



Spring 2011

# ON THE SHORELINE

A publication of Friends of Hammonasset, Inc.

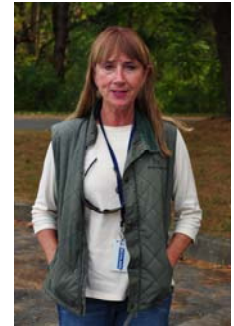
## Vice-President's Note

Dear Friends,

Spring is finally upon us; and I, for one, embrace the changes it will bring. FOH is gearing up for a very busy spring/early summer season. The FOH Annual Meeting on March 16th was very well attended, and all of us were treated to a fascinating lecture/slide show on purple martins by John Picard. Our Trail Maintenance Committee led by Sallie Sperling and her husband Peter Goldberg worked with many volunteers, over two Saturdays, to rebuild a large section of deteriorated boardwalk at West Beach. FOH supplied the funds, and the volunteers provided the labor – a huge thank you to all who participated! We were very pleased to have been selected to host “Family Birding Day “ on April 9th – part of the CT DEP nationally recognized initiative of “No Child Left Inside.” I hope that many of you were able to take part in this first event of the annual “Great Park Pursuit” program.

Mark your calendars for our biggest fundraiser of the year – the annual Plant/Shrub Sale that begins on May 5th and runs through Memorial Day weekend. We will need many volunteers to assist in this endeavor. Remember Carousel Days, the first Friday and Saturday in June (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>), when all Carousel proceeds at The Fish Tale will go to FOH. The first Saturday in June is also CT Trails Day with over 100 trail walks to choose from for all levels of hikers/walkers. FOH is participating once again with a walk along the Shoreline Greenway Trail led by Ranger Russ Miller and Marcy Klattenberg. We will meet in the Campground parking lot at 10:00 a.m. on June 4th. Please join us for an informative walk along this lovely new addition to our shoreline.

The Meigs Point Nature Center will be extremely busy all spring with school groups and will switch over to its summer schedule and programs at the end of June. The FOH website and the calendar of upcoming events in this newsletter will offer more details. The Butterfly Garden Committee chaired by Michelle Kiley is preparing the gardens for the coming growing season. If you like to garden and would like to help out, please contact Michelle at: [rkileyESQ@comcast.net](mailto:rkileyESQ@comcast.net). Remember that 2011 is the year of the “Hammonasset Festival” a wonderful two day celebration of nature and Native American culture. The Festival planning committee is meeting regularly now. If you are interested in serving on any committee or are willing to Chair a Grants Committee, please contact Volunteer Chair, Gay Butler at: [gmbutler@comcast.net](mailto:gmbutler@comcast.net). I wish you all a warm, gentle spring. See you at the park!



Marcy Klattenberg  
FOH Vice-President

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Marcy Klattenberg—Vice-President

# The First Greens of Spring

By Marcy Klattenberg

How the Native peoples of this land must have welcomed the arrival of spring. Winter stores of food would be running low by now, and their bodies must have craved the vitamin filled nutritious greens that arrive in early spring. We enjoy access to wide varieties of green foods all year long and don't need to wait for their emergence in field and forest.

I still do! I watch carefully for signs of fresh green plants each spring. At the end of March or early April, the forest floor is covered with the delectable leaves of trout lilies (Adder's tongues), wild leeks (ramps), garlic mustard (an invasive – might as well eat it), onion grass, violet leaves and flowers, chickweed, plantain leaves, dandelion leaves, Japanese knotweed (another invasive – use top leaves), wild grape leaves, newly opened American Beech leaves (late April – early May) and many others.

All of the above can be cooked up in many ways; my favorite is to make "wild pizza". After foraging and washing what I have picked, I sauté the greens in olive oil with crushed garlic for about 10 – 15 minutes. Add a can of crushed tomatoes, salt & pepper to taste and cook through. I then slice a French bread through lengthwise and then into smaller sections, ladling the "sauce" on each piece and sprinkling parmesan and mozzarella cheese on top. Bake at 350 until the cheese melts and enjoy. The above are also good in an omelet or use smaller amounts mixed in a salad. The early shoots of Japanese knotweed may substituted for rhubarb; I make a tasty cake from them. Happy foraging!

