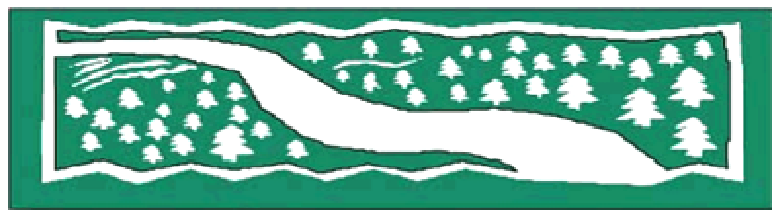


Jan
2007



Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands

Vol. 2
No. 1

FPNL is hosting three Special Events at Mapleton Preserve this winter.

“Winter Trees And Winter Wildflowers”

Feb 17th[1-3] - Although trees and wildflowers are normally dormant in winter, interesting botanical features remain that help to identify them, even in snow. The two program leaders, Edward Lignowski and Mary Anne Borge, are well qualified to provide a great experience for participants, since both are Volunteer Naturalists at Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve (BHWP) in New Hope, Pennsylvania, where they regularly lead programs for visitors. Come enjoy an informative talk and a walk through the meadows and woods! See p. 4 for more details.

“How to ‘Lost-Proof’ Your Family” and “Animal Tracks and Signs.”

March 17th [10-12 and 1-3]: Rick Berry and volunteers from Children of the Earth Foundation (COTEF) will lead these two events. COTEF, founded by world-renowned animal tracker Tom Brown, teaches wilderness survival, nature awareness, tracking, and outdoor education to children ages 7-17 (and their families). The programs are designed for both families and adults. **Pre-registration is required and attendance is limited – if you are interested in joining us for either program (or both), please call 609-683-0483 ASAP to reserve your spot. The fee per person is \$5/program (\$3/program for FPNL members.** See p. 4 for more details.

Historic preservation grant application funded: The South Brunswick Township (SBT) Historic Preservation Commission recently obtained a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission for funding to nominate the Princeton Nurseries Kingston site to the NJ State and National Historic Registers. This was a highly competitive grant. National Register status, when attained, will allow application for federal grants for historic preservation. Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands (which helped to prepare the grant application) congratulates the Historic Preservation Commission for its success!

Princeton Nurseries houses in the news: Part of the over 240 acres of the former Princeton Nurseries Kingston site that are preserved included several houses that once housed former Princeton Nurseries workers. Now, seven of these houses are being restored. The first of these, a large 5-bedroom house on Mapleton Road, is about to be occupied by its new owners. A front page feature on the restoration, written by Carolyn Edelmann was published in the October 18, 2006 issue of U.S. 1 Newspaper. You can read the article at the following link: <http://www.princetoninfo.com/200610/61018c01.html> Two of the houses that are to be restored will be moved in mid-February to their new locations on Mapleton Road .

PAST EVENTS

Two special programs were held at Mapleton Preserve/D & R Canal State Park in Kingston this fall. On Oct. 22nd, the **Kingston Greenways Association** held their **annual fall foliage walk**, and the previous day,

the **D & R Canal State Park Staff and the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands** co-sponsored “**Reptiles and Raptors and More – OH MY!!**” – a family- oriented event that featured snakes, raptors, and history.

The unusual mix of topics on Saturday was a hit. Many people were visiting the Preserve for the first time, so many questions came up about the recently preserved property. **Robert von Zumbusch, Vice President of Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands**, presented a brief talk on the Park’s new headquarters building. *“This handsome structure, recently restored, used to be the main sales/ administration building for Princeton Nurseries when they operated a wholesale tree nursery at the site. The adjacent education building was historically used as a blacksmith shop and later as an education center when Princeton Nurseries was located here. If funding can be obtained, we hope to see the nearby*

propagation house, greenhouses and cold storage buildings restored to use as exhibit and interpretive space,” Mr. von Zumbusch explained.



Photo by Anne Zeman ©2006

The need for a large interpretive space at the new Preserve was obvious during **snake educator Gerry Wronski’s** program, “Strictly Constrictors” held in the education building. Although the building holds 43 people, the ‘snake show’ was standing room only. Fortunately, the presenter agreed to extend his talk so everyone could get a chance to see his slithery sidekicks. Judging from the peals of laughter and screams of delight, the audience was well entertained by their “up close and personal” experience with these misunderstood reptiles.

Another highlight of the day was licensed falconer **Jennifer Pena’s** presentation --*Flight of the Raptor*— [www.flightoftheraptor.com] that focused on free-flight demonstrations with the birds of prey she brought. The Harris’s hawks worked communally to hunt their “prey”, a falconry lure that the birds swooped down on so that the audience could observe firsthand the magnificent flight patterns of these birds, and the strength of their beaks and talons. Ms. Pena also released Boo, her owl, that has a wingspan of over five feet. Boo obligingly flew at eye level in front of captivated viewers – revealing the downy under-wing feathers that provide it with the ability to hunt its prey in total silence.

In addition to talking about the birds, Ms. Pena shared her unusual background with her rapt audience of over ninety people of all ages. She grew up as the daughter of a master falconer whose life revolved around partnering with these magnificent birds. It was natural that she would continue in this vein, spending her life teaching about the nesting habits, hunting adaptations, flight patterns and ecological needs of raptors. Her affection and respect for the birds was obvious – a feeling that appeared to be reciprocated by her owl [as evidenced by the attached photo].

