

NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY

THE FLYER

VOLUME 64 • NUMBER 01

WINTER 2014







Mabel Norman Cerio

The **Norman Bird Sanctuary** was established in 1949 at the bequest of Mabel Norman Cerio. Its mission, under the charge of her will, was to maintain 235 acres of land "for the propagation, preservation, and protection of birds, and where birds and bird life may be observed, studied, taught, and enjoyed by lovers of nature and by the public generally so interested in a spirit of humanity and mercy."

Over the years, NBS has grown to include more than 325 acres of diverse habitats, and its mission remains true to Mabel Norman Cerio's original vision. Today, the mission of the Norman Bird Sanctuary is to preserve and protect its habitats and resources for the benefit of birds and other wildlife, and for people's education and enjoyment.

Board of Directors

- Karen Benson - *Chair*
- Ted Sturtevant - *Vice-Chair*
- Katherine Farnham - *Secretary*
- Lisa Lasky - *Treasurer*
- Rachel Balaban
- Lorrie Burns
- Jay Manning
- Belinda Nattress
- Jackie Zahm

Staff

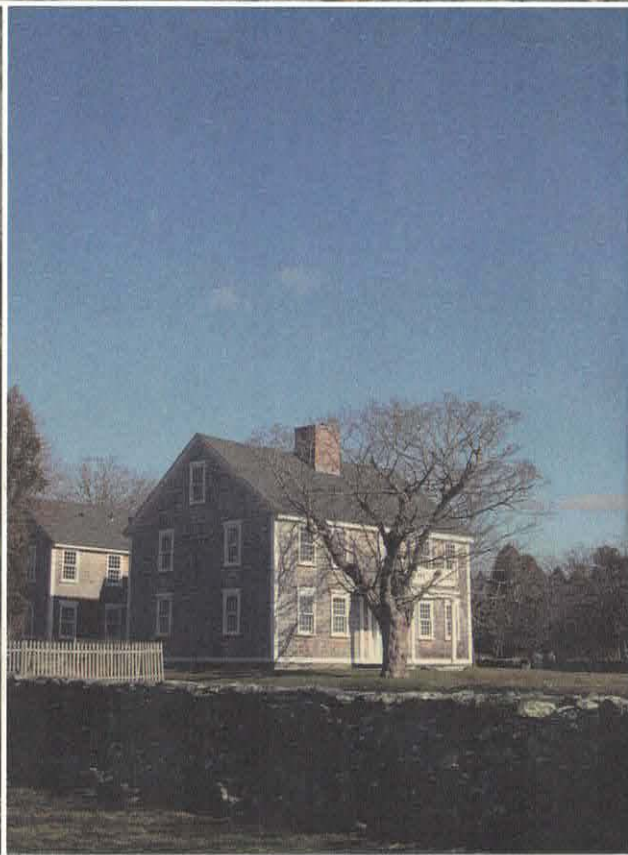
- Natasha Harrison, *Executive Director*
- Joseph McLaughlin, *Director of Properties*
- Lesley Muir, *Director of Communications*
- Lisel Woods, *Director of Paradise Farmhouse & Site Rentals*
- Rachel Holbert, *Co-Director of Education - Americorp Site Director*
- Nicole Souza, *Co-Director of Education*
- Sharon Riley, *Education Assistant*
- Jerry Moriarty, *Properties Assistant*
- Janie Joyce, *Office Manager*

Americorps Staff:

- Lauren Ruotolo
- Mark Pagliarini
- Daisy Frabell
- Kiah Brasch

Norman Bird Sanctuary
 583 Third Beach Road
 Middletown, Rhode Island 02842
 (401) 846-2577
www.NormanBirdSanctuary.org

photo credit : Kim Fuller
 cover photo credit and others: Bob Weaver



2

Dear NBS Friend,

So many people ask me about the Paradise Farmhouse located on the South side of the Norman Bird Sanctuary grounds and have been curious about what the organization has planned for it. After many, many years the renovation of the building is finally complete! The organization made the final steps towards finishing the 3rd phase last spring and it was well worth the wait. The house has 7 bedrooms and is laid out to sleep a total of 16 people. As you may know the house was our founder, Mabel Norman's, home. It is the oldest structure on our property and dates back to the early 1700's when it was a mere shack for tenant farmers. The history is felt throughout the structure and the character of the house has been carefully preserved while bringing all systems up to date. This project was a huge undertaking for us and we could not have accomplished it without the help of so many generous and talented people.