**Grant Writer Needed:** Are you passionate about preserving and protecting Hammonasset Beach State Park and educating the public about our shared natural resources? Do you have grant writing experience and/or technical writing skills or a desire to learn? If so, then Friends of Hammonasset is looking for you! FOH seeks volunteer grant writers who can assist in researching potential funding sources, initiating new grant applications, applying for recurring grants, and maintaining grant awards. If you have time and talent to offer, please contact Gay Butler at (203) 453.2943.

**Publicity Volunteer Needed:** Creative? Love to write? Enjoy meeting new people in the communications media field? Sounds like you? The Publicity Committee has a spot for YOU! FOH's Publicity Committee needs people to write press releases; design flyers and posters; distribute FOH press releases to radio/TV/newspapers; post event information at libraries, Meigs Point Nature Center and throughout the Hammonasset Beach State Park. If interested in doing any or all of the above, please contact Matthew Lubanko, Publicity Chair, at [matthewlubanko@sbcglobal.net](mailto:matthewlubanko@sbcglobal.net)

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President ..... Eileen Grant

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## Native Cooking

By Dale Carson



I love a good ‘hunt’ in the springtime, first for skunk cabbage then on to fiddleheads! They are the delicious early fronds of the ostrich fern (*mateuccia struthiopteris*). These

perennials like rich soil by riverbanks or in the woods. We are fortunate enough to have several patches of them so I get excited about picking and cooking them. As for taste, they are much like asparagus combined with artichoke, subtle and mellow and can be cooked and eaten in similar ways. They should be picked when they reach a height of three inches, are curled and still a little ‘rusty’ near the bottom. Break them off with your fingers, but don’t snack until they are thoroughly cleaned. If you pick them wild, be sure to leave some to ensure future generations of the plant. Rub off any brown scales with your hand or toss inside a clean cloth. Rinse well. Soak in cold water a couple of times to remove the dirt, swooshing them around while they soak. Then put them on a cloth to dry. Now they are ready for your recipes: steam them or sauté lightly in butter and herbs; serve with soy sauce, lemon juice or cider vinegar. They only need to be steamed for a few minutes to make them tender. Boiling them is not recommended.

Fiddleheads have not always been available commercially. Now that they are, their market season is a short window of opportunity. Their season only lasts for two weeks whether located in the south or in Canada. They don’t keep well either so wrap them in plastic, refrigerate and use within two days. I had to buy a case of them once for an event; it cost me ninety dollars! I really freaked. They told me this was because I needed them three weeks before market time and some nonsense about having to buy and have them shipped from a greenhouse somewhere in the universe, I suppose. Now if I need a large supply, I’ll watch my timing or change the menu. Our favorite way of having them is steamed tender, chilled and used in a mixed green salad. They are so pretty since they are named for their resemblance to the top of a violin. It is hard to know how long Native people have been enjoying these

morsels, certainly longer than asparagus which has Mediterranean origins.

### FIDDLEHEAD SALAD WITH VINAIGRETTE

- ◆ Mixed greens: Mesclun, Watercress, Spinach and/or Arugula
- ◆ A few fresh mushrooms, sliced paper thin
- ◆ Two or more scallions, sliced very thin, including greens
- ◆ ½ cup goat or feta cheese sprinkled on top
- ◆ Vinaigrette:
  - 4 tablespoons good olive oil
  - 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
  - 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
  - Tiny pinch sugar
  - Salt & Pepper to taste

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**Friends of Hammonasset participated in Friends of Connecticut State Parks Day March 2, 2011, at the State Capitol/Legislative Office Building in Hartford.** We had a booth to showcase our activities and accomplishments in past years and our future plans for projects. We also spoke with legislators to advocate for the park.



Senator Meyer visits our booth (Left to right: Russ, Carol, Michelle, Sen. Meyer, Caryl and Caitlin)

## The "Flagship" Report

By Bill Mattioli, Park Supervisor



Hopefully the snow is done for the winter of 2010-2011, and boy has it been hectic around here. We found ourselves plowing and removing snow much longer than we anticipated. After that, we had the cold temperatures to deal with which pushed our projects further and further behind. Thankfully, we resumed roofing just a couple weeks ago. Our guys did a fantastic job completing all the roofs we needed in anticipation of the installation of the solar panels. I'm pleased to say all four buildings now have the solar panels in place and are ready to go for this season. These panels are going to be providing solar hot water to the campground buildings.

