



Winter 2011

ON THE SHORELINE

A publication of Friends of Hammonasset, Inc.

Vice-President's Note

Dear Friends,

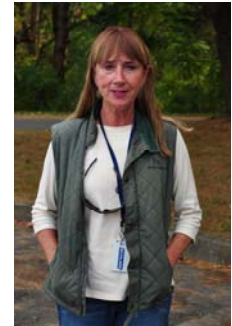
I must say that I really do envy our President Deanna Becker who escaped this record breaking winter by taking an extended vacation to Florida. Oh to feel and see warm sun and colors other than white!

FOH has not been hibernating, and there is much to share with you. Hammonasset Beach State Park has a new Park Supervisor – Bill Mattioli. We all wish Bill the best in taking on the state's most visited and challenging park. He has been very receptive and grateful of our endeavors to help Hammonasset remain the "Crown Jewel" of the state park system. Welcome aboard, Bill; and we look forward to working with you! Our new website is up and running with the guidance of Michael Greene. We extend our most sincere gratitude to Alan and Kirsten Walker for creating and maintaining the website for the last 10 years. This was an extremely time consuming job, and they have been willing to continue hosting until we could find a new web master. Madison resident and FOH board member, Michael Greene, with the help of Gay Butler, Landa Freeman, Michelle Kiley and Jean Russman has successfully made the transition – please check it out at www.hammonasset.org or www.friendsofhammonasset.org We will post any changes in events on the website – so if you have concerns about weather or need to check on time changes – just go to the web. Our annual Bauer Lecture series has been underway, offering educational topics on 4 Saturdays, the last being February 26, 2011. There are also several upcoming educational programs offered through the Meigs Point Nature Center (MPNC).

Please see the calendar of events in this newsletter (pg.5) or check the website for specific topics for the Bauer Series program and programming at the MPNC. You can also call the MPNC at 203.245.8743 for information. We are getting ready for our annual plant sale in May and will need many volunteers to sign up. This is our biggest fund raiser of the year, and so many of you have helped make it the success it has become – sign up with Gay Butler, Chair of Volunteers. Lastly, 2011 is once again the year of the *Hammonasset Festival*, Chairs Dale

(Continued on page 2)

ANNUAL FOH MEETING
Memorial Town Hall on the Madison Green
MARCH 16, 2011, 7:30 p.m.



Marcy Klattenberg
FOH Vice-President

Inside this issue:	
<i>Remembering Paula</i>	2
<i>"Flagship" Report</i>	3
<i>Woodland Native Food of Winter</i>	4
<i>White Tail Deer Antlers</i>	4
<i>Calendar of Events and Announcements</i>	5
<i>Nature Center Wish List</i>	6
<i>Help Needed: Grant Writer and Publicity Volunteer</i>	6
<i>Where Cedar and Composite Collide</i>	7
<i>FOH Membership Form</i>	8

Vice-President's Note

(Continued from page 1)

Carson and Don Rankin are deep in the planning phase of this extraordinary event to be held on the first weekend in October. Please contact Gay if you want to be a part of this outstanding 2 day event – volunteers are needed in a wide variety of ways.

The FOH Annual Meeting will be held at the Memorial Town Hall on the Madison Green on March 16th (a Wednesday) at 7:30 p.m. After a brief business meeting, we are excited to welcome John Piccard who will give an informative lecture on the natural history of purple martins. Please join us to learn more about these beneficial colonial birds who have taken up residence behind our Nature Center.

See you at the park!

Marcy Klattenberg—Vice-President

Remembering Paula

By Marcy Klattenberg

Last October, the Friends of Hammonasset and I lost a true friend and supporter. Paula Schiller died far too young, but she achieved far more than many of us ever will. I was fortunate to first meet Paula while we were both graduate students in the GLSP (Graduate Liberal Studies Program) at Wesleyan University. We were classmates in two environmental courses, and Paula brought such a fresh interest and curiosity to each class. We reconnected ten years ago when Paula joined a fledgling “Friends of Hammonasset”. She took on many projects and positions over the next decade before discovering her talent for working with the legislature and our umbrella group, Friends of CT State Parks (FCSP) as an activist to affect needed change in the state park system. Paula found the time to chair our Grants Committee, bringing in funds for the “Meigs Mobile”, interpretive signage at Hammonasset Beach State Park, new kayaks and canoes and much more. Paula was always available for volunteering cheerfully in almost every event that FOH held (a full time job in itself!). Somehow, this amazing woman also served numerous other community based organizations in the shoreline area. Her brain-child is the Schiller Shoreline Institute for Lifelong Learning in Guilford where she lived. Other organizations that Paula actively supported included Women and Family Life Center in Guilford, the Guilford Arts Center, the Rivers Alliance, the Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven, Guilford Youth Mentoring and CT Farmland Trust Preservation Society. Every organization would be incredibly fortunate to have a Paula on board – we at FOH were truly one of those lucky organizations.