We are very excited to start to use the house to support the mission of NBS and share our inspirational property and programs with people from all walks of life. We will launch the new programs in 2014 which will include nature retreats for birders, naturalists and folks who want to learn about and love nature. We will also invite groups who have educational programs and want to stay in the house while they deliver their programming. We are excited to host university programs, environmental organizations, symposiums and many more thought provoking programs and groups. In addition we have plans to bring artists to live and work in an artist's residency program that will allow us to continue our significant history of artists creating on our property. The Artists residency program will be the first and only of its kind in RI and will allow us to see NBS in a new way; through the lens of artists of all mediums. It is an exciting time here at NBS as the programs in the Farmhouse unfold. We plan for a ribbon cutting ceremony and house warming party in the spring and we do hope you will join us. If you have questions or would like a tour please don't hesitate to get in touch with us!



Natasha Harrison,
Executive Director



NBS Education Department Fun Facts

- NBS provides quality environmental education programs to over 7,000 people each year.
- Each year 4 AmeriCorps Members serve 1700 hours each, for a total of 6800 hours of community service through environmental education.
- We have 23 animal ambassadors "on staff" in our education department. These animal ambassadors help children and adults connect to nature.
- We teach outreach, fieldtrips, camps, public programs, birthday parties and scout programs year round, even in the winter!
- 2014 will mark the 55th anniversary of summer camp the Norman Bird Sanctuary.



Development Newsletter

NBS is excited to welcome Lisel Woods to the Development team. Lisel arrived in June with over 30 years of experience in Hospitality and Marketing. With degrees in Food & Beverage Management and Culinary Arts from Johnson and Wales University, Lisel began her career as co-owner & manager of retail stores featuring the works of RISD graduates and other local artists in Providence and Newport. She owned and operated independent restaurants, Salvation Café and Bliss Natural Grocer and Café in Newport RI, and worked as a corporate restaurant manager for Wyndham Worldwide. She became an independent small business consultant specializing in hospitality, restaurants and food & beverage businesses. NBS contracted Lisel to create and execute the marketing and operations plans for the Paradise Farmhouse, ultimately hiring her as Director of Paradise Farmhouse & Site Rentals, focusing on sales, marketing and operations management.

After wrapping up an ambitious and successful event season with October's Annual Meeting & Appreciation Dinner, we are already gearing up for 2014, a year of celebration! The Norman Bird Sanctuary marks 65 years, having grown to become a leader in Environmental Education and continuing our mission of land conservation and preservation with thoughtful initiatives, including grassland and habitat restoration. Our extremely popular summer camp, now seeing 3rd generation campers, will celebrate 55 years and we are planning a few surprises for our signature event, the 40th Annual Harvest Fair.

It's not too early to plan your schedule around the NBS calendar of events! Our Dine To Donate series begins at Stoneacre Pantry on January 15th, followed by the 4th Annual Executive Director's Dinner February 7th, and the 7th Annual Fluke Wine, Bar & Kitchen Dinner March 26th. Mark your calendars for the following Annual Events:

- Sunday, May 18th – 32nd Annual Birds & Breakfast
- Saturday, June 14th – 8th Annual 5K in honor of David Leys Jr.
- Saturday, July 19th – 2nd Annual Bake on the Beach
- August date to be determined - Mabel's Table
- Saturday & Sunday, October 4th & 5th – 40th Annual Harvest Fair
- Saturday, October 25th – Annual Meeting & Appreciation Dinner
- Saturday, December 6th – Holly Days

Please check our website at www.normanbirdsanctuary.org for details to follow.