Another project that began just a few days ago is installation of security cameras at our ticket booths. We are going to have the ability to monitor all transactions made at each booth as well as each vehicle entering and exiting the park. This will not only keep our staff safer but also help out our law enforcement staff if an incident should occur. These should be in place by the beginning of the 2011 season. Along with security cameras, new cash registers are going to be installed in each booth. These new touch screen registers are going to have the ability to make credit card transactions as well as keep more accurate records of each transaction made. This will make the state auditors very happy. The new equipment is scheduled to be operational by no later than Memorial Day 2011.

I'm sure we were all pleased to hear the news that the State Bond Commission approved the funding for the beginning steps to have our West Beach repaired and restored and for the design phase of a new Nature Center building. Both have been a long time coming, and all of us here are very eager to see these projects begin. We look forward to providing any assistance we can to expedite this process.

I would like to personally thank the Friends of Hammonasset for their gracious donation of two golf carts. These are going to be a welcome addition to

our park. Given the times ahead, vehicles are going to be at a premium, so we are very pleased to have them. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Ring's End Lumber Company for their donation of the lumber for the repairs to the West Beach boardwalk. And of course a big "thank you" goes to the Friends trails committee and their volunteers for completing the repairs. This area was in dire need of attention due to the number of accidents we had in years past. Again, thank you to all who participated.

Finally, we are preparing for the 2011 season, and we find that a large number of last year's staff will be returning for another summer. This is welcomed news as experienced staff is always a positive thing, especially in an environment such as Hammonasset Beach. We have approximately 80 to 85 percent of last year's staff returning; an extremely high amount - not to mention the stack of applications that Becky already has on her desk, and it's only April. All are great signs as we are looking forward to a positive and productive 2011 summer season.

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### Friends of Connecticut State Parks Day March 2, 2011



Anita and Caryl pose with Governor Dannel P. Malloy during Friends of Connecticut State Parks Day

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**Thursday, May 5 through Memorial Day Weekend -- FOH Annual Plant/Shrub Sale.** Route 1 - east of Hammonasset Beach State Park main entrance. The Plant Sale commences with a wide variety of hanging baskets May 5th and will be joined by flats of vegetable and flowers, perennials and 4 inch annuals by the following weekend. Please see our website [www.friendsofhammonasset.org](http://www.friendsofhammonasset.org) or FACEBOOK for updated information including hours of operation as well as anticipated delivery of shrubs.

**Saturday, May 14 -- Sunset Star Gazing.** At Meigs Point Nature Center. Telescopes will be available, and experts will be on hand to tell you what you are viewing.

**Wednesday, May 25 -- Responder Training for Seals.** 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. At Meigs Point Nature Center. Please register with Marine Mammal & Sea Turtle Stranding Program at 860-572-5955 x134. If you have an interest in seals and would like to help, this is the training for you.

**Friday, June 3 and Saturday, June 4 -- Carousel Days.** 12 noon to 8:00 p.m. To be held at Lenny & Joe's Fish Tale Restaurant, Route 1 in Madison, CT. Proceeds are donated to the Friends of Hammonasset.

**Saturday, June 4 -- CT Trails Day.** Ranger Russ Miller and FOH Vice-President Marcy Klattenberg will be leading an interpretive walk along the Shoreline Greenway Trail. Meet in the Campground parking lot at 10:00 a.m.

**Saturday, October 1 and Sunday, October 2 -- Hammonasset Festival** to celebrate nature and Native American culture. Detail information will be provided in the Summer 2011 Newsletter.



### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ Meigs Point Nature Center Docent Training Saturday, May 7, 2011 for a variety of programs: 10:00 a.m. - Salt Marsh; 11:00 a.m. - Rocky Shore, 12:00 noon - Sandy Beach, 2:00 p.m.- Turtles, 3:00 p.m.- Snakes. All are welcome as refresher or new docents.
- ◆ Meigs Point Nature Center Docent Refresher Training: Call (203) 318.0517 x 217 or check FOH Website regarding additional docent refresher training opportunities. Docents can come to the MPNC while the staff trains and prepares for the season. We would like docents to help with programs Tuesday - Friday, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., from May 10 - June 17, 2011.
- ◆ To sign up for the Electronic Newsletter, send an email to [info@hammonasset.org](mailto:info@hammonasset.org) with "FOH E-Newsletter" (without quotes) in the subject field. In the email, provide your name and address as it's shown on the mailing label of your hard copy newsletter.
- ◆ Look for us on [FACEBOOK](#)

Friends of Hammonasset, Inc.  
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