Photo by Tasha O’Neill



The trees of the Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site were showcased in the second event of the weekend – a **fall-foliage walk sponsored by the Kingston Greenways Association**. KGA, an open space organization, helped to champion the acquisition of the property, a critical component of Kingston's greenbelt. This year's fall foliage walk had two very special **co-leaders** – KGA Trustee and **nurseryman Bill Flemer IV, and Jim Consolloy, the Head Grounds Manager for Princeton University**. Bill is a member of the Flemer family, which founded Princeton Nurseries, so he has an intimate knowledge of the wholesale nursery business that once thrived at this site. Jim Consolloy is responsible for maintaining Princeton University's 2300 acres and over 400 species of trees.

The 50 people participating in the walk were treated to a wealth of Princeton Nurseries History, and tips on tree identification, highlighting not only native trees, but also specimens of Princeton Nurseries' unique cultivars, such as the 'Princeton Sentry' Ginkgo and 'Bonfire' and 'Goldspire' sugar maples, aflame in their glorious fall colors.



Nurseryman William Flemer IV



Jim Consolloy
Head Grounds Manager for Princeton University

Photos of Bill Flemer and Jim Consolloy by Tari Pantaleo

COMING UP!

January 27th: Kid's Groundhog Day Celebration: Let's make some guesses with **D & R Canal State Park Naturalist Stephanie Fox** on what *Punxsutawney Phil*, the famous groundhog, has to say about this winter season. Children will learn about hibernation, migration and other techniques animals use to survive the winter weather while we make a Groundhog Day craft for everyone to take home. Appropriate for ages 4 and up. **The hour long program will be held at the D & R Canal State Park Headquarters in Kingston and begin at 10:00 am, weather permitting.** Space will be limited and pre-registration is requested – call early (609-924-5707) to reserve your spot!

February 10th: History and Nature Walk to Kingston Lock: **Enjoy a leisurely 2-mile round-trip walk with the D & R's Historian and Naturalist** from Mapleton Preserve to the canal towpath and the Kingston Lock-tender's House (and back). Participants will meet at the D&R Canal State Park's Headquarters, 145 Mapleton Road, at **10:00 am, weather permitting**. Walk through a portion of Princeton Nurseries' former property as part of this outing. Upon return to the office attendees can warm up with a cup of hot chocolate! Come enjoy a winter morning outdoors and learn a bit about the natural and historic resources of the D & R Canal State Park! **Pre-registration is requested (609-924-5707).**

February 11th: *Beginners birding – winter birds:* The fields and tree rows of Princeton Nurseries Kingston site are home to many species of birds. Join the **Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands** president **Karen Linder** at **9:00 a.m.** for a **bird walk through the Mapleton Preserve**. This walk is designed for beginners, but seasoned birders are welcome to join us. Meet at the D & R Canal State Park Headquarters, 145 Mapleton Road, Kingston for this Sunday morning event. Those who have binoculars and/or bird books are encouraged to bring them along. Keys to successful bird identification will be highlighted. Call **609-683-0483** for more information.

February 17th: *The Great Backyard Bird Count:* Come and take part in a continental effort in better understanding our avian friends. The **D & R Canal State Park staff** will show you how to identify some of the more common winter birds in our area and you can make a bird feeder to take home. And, after participating in our program you will be ready to take part in the **2007 Great Backyard Bird Count!** This program is appropriate for all ages and is a fun activity that the whole family can join in on. Participants are asked to meet at the D & R Canal State Park Headquarters located at 145 Mapleton Road in Kingston. Start time is at **10:00 am**. **Pre-registration is requested (609-924-5707).**

February 17th: *Winter Trees and Winter Wildflowers at Mapleton Preserve:* Learn to read the winter landscape on **Sat., Feb. 17th from 1:00 – 3:00 pm** at the **D & R Canal State Park/Mapleton Preserve**. **Ed Lignowski**, a **Volunteer Naturalist** from **Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve**, will present a slide show on trees in winter – describing methods to identify them, how they survive the winter through dormancy, how they prepare for spring growth, and how flowing sap is used to make maple syrup.

We will then explore Mapleton Preserve in its winter brilliance with **Mary Anne Borge**, who, like Ed, is a **volunteer Naturalist from Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve**. We will put our tree identification skills to use, and also learn about the wildflowers and weeds that fill the Nursery fields. Come see the winter interest that is provided through their fruits, seeds, color and architecture, and enjoy the quiet beauty of a walk through the meadows and woods. Call **609-683-0483** for more info. This program, sponsored by **Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands**, will be held rain or shine.

March 17th: *How to “Lost-Proof” Your Family [10-12 am] and Tracking and Animal Signs [1-3 pm]:* Join **Rick Berry** and volunteers from **Children of the Earth Foundation (COTEF)** for these **two programs**, sponsored by **Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands**. COTEF, founded by world-renowned animal tracker Tom Brown, teaches wilderness survival, nature awareness, tracking, and outdoor environmental education to children ages 7-17 (and their families). **The first program strives to instill potentially life-saving knowledge of how to keep from getting lost**, and what you can do if you are ever lost in the woods.

The second program builds awareness of the natural world, by focusing on animal tracks and signs in the landscape– the basics of tracking will be presented and we will look for signs of the critters that inhabit the Mapleton Preserve – their tracks, trails and scat.

Pre-registration for these programs is necessary as the instructor to student ratio will be high. Call 609-683-0483 for more information and a registration form. **Cost is \$5/program (\$3/program for FPNL members).** The programs, suitable for both adults and families (kids age 7 and up) will be held rain or shine, and are still in the planning stage – check our website www.fpnl.org for up to the minute details. Meet at the D&R Canal State Park Headquarters, 145 Mapleton Road in Kingston.