NEEA Conference Weekend Hike

Danielle Leitao – AmeriCorps Member 2013

Have you ever wanted to go on a private naturalist-led hike across NBS property? This November, a small group of environmental educators from around New England had an opportunity to do just that. The weekend of November 1st-3rd marked the annual New England Environmental Educators Alliance (NEEEA) conference and Sustainable Schools Summit. Over 300 people participated in the event held at Salve Regina University in Newport, with some attendees traveling from Canada, New York and New Jersey.

The main goal of the conference was to promote environmental literacy and to build relationships in and outside of the classroom through environmental education. The goal of environmental education, as defined in the Belgrade Charter from the 1976 United Nations conference, "...is to develop a world population that is aware of, and concerned about the environment and its associated problems, as well as the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations, and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the preventions of new ones." In fact, Rhode Island was one of the first states to write and adopt its own Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP) in 2009. Environmental literacy is "...the capacity of an individual to act successfully in daily life on a broad understanding of how people and societies relate to each other and to natural systems, and how they might do so sustainably" (Campaign for Environmental Literacy, 2011). The NBS Education Department promotes environmental literacy at any age through meaningful experiences in nature.

On the last day of the conference, participants were given the opportunity to choose a field trip to a local environmental education organization for an in-depth tour. A small group of educators chose to visit NBS for a hike led by Rachel Holbert, Co-Director of Education. The chilly two and a half hour walk included a tour of the historic buildings and teaching spaces, points of interest such as the Quarry and Wampanoag shell midden, and culminated at the end of Hanging Rock. Participants were intrigued to learn about the rich history of Paradise Farm as evidenced by our barn and stone walls. The story of Mabel Norman as a single female land owner in the late 19th century was told next to the towering window in the Studio under which Mabel herself used to paint.

At the end of the hike, the group of naturalists promised to return to visit with family or friends. Over hot chocolate and coffee, participants discussed difficult plant IDs and signs of the changing seasons that they had observed along the trail. The education staff at NBS was pleased to attend and participate in the 2013 NEEEA conference, especially the opportunity to share our beautiful property and history.



Eagle Scout Rank Achieved

Joseph McLaughlin – *Properties Director*

William Spangler of the Middletown Troop achieved the highest rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America here at the Norman Bird Sanctuary in 2013. William along with family and fellow scouts repaired and replaced the 72" long board walk along the Woodland trail this summer. The hauling of old building material out and new lumber in to the red maple swamp section of the NBS woods was done by wheelbarrow, not a short stroll by any stretch. Work was carried out in sections leaving the boardwalk passable at all times. The project was well planned and executed with the hard work of this young lad and fellow scouts.

THE PARADISE FARMHOUSE will provide quality environmental education for a wide spectrum of ages, backgrounds, and interests; introducing learners of all ages to Rhode Island's diverse natural resources and wildlife. Children, families, adults, and groups from far and wide will find opportunities that engage and inspire.

Participants will stay in the original 18th Century Farmhouse of the Norman Bird Sanctuary. This seven bedroom house overlooks breathtaking views of fields, stonewalls, forests and ocean.

NBS currently serves over 7,000 students per year, through innovative science and nature programs at our beautiful wildlife refuge and in classrooms across the region. With the addition of the Paradise Farmhouse, the Sanctuary will expand its offerings to include multi-day symposia, teambuilding, and residential programs for adults and school groups. Programs will feature sustainability, birding, artists' retreats, local history and the marine ecology of Narragansett Bay.

Friday Lunch Tours

When:

Every Friday starting
January 17– March 28, 2014
12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m.

What:

It includes: farmhouse tour & a lunch of soup, salad, beverage & treats.
\$12.00 suggested donation

Mini Nature Retreats

When:

January 18,
February 1, February 15,
March 1, March 15
2pm Saturday arrival
12pm Sunday departure

What:

It includes: overnight accommodations at our newly renovated & eco-friendly farmhouse, welcome snack & beverages, spa inspired cuisine dinner & brunch, discovery tour, meet our animal ambassadors, naturalist guided bird walk & so much more.



AUTUMN VIEW OUT OF
PARADISE FARMHOUSE
BEDROOM



Mabel Norman Cerio was the founder of the Norman Bird Sanctuary and lived and painted there until her death. She was a painter noted for her portraiture and she famously depicted Maud Howe Elliot, the founder of The Newport Art Museum, in a finely crafted portrait. By creating the Norman Bird Sanctuary, Cerio set the stage for the preservation of Paradise Valley. Today hundreds of artists visit the 325 historic acres of Paradise each year.

