara Morgan.

For ages 7-12. Members \$40, Non-members \$50. Registration is encouraged.

Thursday, March 20 7:00 pm

Wildlife Lecture Series - Piping Plovers

Join Wendy Edwards from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to learn more about the natural history and conservation of the piping plover. Members \$6 adults 12 and over, Non-members \$8 adults 12 and over, Children 11 and under free with adult. Registration is required.

Friday, March 21 6:30 pm

Vernal Pools Walk

Venture into the forest to find the Sanctuary's vernal pools and the animals that breed in them! Members \$6 adults 12 and over; \$4 children 4-11, Non-members \$8 adults 12 and over; \$6 children 4-11. Children 3 and under free. Registration is required.

April - May

Saturdays 10:00 am & 1:00 pm

Craft Stations, Guided Hikes and "Amazing Animals" Presentations

These weekly programs are free with NBS admission or membership.

Apr. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, May 7 (6 weeks)

Wednesdays 1-2 pm

Preschoolers with Parents

Outdoor fun for the youngest nature enthusiasts! Join Marilyn Lyell for this engaging, age-appropriate series for children aged 2-4 and a parent or caregiver. Members \$50, Non-members \$60. Registration is required.

Friday, April 4 6:30 pm

Family Nature Night - Woodcock Walk

Come witness the amazing courtship display of the American Woodcock! Members \$6 adults 12 and over; \$4 children 4-11, Non-members \$8 adults 12 and over; \$6 children 4-11. 3 and under free. Registration is required.

Saturday, April 5 10:00 am

Tree Swallow Nest Boxes

Help to set up "summer cottages" for some of our favorite seasonal residents - tree swallows! Free; registration required.

Saturday, April 5 All day

Bird Fest

Sponsored by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, this day long event at NBS will feature bird walks, animal demonstrations, and much more! Visit www.asri.org for information.

April 6 and 19-20 All day

Wabisabi Woman Spring Wellness

Retreats. Nurture your self expression, awaken your senses, and connect with nature. For more information, visit www.wabisabiwoman.com or call 401-261-7062.

April 14-18 9:00 am - 3 pm

Spring Vacation Camp

Explore the habitats that make NBS such a special place! We'll investigate the forest, field, pond, ridge, and even the "human habitat" in this fun-filled camp. 2 age-appropriate sessions will be held for ages 4-6 and 7-11. Members \$190, Non-members \$225. Registration is required.

Thursday, April 17 7:00 pm

Wildlife Lecture Series - Sea Turtles

Join former sea turtle researcher Catherine Arning for an interactive look at the five species of sea turtles found in the U.S., with an emphasis on conservation efforts. Members \$6 adults 12

and over, Non-members \$8 adults 12 and over 11 and under free. Registration is required.

April 21-25 12 pm - 5 pm

Earth Week

Celebrate Earth Day all week long, with recycled craft stations, nature scavenger hunts, and a spotlight on local wildlife. Stations will be set up throughout the afternoon. Free with NBS admission or membership.

Friday, May 2 7 pm

Family Nature Night - The Untouchables

For the brave at heart, this interactive program lets you get up close and personal with nature's slimiest and scaliest creatures. Members \$6 adults 12 and over; \$4 children 4-11, Non-members \$8 adults 12 and over; \$6 children 4-11. Children 3 and under free. Registration is required.

Saturday, May 3 10 am - 3 pm

Volunteer Naturalist Training

Calling all outdoor enthusiasts! Join us for volunteer training to become a NBS education docent. Registration is required.

Thursday, May 15 7 pm

Wildlife Lecture Series - Coyotes

Numi Mitchell of The Conservation Agency will present the latest research from the Narragansett Bay Coyote Study. Members \$6 adults 12 and over, Non-members \$8 adults 12 and over. Children 11 and under free with adult. Registration is required.