Paula will be missed in many ways: her friendship, hard work, laughter and dedication stood out. Her legacy of educating the public about environmental issues and, in particular, Long Island Sound will live on. The Board of Friends of Hammonasset will plant a tree in Paula’s memory at Hammonasset Beach State Park in the spring.

The “Flagship” Report

By Bill Mattioli, Park Supervisor



Occasionally someone will ask, “What do you guys do down there all winter?” Lately the answer has been “Plow, plow, plow!” The large

amount of snow we have gotten has called for a large amount of snow removal. We purchased a new plow for our John Deere tractor, but have only that and one smaller plow truck to handle all of the work. Given the lack of usable equipment, extra kudos and appreciation go out to our maintenance crew for the great job they’ve done keeping the roads and parking lots clear.

The recent winter storms have caused some delays in other ongoing maintenance projects. Much progress has been made on reroofing some of the buildings in the campground; however, work has been on hold due to the recent snows. More roofs will be replaced once the weather clears.

The upgrade to the park’s communications system has also been delayed due to the weather, but the contractor is confident that the work will be completed by the beginning of the summer season. The park is in the process of purchasing new radio equipment that will enable staff to communicate clearly with each other at all times. With the current communication system, there are certain locations within the park where radio contact is limited. The new system will eliminate “dead spots” and allow staff members to communicate more quickly and efficiently.

Work on the electrical and water hook-ups to the campsites on Beach Road is continuing again (weather permitting). Despite the delays, we are on schedule to have everything completed by the beginning of the camping season. Word is getting around that electrical and water hookups will be available for the first time to campers at Hammonasset. Comments are generally positive – “It’s about time!” has been heard more than once. Because campers were able to reserve sites on Beach Road before the hookups were installed, use of the electricity will be optional for this season. Campers can choose to do

without power, or can access the hookup for an additional fee. Starting with the 2012 camping season, use of the hookups will automatically be included in the reservation fee for campsites on Beach Road.

A plan is in place to install solar panels on the roofs of four park buildings to heat hot water. The park’s light poles and the lighting systems in all bathhouse buildings are also scheduled to be replaced using “green” technology. These efforts should be reflected in the park’s electrical usage costs. The solar panel project is scheduled to begin in March, while work on the light poles and bathhouse buildings will be an ongoing project throughout the year.

Unfortunately, the reallocation of funds for the Meigs Point Nature Center expansion project did not appear on January’s Bond Commission agenda. We are hopeful that it will appear on the agenda when the Commission meets on February 25th.

I began my assignment here at Hammonasset on November 19th and am looking forward to the challenges faced by such a large facility. So far I have found the staff to be a great asset. I am very happy and proud to join such a wonderful team of dedicated staff members.

What’s happening at the Menunkatuck Audubon bird blind near the Meigs Point Nature Center? See page 7.



Woodland Native Food Of Winter

By Dale Carson



What did people do to survive winters two to four hundred years ago? One thing they did was to prepare. It was common for many families and tribes to travel to the coastline in summer where

they enjoyed the fruits of the sea. Hammonasset was a perfect location, evidenced by state archeological records. Seafood of all manner was prolific. The clams, oysters, scallops, lobsters, herring, shad and numerous other species were not only eaten daily while by the sea, but much of this bounty was smoked and/or dried to bring back to the winter camp. There it was often cached, wrapped in seaweed or animal skin and buried in the ground under the frost line. Dried corn, beans and squash were also cached. Other various items were also saved away like dried wild herbs, mushrooms, wild rice in some areas, wild onion, and other greens plus some edible tubers.

Once camped in winter homes, hunting provided both large and small mammals as well as birds like duck, quail, pheasant, and wild turkey. Some of these were eaten right away; some were dried or smoked to preserve them. Winters were more severe in those times so hanging small game in trees to dry was common while providing some refrigeration. Teas and other beverages could be made from white pine, staghorn sumac and many other sources that were available in freezing temperatures. In the Northeast Woodland areas, dwellings were bark covered wigwams that had a central fire and a smoke-hole in the roof which could be covered, lifted and angled according to wind direction. Maple sap was collected and boiled into syrup or dried to become maple sugar. Using both birchbark containers and clay pots, a family meal was begun early in the day; and this soup/stew could easily be varied.

Toward the end of winter, caches dwindled and game became scarce so that was a hard time. It is interesting to note that some squash can last for

months. Dried corn and beans have a very long shelf life and often filled in the gap if hunting was slowing down. Preparing a meal was often difficult when there was not enough stashed away. Severe weather or sickness could wreak havoc on a family or tribe. However, hope springs eternal; and soon the ground warms a bit and brings many edible shoots, and the cycles begin anew.