(Photo of Mabel Norman Cerio (1875-1949)
Founder of the Norman Bird Sanctuary)

The Norman Bird Sanctuary's 325 acres is situated in one of the most culturally significant landscapes in Rhode Island: Paradise Valley and was founded on the basis that the land merits preservation and should be a resource for the community. Long before the sanctuary was established, the southeastern tip of Aquidneck Island, otherwise known as Paradise Valley, was an inspiration for many early nineteenth and twentieth century artists. As a steward of Paradise Valley, the Norman Bird Sanctuary is entrusted with protecting the birds, plants, and animals that thrive on the property; but also to maintain the restored buildings, scenic landscape and history. The landscape is defined by numerous natural factors. Thousands of plant and wildlife species flourish in the area. Its Geology with the puddingstone ridges, the sloping hills, and, of course, Hanging Rock is the most defining feature. It could also be argued that the breathtaking views of the shoreline are what make this place unique. Yet it is the combination of all of these factors – the ocean, hills, rocks, plants, trees, and wildlife that give Paradise the Arcadian quality synonymous with its moniker. Artists have sought to capture that quality for nearly two centuries.

Throughout the years many artists including John La Farge, Winslow Homer, William Morris Hunt, William Trost Richards, John Frederick Kensett, Louisa and Helena Sturtevant, among others, have stood on the ridges, rolling hills, and beaches of Norman Bird Sanctuary to capture the beauty of this Paradise forever in their artwork.



It is rare that a large plot of land in such a desirable place would remain relatively untouched. It is rarer still that such a place would continue to be used as it was more than 150 years ago. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Paradise has provided a wellspring of inspiration for artists and writers and it continues to do so today. The Norman Bird Sanctuary continues to have a strong connection with artists and provides innovative opportunities to foster creativity and honor its unique history. This continuum is unique and warrants thoughtful preservation and encouragement.

We are fortunate that we don't have to visit historic paintings from centuries past to experience the slice of utopia that is Paradise Valley. This breathtaking part of history is safe from harm right at The Norman Bird Sanctuary. The 325 acres will continue to be thoughtfully preserved for the artists of the future, and the creative continuum will be encouraged for the next generation of painters, photographers, musicians, filmmakers, dancers, philosophers and writers.



The Norman Bird Sanctuary is a living, breathing museum whose legacy will live on in perpetuity.

Vacation Camp at The Norman Bird Sanctuary

Summer Camp is a longstanding tradition the Norman Bird Sanctuary. This past summer marked our 54th year of camp. Over 370 children from grades Pre-K through 12 joined us for 8 fun filled weeks of nature exploration, hikes, games, songs, crafts and much more. If your child missed out on the fun this summer, or just can't wait a whole school year to return, check out our exciting school vacation camps!

LOST IN THE WILD (GRADES K-6)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH- FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST

8:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

\$215

Test your survival skills during February Vacation! This action packed camp program will focus on winter outdoor exploration, native animals and survival skills. We'll learn how to build forts, identify animal tracks and signs, use compasses and navigate our hiking trails. We will also learn all about the adaptations of native animals and how these animals survive harsh winter conditions.

HABITAT SAFARI (GRADES K-6)

