

October
2011



Vol. 6
No. 2

Newsletter

Preserving and Protecting the Historic Princeton Nursery Lands

www.fpnl.org

FPNL trustees put finishing touches on interpretive signs for the Mapleton Preserve

The interpretive signs project that was funded by the New Jersey Historical Commission is making good progress. Six interpretive panels are being designed, based in part on information and old photographs provided by William Flemer IV, Princeton Nurseries catalogs and brochures, an interview with William Flemer Jr. that was captured and preserved by the Princeton Recollector, the Kingston Historical Society and the Historical Society of Princeton. Archives from local papers, the New York Times and the State of New Jersey also yielded interesting images and background material.

Says Karen Linder, president of FPNL, "It has been fascinating to sift through a variety of historical resources, with the goal of preparing signs to help interpret the rich history of Princeton Nurseries."



Entrance Sign - Princeton Nurseries, Kingston 1978. Photo courtesy of JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University

One of the delightful "finds" from the historical research for the project was a set of 83 photos taken at Princeton Nurseries in 1978 and 1982 by the horticulturalist and teacher J.C. Raulston. We are grateful to the JC Raulston Arboretum for providing access to these historical images, and to the volunteers that spent countless hours scanning and cataloging the 84,000 slides in this amazing collection. The photo to the left shows a 1978 view of the row of 37 ginkgos at the Kingston site. We invite you to visit the site in October to see the fine fall color of these specimens, which are now substantially larger than they were in this picture.



J. C. Raulston: Ginkgo row and greenhouses - Princeton Nurseries, Kingston 1978 photo courtesy of JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University

Unique partnership reunites Bill Flemer IV and "his" tractor

As some of you may remember, several vehicles from the Princeton Nurseries Kingston site were purchased at auction when Princeton Nurseries closed down. One of these vehicles was the 1961 Farmall 140 "High Clear" that gave William Flemer IV his first tractor driving experience.

This fall, Bill proposed that the tractor be fixed up and used in a unique project that he is working on for D & R Greenway Land Trust. He asked if he could borrow "his" old mount to cultivate at the St. Michaels Farm Preserve, which he manages. Recognizing the value of this opportunity for both FPNL and D&R Greenway, tractor owner Karen Linder said yes.

Bill Flemer IV prepares to haul historic Princeton Nurseries tractor away for repairs



The St. Michaels Farm Preserve was preserved in 2010 through a grassroots effort by the Hopewell community with the support of over 900 individuals and local businesses. D&R Greenway spearheaded the preservation initiative, and along with partners, purchased the property for permanent preservation as a community farm and a natural systems resource.

The tractor has now been repaired and is running well, despite its 50 year-old age. Bill Flemer is now searching for a set of cultivator tines for the vehicle, so that it can be used to weed the crop of native wildflowers and grasses that has been planted at the Saint Michael's property.

The growing fields will ultimately produce seed for a blended native seed meadow mix that is genetically appropriate to this region. **FPNL is delighted to be able to assist in this worthy collaboration.**



**Bill Flemer IV and Karen Linder
Photo by Robert von Zumbusch**

National Public Lands Day - September 24, 2011

FPNL was delighted to see so many old friends and new faces at our 3rd annual National Public Lands Day event at the Mapleton Preserve. **We had 22 volunteers participate in this year's event. Everyone worked hard, but we had a lot of fun!**

Crews cleared brush and vines, removed small trees from building peripheries, weeded the butterfly garden, and collected litter in the Preserve and along Mapleton Road.



Porcelain-berry - beautiful, but invasive: Volunteers helped to remove a shroud of porcelain-berry vines (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*) from a row of very grateful crab apple trees. A native of Asia, this vine is a vigorous relative of the grape, best known for its unusual berries, which may be green, creamy white, purple, or turquoise-blue, depending on their stage of ripening. The name porcelain-berry is derived from the china-like sheen of the fruit.



Photo courtesy of *Cristian Calugar*

Fall membership drive: FPNL is grateful for the contributions of our members. Without your help, we could not run the programs that we do. Our fall membership drive will begin soon. Since we solicit renewals and donations only once a year, **we urge you to join or to renew your membership in Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands TODAY!** Visit our website at www.fpnl.org to join or renew using either PayPal or by downloading a membership form.

Oral history project: Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands has purchased a digital recorder with the intent to use it to take oral histories from people who once worked at the Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site. The cost of the recorder is being split between FPNL and the Kingston Historical Society, which hopes to use it for oral histories of key Kingston residents.

Did you work at Princeton Nurseries Kingston site? If so, your memories of that time have historical significance. Your stories are unique, valuable treasures. They can help us to interpret the nursery for future generations. If they are not collected and preserved, one day, they will be lost forever. **If you would like to share your stories with us, or if you would like to work on this project, please call Tari (609-750-1821) for more information.**

Upcoming events: Come visit Mapleton Preserve this Fall!

Saturday, Nov. 19: What's Your Story? Kids, bring your parents and be prepared to explore your own history by creating a family tree with the D&R Canal State Park historian. Together we will learn about family trees and begin the process of growing our own! This 10 am program will be held at the D&R Canal State Park's Kingston Office located at 145 Mapleton Road. **Space is limited, and registration is required, so register early (609-924-5705) to reserve a spot! Suitable for children 8 - 12 years old.**

Thursday, Nov. 24th (Thanksgiving): Over the river and through the woods - a Thanksgiving Day nature walk.

Join FPNL president Karen Linder for a Thanksgiving Day morning exploration of the Mapleton Preserve. This 10 am program will begin at the Main Office for the D&R Canal State Park, 145 Mapleton Road, Kingston.

Come work off some Thanksgiving day calories, search for turkeys and enjoy the abundance and subtle beauty of late fall. **Open to all, but preregistration IS requested. Call 609-683-0483 to reserve a spot.**



Wild turkey - photo courtesy of Gary D. Tonhouse

Sunday, Dec. 18th: Audubon Christmas Bird Count (BIRDERS TAKE NOTE!): The Kingston segment of this year's Audubon Christmas Bird Count begins at 7:30 AM to catch the "early birds". We will bird until noon and then take a break for lunch at Main Street Café. The group then continues with the count in the afternoon. You can join us for morning, afternoon, or both. It is a great way to hone your birding skills and get to know the Princeton Nurseries Property and other open space in Kingston better! If you are interested, give Karen Linder a call (609-683-0483) for more info.



**Chickadee dining on poison ivy berries
photo courtesy of Brenda J. Jones**