White Tail Deer Antlers

By Marcy Klattenberg

In winter, while there is still a snow cover, deer trails can be easily discovered. There are often many tracks as deer cover the same pathways through the forest as they forage for food. Noting the location will make it easier to hunt successfully for antlers after the snow melts.

Male white-tailed deer (bucks) begin growing new antlers in April; they can actually grow up to 1/2" per day. Antlers are made of bone and covered during the growing season (until late summer – early fall) with a soft skin called “velvet”. This covering is rich in blood and supplies nutrients to the growing bone. Decreased daylight in late summer arrests the growth, the bone dies and the velvet is shed by rubbing on saplings (another deer sign to look for). Male deer have scent glands on their foreheads and below the eyes allowing them to mark their territories as they rub off the dried velvet. Other deer learn a lot about the deer’s health and vigor by these rubbings. Many people believe that you can age a deer by the number of tines (points) on the antlers. This is erroneous; the size and number of tines are a direct indication of the nutrition and health of the deer and may vary from one year to the next.

After the “rut” (mating season from mid-November to mid-December), the antlers loosen and eventually fall off. They usually fall off one at a time – from a few hours apart to several days. With over 70,000 deer in CT, it would seem like an easy task to find antlers – not so! You need to actively look beginning in January to find any. The antlers are recycled quickly by mice, squirrels, rabbits and other forest creatures for their rich calcium content. It is rare to find one that doesn’t have at least a few gnaw marks.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Saturday, Feb. 26, 10:00 a.m. -- Bauer Series - Guided Geology and Native American Land Use Hike. This guided hike led by Dr. "Nick" Bellantoni, State Archaeologist, will inform folks about the geologic past of the Park and how Native Americans adapted to the changing climate and landscape over 10,000 years. Bring your own artifacts for identification. Meet at the Meigs Point Nature Center.

Saturday, Feb. 26, 11:00 a.m. -- Seal Search. Guided walk to look for seals and other wildlife along a beautiful trail. Meet at the Meigs Point Nature Center.

Wednesday, Mar. 2 -- Friends of Connecticut State Parks Day. FOH is going to be part of the Friends of Connecticut State Parks delegation at the Capitol in Hartford with a display table in the concourse. FOH is meeting with State Senator Ed Meyer to discuss budget and Hammonasset Beach State Park/Meigs Point Nature Center concerns.

Saturday, Mar. 5, 6:00 p.m. -- Fireside Stories with Ranger Russ. Hear Native American folk tales and fables by the campfire at the outdoor amphitheater at the Meigs Point Nature Center. Dress for weather. Bring chairs and blankets as well as roasting sticks. We'll provide the marshmallows.

Wednesday, Mar. 16, 7:30 p.m. -- FOH Annual Meeting at the Memorial Town Hall on the Madison Green. Short business meeting followed by a lecture by John Piccard regarding the natural history of purple martins.

Saturday, Mar. 26, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. -- Clinton Town Expo Fair at the Clinton Town Hall on Route 1. Volunteers are needed to staff the FOH table for 2 hour increments. Call Anita Bennett @ 860-669-1372 to volunteer at the table to distribute FOH literature.

Starting Thursday, May 5 -- FOH Annual Plant/Shrub Sale. Route 1—east of Hammonasset Beach Park main entrance. Initially hanging baskets will be offered. Please see our website for updated information including dates/times and anticipated delivery of other plants and shrubs.

Saturday, June 4 -- CT Trails Day. Ranger Russ and FOH Vice-President Marcy Klattenberg will be leading interpretive walks. Please see our website for updated information.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ We're pleased to announce that FOH has a new website. Please see www.friendsofhammonasset.org
- ◆ You can now follow us on [FACEBOOK](#)
- ◆ FOH Trail Committee will be meeting in March to repair some of the planks on the beach boardwalk. (Date to be announced via email.)
- ◆ New Nature Center Contest: WHERE IS IT? Folks are asked to submit photos to the Nature Center of unusual sightings for all to search for and find. First submission, photo courtesy of Lori Rankin, is pictured on right. Search the park and then visit Ranger Russ at the Nature Center to report its location.
- ◆ To sign up for the Electronic Newsletter, send an email to 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.