MONDAY, APRIL 21ST- FRIDAY, APRIL 25TH

8:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

\$215

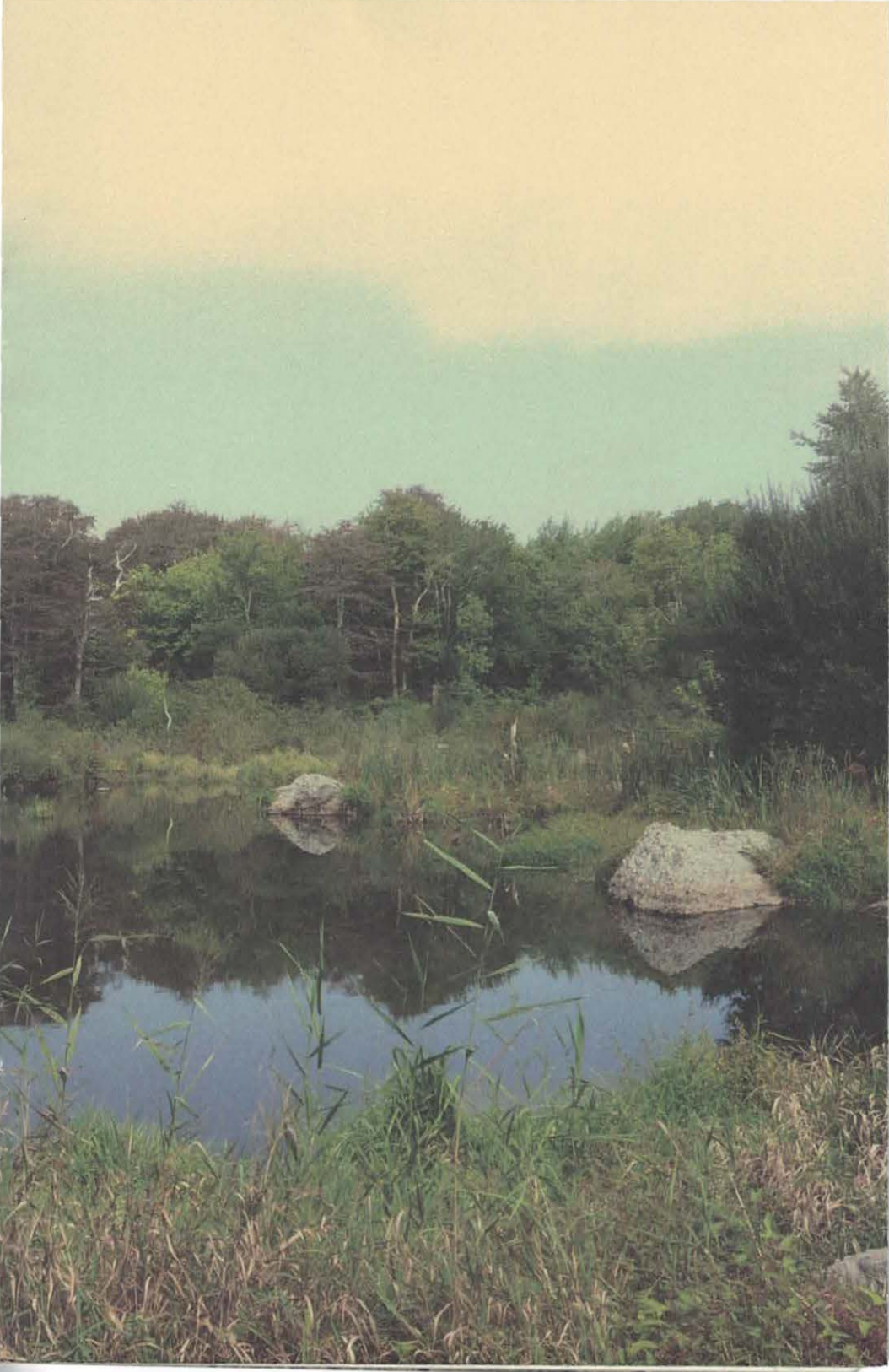
Here at NBS, there are many places for animals to live. Get outside during your school vacation and explore forests, beaches, ponds, ridges and fields. Each day we will explore a different habitat in search of animals and their homes. We will also sing songs, play games and make crafts.

2014 SUMMER CAMP AT NBS – CELEBRATING 55 YEARS!

ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD

Summer is a special time at the Norman Bird Sanctuary! Each year, children explore the beauty of nature on our 325 acres of preserved habitat! They build fairy homes in the fairy forest, go ponding, catch fish and explore tide pools at Third Beach and learn about nature experiments, games, crafts and songs. Can't wait for your child to join us? **Save the Date!**







585 Third Beach Road
Middletown, RI 02842

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
NEWPORT, RI
02840
PERMIT NO.43



Image: *Bubo Scandiacus Delta* by David Syzdek