

The Polypodium



News from the Council of Park Friends

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Fall 2009

CPF Pot-Luck Picnic, Sept. 26 featuring ESF Woodsmen



The Woodsmen are an ESF student group that competes against other college teams in traditional woodsmen skills. Years ago, ESF held an annual day-long barbecue for the entire college at which woodsmen skills were demonstrated. This picture was taken at one such day at Clark in the 1930's. Come to CPF's Pot-Luck Picnic and see today's ESF Woodsmen Team do its stuff! You are sure to be entertained and impressed.

EVERYONE INVITED - NO CHARGE (see Page 2)

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Pot Luck Picnic

celebrating
National Public Lands Day

Saturday September 26

Noon to 3 PM

Clark Reservation

National public Lands Day is September 26 (see President's message). In celebration, CPF will be hosting a Pot Luck picnic for members and representatives of various environmental groups in the area. Come meet other CPF members and kindred spirits.

Please bring a dish to pass. CPF will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, beverages, plates and utensils. The featured attraction at the picnic will be a demonstration by the ESF Woodsmen Team.

from the President -

What Does CPF Do?

I asked this question for quite a while after joining CPF. Gradually, nature education, advocacy for preserving our magnificent geological landscapes and being a watchdog for harmful development came into focus for me as some very worthwhile things CPF does. Yet the question never went away. Years later now, I find it still preoccupying me as we strive to keep CPF fresh and vital.

National Public Lands Day, September 26, is described as "the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy". The intersection of volunteer efforts and public lands nicely describes the domain of CPF. Board member Gordon Heisler's article in this issue of the Polypodium provides a concrete example. In a real sense, the project Gordon describes would not have come about without CPF. Ken Showalter of OPRHP mentioned at one of our meetings that a fish survey was planned for Glacier Lake. For his part, Gordon had heard about a procedure developed by Charles Driscoll at SU for measuring mercury in fish and Gordon knew about previous research Driscoll had done at Glacier Lake. Why not, Gordon thought, see if the fish survey could be brought together with Driscoll's research interests? Many email messages later the collaborative effort Gordon describes took place. It is something of which CPF can be proud. Joint efforts involving the public sector and local groups are celebrated on National Public Lands Day. We at CPF hope to do more in the future to bring together groups and individuals with the shared goal of enhancing public lands.

- Dan Smothergill

Fish Research at Clark Reservation

Contributed by Gordon Heisler

Some of our members will remember the interesting talk on mercury in the environment by Dr. Charles Driscoll of Syracuse University at our CPF annual meeting in January 2008. In another talk on the topic at SUNY ESF this spring, Dr. Driscoll described some of their laboratory testing of fish. A light-bulb came on. "If we get some fisher people to donate their catch from Glacier Lake in Clark Reservation, would you be able to test them for mercury?" I asked. "Yes." said Dr. Driscoll.

We discussed the possibility of fish testing at the June Board of Stewards meeting, and the idea was on the back burner until the next board meeting, when Ken Showalter mentioned that OPRHP Natural Resources Steward Tom Hughes was working with Aquatic Biologist Dave Lemon of DEC on a fish survey for Glacier Lake. The survey was to be done mostly on July 29 with some preparations on July 28. This was better than recruiting fishermen! After a flurry of emails that included Tom Hughes, Dr. Driscoll, SU lab manager Mario Montesdeoca, and Dave Lemon, the plans were in place.

On the morning of July 29th I stopped by Clark Reservation, intending to stay just a few minutes and perhaps take a few pictures. Finding survey headquarters on the west shore of Glacier Lake, I chatted with Dave Lemon about the survey techniques while Tom Hughes and CPF Intern, Robert Alexander, paddled a canoe to haul the first of three large gill nets they had placed earlier. I mentioned to Dave that many years ago I had heard rumors of large walleye pike being caught in Glacier Lake. "Oh," said Dave, "that's interesting, because That's why we are doing the survey. We know walleye fry were stocked in the past, but we don't know the success."

Then the fun began. When Tom and Robert returned with the first net, indeed there were large walleye, along with chain pickerel, large sunfish, and some shiners. Soon a group of teenagers and their leaders from SUNY ESF who were participating in the

Stewards of Syracuse program (<http://www.esf.edu/outreach/esfscience/sos.htm>) appeared. Tom Hughes had arranged for them to remove invasive vegetation in the park that day and to help with the fish survey. As Dave measured and weighed the fish, attached number tags, and collected a few scales for aging, one of the S of S teens recorded the information in Dave's notebook, while our Intern, Robert Alexander, carefully put the scales of each fish in a separate numbered envelope. Before long, yet another group appeared with more equipment. This was Edward Mason, Quality Control Coordinator of the SU mercury lab, along with some SU students and equipment to do a demonstration of biopsy sampling of live fish right there on the shore of Glacier lake! The demo held the rapt attention of all the students.

As I was tearing myself away about noon, Mario was arriving with another dozen students in an SU summer program and with videographers. It was a great day for environmental research and education in Clark Reservation!

(continued on page 4)



Dave Lemon, Aquatic Biologist with DEC Fisheries -7, holding a Walleye Pike caught in the Glacier Lake survey.