Meigs Point Nature Center Wish List

By Russ Miller, Nature Center Director



Ranger Russ and the FOH Board thank you very much for your past and future contributions which serve to enhance the environmental education provided by the Nature Center Programs. The Nature Center currently still has a need for:

Craft Supplies	Quality Lumber	Boating Supplies	Office Supplies
Small Refrigerator	Hand Tools	Gardening Supplies	Candle Wax & Old Candles
Air Conditioner & Fans	Printer Paper	Paint (indoor, outdoor & craft)	Microscopes
Magnifying Glasses	Binoculars & Scopes	Nature Books	Field Guides
Nets—Butterfly or Fish	Animal Mounts	Mounted Fish	20 Gal. or Larger Aquariums
Garbage & Freezer Bags	Cleaning Supplies	Pet Bedding (wood shavings)	Ceramic Heat Bulbs (75 Watts)
Fishing Supplies (poles, nets, traps)	Heated Water Bowls—Large	Sand Box Play Sand	Freeze Dried Meal Worms
Astro Turf	Bark Chips	Rope	Office Chairs
Pressure Treated 2x4's, 4x4's, 2x6's	Pressure Treated Plywood	Bead Board (wainscoting)	Plastic Greenhouse Roofing
Wall Sheets	Corrugated Roofing (blue sheets)	Merrick's Puppy Plate Dry Dog Food	Tarps
Unsweetened Apple Sauce	Frozen Vegetables (Corvid Food)	Plastic Wrap & Aluminum Foil	Heat or Drop Lamps
Light Bulbs	Bird Seed & Suet	Native Non Releasable Animals	Pet Food
Sheets & Towels	Kitchen Cabinets & Counters	Shelves	Carpet & Door Mats

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

Where Cedar and Composite Collide

By John Picard

It had been well over a year since we started discussing the possibility of encouraging chimney swifts to nest within the boundaries of the Hammonasset Beach St. Park. We inventoried the existing and available chimneys and found that they were not suitable for use; most were either capped off to prevent rain and raccoons from entering, or ill suited for this purpose because they were too small. Chimney swifts prefer to have a minimum opening of 7" x 11". Considering all our options had been exhausted, there was only one thing left to do--build one. We consulted with Margaret Rubega, the CT State Ornithologist at UCONN; she had been experimenting with free-standing artificial chimneys for the swifts and had some ideas to offer. We visited with her at UCONN to see her chimney swift towers and then asked her to do a presentation at our monthly public program to communicate her findings and share her knowledge of chimney swifts and the story of how artificial chimneys can benefit these birds. Shortly thereafter, armed with a few diagrams and photos of artificial chimney swift towers that are in use in the southern states, we headed off to the lumber yard; red cedar and Azek were decided upon for the primary building materials. Red cedar will hold up against the weather with minimal care for many years and Azek, a composite material that is often used for trim, will last a lifetime or as the advertisements state, forever.

The process of building the tower went on for several months and could be best described as trial and error. The diagrams and photos of the artificial towers we had viewed were tailored for the southern states, and did not necessarily blend well with the Park environment. Changes were needed to make the tower suitable for our location. We decided it would be best to locate the tower up against the existing Menunkatuck Audubon bird blind at the lower wetland area near the Meigs Point Nature Center. Chimney swifts associate chimneys with buildings, so rather than make an artificial chimney that was free standing, we decided to place it up against the bird blind so it would appear more chimney-like. The bird blind first needed to be stained and leveled; then, volunteers helped to assemble the artificial tower, piece by piece, over the course of several weekends. Aside from the help of the Menunkatuck Board members, help came in the form of volunteers that had worked with Menunkatuck on other projects as well, most notably, John Pfitzner, Cpl. Stephen Petrosky, Mike Sexton and Paul Bukowsky.

The final installation of the chimney swift tower was on

April 19th, 2010, a few weeks in advance of the anticipated return of the chimney swifts. Although some swifts were observed flying in the vicinity of the tower, they did not use it to nest in this year. Next year, we plan to increase our odds of the chimney swifts finding the tower by playing recorded songs and calls of chimney swifts, in hopes that it will attract the swifts to the tower. Although only one pair of swifts will nest in a chimney at one time, after the nesting season is over, the swifts will often congregate in large numbers to roost together in chimneys. Either way, the tower is ready and waiting.

Many thanks to all of the volunteers that helped with this project and all of the members of the Menunkatuck Audubon Society who support this and other initiatives.

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Name: _____	Address: _____		
City: _____	State: _____ Zip: _____		
Phone: (____) _____	Email: _____		
Member Levels		<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you want to receive FOH newsletters via email	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student \$15.00		Please indicate volunteer interests:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend/Family \$20.00		<input type="checkbox"/> Nature Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Beach/Trail Maintenance
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$50.00		<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/> Website
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor: \$100.00		<input type="checkbox"/> Photography	<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy/Legislative
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate \$500.00		<input type="checkbox"/> Events	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity
<input type="checkbox"/> My employer will match my donation		<input type="checkbox"/> Plant/Tree Sales	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

(Employer Name)			
Additional Donation			
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ \$____.00			
Total Enclosed \$____.00			
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