



Newsletter

Preserving and Protecting the Historic Princeton Nursery Lands

Coming up – FPNL events!

**Thursday, November 24th, 2022 10 - 11:30 am: Thanksgiving Day Walk:
Birds of a Feather**

Join FPNL President Karen Linder for our annual Thanksgiving morning walk. This year, the walk will focused on birds of all kinds, including turkeys. [Yes, they can be found in the Mapleton Preserve].

We will talk about feathers, look for local birds and migrating flocks, search for bird nests and the food that birds might eat at the Preserve.

Hopefully, by the end of the walk, you will be grateful for birds (if you are not already). This 10 am program will begin at the Main Office for the D&R Canal State Park, 145 Mapleton Road, Kingston. Suitable for all ages. **FREE. ALL ARE WELCOME.**



Saturday, December 3rd, 2022 1 - 3 pm: Wreaths and garlands!

Make a seasonal wreath or garland to decorate your door for the holidays. Sue Maser will show us how to transform wisteria vines into wreath forms. Some greens and supplies will be provided. If you have them, you are invited to bring greens, pinecones or dried materials to share with the group.

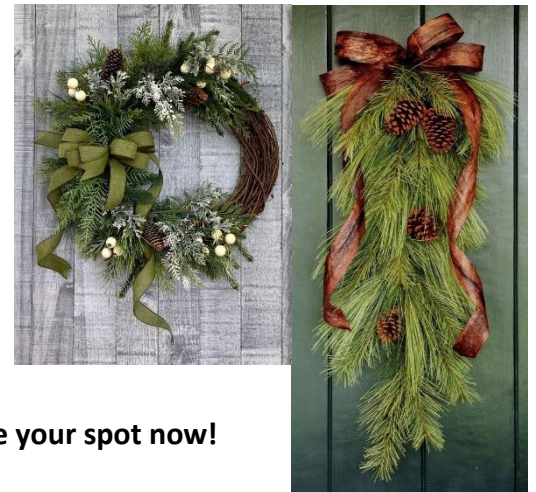
Please bring clippers, and any special ribbons or ornaments you wish to incorporate into your design. Cookies, cocoa and holiday music will round out the event. Come get into the holiday spirit!

Preregistration is requested at 609-608-6455, as space is limited. Save your spot now!

Suggested donation of \$10 to cover cost of supplies.

Sunday, Dec. 18th, 2022 7:30 am - ?: Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The Kingston segment of this year's Audubon Christmas Bird Count, sponsored by the Kingston Greenways Association, begins at 7:30 AM to catch the "early birds". We will bird until noon, when we take a break for lunch at the Palace of Asia on Rt 27 in Kingston Center. The group then continues with the count in the afternoon. You can join us for morning, afternoon, or both. If interested, call Karen Linder (609-683-0483) for more info. **We would particularly appreciate help from experienced birders for this event, but novices are welcome.** It is a great way to build your skills and get to know the Nursery Lands better.



Our Annual Membership Appeal is happening now. Please Renew/ Join: see page 4

Coming up in 2023 – Save the dates!

Sunday, January 1st, 2023 Noon - 2 pm. First Day Hike: Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands invites everyone to a First Day Hike in the Mapleton Preserve on Sunday, January 1, 2023 at noon. **Exercise your New Year's resolution to walk more or make new friends on this easy 1.5-mile loop hike through the Mapleton Preserve.** We know you will want to sleep in a little, so the walk does not start until noon. It begins and ends at the Mapleton Preserve/D&R Canal State Park Headquarters at 145 Mapleton Road in Kingston. Dress for the weather, whatever it is. The walk is free and all are welcome. Socialize after the walk over cocoa. For more information, visit www.fpnl.org as we get closer to the New Year.

Monday, January 16th, 2023 Noon to 3 pm. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service work session in the Mapleton Preserve: We will be clearing small trees, brush, vines, and trash. Come spend a winter afternoon outdoors with us and discover the special joys of stewardship! Bring saws, clippers, loppers and rakes. Work gloves, sturdy shoes, warm clothes, and hats are a must. All are welcome. Call 609-683-0483 for more information, or if you would like to involve a group to help.

FPNL's year 2022 in review:

January: FIRST DAY HIKE. We had 15 to 20 people on the First Day Hike despite rainy conditions. All told, the intrepid in the group walked 2.8 miles. The mist on the Seedbeds and the Turning Basin was lovely. Unfortunately, our MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY OF SERVICE WORK SESSION had to be cancelled later that month due to bad weather and a COVID spike.

February: GROUND HOG DAY CELEBRATION. We found a groundhog's den with a freshly excavated second exit (a spy hole), and watched two red-tailed hawks courting. We were also treated to the sight of three bluebirds glowing turquoise in the sun. A lovely walk!

March: WOODCOCK TALK AND TWILIGHT WALK. Woodcocks were featured in Kathleen Farley's Zoom presentation on this harbinger of spring. Later that month, participants in our twilight walk were thrilled to witness the woodcocks' spectacular mating ritual and hear spring peepers calling.