Photo by Tom Hughes

Fish Survey (continued from page 3)

A few days later some results were available. Dave Lemon reported that the total tally of fish caught included 6 walleye from 12 to 19 inches, 7 pickerel from 16 to 20 inches, and 21 sunfish, the largest of which was 8.5 inches and weighed a half pound. Dr. Driscoll reported the mercury levels in a report to DEC for the incinerator permit renewal. Highest mercury values were in the walleye and pickerel. This is expected because these species are at the top of the food chain, and mercury builds up in fish that eat other fish. Also, for the same reason, the larger the fish, the higher the mercury levels.

The implications of the survey for the future remain to be seen. Dr. Driscoll cautions that it is up to health departments to decide whether advisories against consumption of fish are in order. However, 86% of the pickerel and 33% of the walleye had levels of mercury higher than the recommended level by the US EPA for mercury consumption advisories. Dr. Driscoll's previous report on mercury in Glacier Lake sediments may already have had an effect on management of the incinerator—the draft of the new permit calls for large reductions in allowed emissions of mercury. - Gordon



Tom Hughes unloads the nets while Rob Alexander passes up gear. Photo by Gordon Heisler

“Birds of Prey with Eyesly”



Jean Soprano, wildlife rehabilitator, and Eyesly, a Great Horned owl. Photo by Nancy Smothergill

“Birds of Prey with EYESLY, the Great Horned Owl” was the title of a fascinating presentation by Jean Soprano at the Nature Center on June 20. Jean directs the Kindred Kingdoms Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Pennellville, which treats injured and orphaned wildlife to make them healthy and strong enough to return to the wild. Jean showed pictures of a variety of wildlife that have been brought to Kindred Kingdoms and talked about their treatment. She is a gifted speaker and the audience of adults and children was thoroughly enthralled. Many were surprised to hear that raccoons are one of the few animals the Center does not take in. To do so would require a series of rabies shots for the staff. As a grand finale, Eyesley, a Great Horned Owl, was brought out of his carrying cage and introduced to all. You can learn more about Kindred Kingdoms at <http://kindredkingdoms.com>. Naturalist Mike Greco arranged for the presentation.

Nature Center Open More Hours

Thanks to Board member and OCC Professor Meg Harris, the hours the Nature Center was open this year were greatly expanded. From about 40 hours each week in the past, this year it was open nearly 60 hours. The difference was noticed by visitors too. We often heard comments that the Nature Center was sometimes closed when people came by in the past but now was open all the time.

The expanded hours were made possible by students of Professor Harris. One, Mike Greco, was hired as Naturalist and staffed the Nature Center himself from Friday through Sunday. In addition, Mike supervised a platoon of students satisfying college internship requirements by working at the Nature Center during the week. They included Rob Alexander, Chelsea Carter, Eric Johns, and Kiera Wooley. In addition, Val Hughes from Kiwanis also helped out. Our thanks to all.

Special Programs

Besides programs scheduled for the general public, CPF also offers special programs for groups making arrangements in advance. We provided 3 special programs this year. One was for a Girl Scout group, another for students at South Cayuga School and one that ran several consecutive days to accommodate over 400 students from Jamesville Elementary School. The formidable logistics associated with the last were handled with aplomb by Board member and Vice-President Diane Wheelock with the support of our great interns at the Nature Center.

“Climb with Katlyn” Walk

Volunteer Hike Leaders Needed

Sunday, Oct. 11 2009, will be a special day at Clark Reservation State Park. A fundraising event will be held in support of TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) patient Katlyn Fleury, a local 15 yr. old, who in a May, 2009 was in an auto accident and is still in a coma. She is slowly making progress and the family remains optimistic for her continued recovery.

The family has requested CPF's assistance in the form of a guided walk "Climb with Katlyn" between 9 and 11 AM on Oct. 11th. Registration is \$10 per person or \$25 per family and begins at 8 AM. Monies raised will go to the Katlyn Fleury Support Trust fund (set up to defray extensive medical & rehabilitation costs) and to the TBI Foundation. A light continental breakfast (water, fruit and Danish) will be provided by the family for participants. All are welcome to support Katlyn in her climb to recovery.

There will be two walks - an easier one along the Mildred Faust trail and a more difficult one along the Cliff Trail, down to the Lake Trail returning by way of the steps to the overlook shelter. One or two volunteer hike leaders are needed for the Cliff Trail hike (approx. 1 -1/2 hr.). This is a symbolic walk for the family and friends, so a lot of interpretation is not required. If you can help with the guided Cliff Trail walk, please let me know by e-mail or phone.

Thank you,
Diane Wheelock , Council of Park Friends
315/446-0263
fwheelo1@wcnv.ny.gov

Membership Information:

Annual membership in the Council of Park Friends supports a professional staff of naturalists who provide educational offerings for all ages and levels of interest, and entitles members to *The Polypodium*, a periodic newsletter of upcoming events, nature news and members-only activities. Send your dues to: C.P.F., PO Box 153, Jamesville, NY 13078 Attn: membership

<u>Member Category</u>	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Patron</u>
One year	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$50.00
Two years	\$18.00	\$22.00	\$95.00
Three years	\$22.00	\$30.00	\$135.00
Life membership	(please inquire)		

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____