Saturday, May 17 6:30 am-5:00 pm

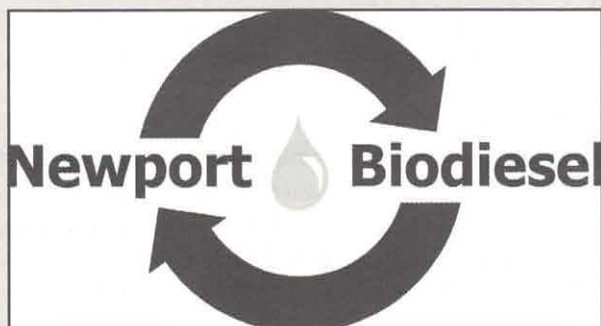
Spring Migration Day Trip

Join us for this full-day trip to Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA, with stops at other migration hot spots along the way! Members \$40, Non-members \$50. Registration is required.

Sunday, May 18 6:30 am - 11:00 am

Birds and Breakfast

Celebrate Spring with a morning of guided bird walks and breakfast featuring local produce and restaurants. Children's activities. Seatings at 8:00, 9:00, and 10:00 am. Advance tickets: \$20 adults, At door: \$25, Children 4 and up: \$5. Registrations encouraged.



This issue of the NBS Flyer is sponsored by Newport Biodiesel

Aquidneck Island's sole producer of biodiesel. Newport Biodiesel provides the local community with ASTM D6751 certified biodiesel made from a locally generated waste product, restaurant fryer oil.

Contact them at: 312 Connell Highway, Newport, RI 02840
tel: 401.846.1117 | fax: 401.846.1118 | cell: 401.256.4347 |
email: info@newportbiodiesel.com



The Norman Bird Sanctuary
583 Third Beach Road
Middletown, RI 02842

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
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Newport, RI 02842
Permit # 43

Our Wish List!

- Tanks, aquariums, and cages
- Hand towels and blankets
- Humidifier
- Children's games, puzzles, and toys
- Children's nature and story books
- Area rugs for classrooms
- Framed pictures and art for classrooms
- Craft and art materials
- Double boiler and hot plate
- CD players
- Bird Feeders, Bird Seed, and Suet
- Passenger Van
- Volunteers

**Please help us raise
money by sending NBS
your Shaw's and
Clements' receipts!**

We receive 1% of your total purchases!

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Volunteer Venue

Whether part of a corporate office whose employees come to NBS for a morning of planting trees, or a University athletic team spending an afternoon installing bluebird boxes in a field, a High School club whose members volunteer their time wrapping gifts at Barnes and Noble to benefit NBS, or an Eagle Scout who spends months constructing a walkway through the woods, our volunteers are our most valuable resource. Chances are, if there is an area that interests you, we have a need. NBS holds four fundraisers over the year where volunteers are crucial to insuring a successful event. They are a lot of fun and a great way to connect with people in our community.

Our 2008 event schedule includes: Birds and Breakfast (Sunday May 18th), 2nd Annual 5K Run and Walk (Saturday June 14th), 5th Annual Bird Ball (Saturday August 16th), 34th Annual Harvest Fair (Saturday & Sunday October 4th & 5th), and our Volunteer Appreciation Party (Saturday October 25th). For further information on how you can become involved in these events, please contact Lesley Muir at (401) 846-2577 x17 or by e-mail at lmuir@normanbirdsantuary.org. Volunteers interested in helping with the animal care program can contact Catherine Arning at x15 or via e-mail at carning@normanbirdsantuary.org.

Volunteer Naturalist Training (Saturday, May 3 - 10:00-3:00): Are you a retired teacher, stay at home mom, or outdoor enthusiast with a passion for teaching about the natural world? Join the Norman Bird Sanctuary for volunteer training, and become an education docent! We need dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers to help us teach a variety of programs. No prior experience is necessary, and all ages and backgrounds are welcome. Schedules are flexible and depend on interest and availability. This interactive, hands-on day of training on 5/3 is the first step to joining the NBS team. Lunch will be provided.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED - TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT CATHERINE ARNING