April: ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION. This year's Arbor Day celebration at the Mapleton Preserve featured a tree walk led by William (Bill) Flemer IV, focused on trees developed and patented by the former Princeton Nurseries. These special cultivars in the Flemer Arboretum are now labeled with new QR-coded tree tags designed by Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands to highlight the special features of each cultivar. We planted an October Glory maple in the Arboretum.



ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION

We also made festive spring hats and danced around the Maypole.



June: NATIONAL TRAILS DAY. Our National Trails Day event was the grand opening of the new “Bamboo Trail,” created by Mehul Khajuria of Monmouth Junction Troop 10 for his Eagle Service Project. After the ribbon cutting and award ceremony, Mehul led a walk on the trail. Scouts and volunteers stayed on to plant native plants along the new path which will be enjoyed year after year.

FPNL Trustee BreeAnne Lemmerling provided guidance to Mehul during the trail-making process. The trail is augmented with board-walks in the wet spots, and the improved access to Heathcote Brook will be helpful for summer programs that need good stream access.



Also this year, Troop 10 Scout Michaela Schafer and volunteers have built and installed 9 new birdhouses at the Preserve, and are expanding and adding to the variety of plants in the Butterfly Garden.

September: NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY. A cheerful group met at the Mapleton Preserve for an afternoon of trail marking, mulching, butterfly garden maintenance, litter pickup, and more. The weather was perfect, and much was accomplished. Many thanks to our public land lovers and caretakers!

October: FORAGING WORKSHOP. A fall foraging workshop and book signing at the Mapleton Preserve was led by Debbie Naha-Koretzky, a naturalist and recent author of a book entitled Foraging Pennsylvania and New Jersey: An indoor slide presentation was followed by a foraging walk and taste testing. Autumn olive berries were at peak. There are plenty of berries to go around.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD: Milkweed tussock moth caterpillars. The leaves and sticky white sap of common milkweed are poisonous to many insects and animals. The toxins, known as cardiac glycosides, can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, serious cardiac effects and (rarely) death, though most grazers quickly learn to avoid its bitter taste and side effects. Despite this, milkweed is a favorite food of the Monarch butterfly caterpillar, which has evolved to be able to eat milkweed, and concentrate the toxins without effect.

It has been observed that blue jays vomit after they eat monarch butterflies and ingest these toxins. It is hypothesized that after this experience, the bright orange and black coloration of the monarch acts as a reminder to predators - this butterfly is TOXIC to eat.



NOTES FROM THE FIELD CONTINUED:

This summer, the butterfly garden hosted with another caterpillar that uses this same protective strategy - the milkweed tussock moth caterpillar. When their larvae are small, they feed in big groups on milkweed leaves. As the caterpillars mature, they develop tufts (tussocks) of black, orange and white.



Milkweed tussock moth caterpillar

The bright colors signal that their bodies have accumulated toxic cardiac glycosides from the milkweed plants they feed on exclusively. Note: The hairs on milkweed tussock moth caterpillars can be irritating or cause allergic reactions, so do not handle these “cute” caterpillars with bare hands.



Milkweed tussock moth.
Photo by Patrick Coin,
Wikipedia Commons

In fall, they form a gray cocoon from the hairs of the larvae and overwinter as pupae. The next spring, they metamorphosize into gray moths with orange and black bodies that warn of their bad taste. In addition, the milkweed tussock moths emit an ultrasonic sound to warn bats, a primary predator, of their noxious flavor.

Join us to preserve, protect and promote the former Princeton Nursery Lands.

Membership Renewal Appeal: 2022 is drawing to a close. That means that it is again time to renew your membership with the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands for 2023 (or join us for the first time). If you were waiting for someone to ask you to join, please consider this your invitation.

Since we solicit renewals and donations only once a year, we urge you to join or renew your membership in the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands TODAY. For those who are new to FPNL, our programs are generally free and open to the public. Your donations will be used for speaker and program fees, tree- and trail upkeep, as well as the newsletter.

If you are a member, a renewal form will be sent to you in the mail and/or via email. If not, please **visit our website at www.fpnl.org to join, or renew using either PayPal or by downloading a membership form at www.fpnl.org** Please give as generously as you can.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED – would you like to be more involved?

Here are just a few of the ways you can help:

- Website maintenance, graphic design and layout
- Assist with events, such as a welcome table or sign-in sheet
- Assist in grant writing
- Lead nature walks
- Trail maintenance and repair



Whatever your special skill, we need it! Help us achieve our mission. Please email us at fpnl.org



Stay up to date. You can always find information about FPNL and the Mapleton Preserve at our website www.fpnl.org but here is a newsflash: **Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands has a Facebook and an Instagram page too!** Our new pages are a source of information, maps, current and historical photos, and a place to ask questions and post your own photos and videos of your experiences at the Preserve! “Like us” **us online at Facebook @FPNLnj or find us at Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofprincetonnurserylands/>**