



Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge

Among Friends

Summer 2004

Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the enduring protection, management, and appreciation of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge and its environs.

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The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to preserve a national network of lands and waters for the conservation and management of fish, wildlife and plant resources of the United States for the benefit of present and future generations.

Watercolor Workshops Are Wonderful!

"An unqualified success!" That's how John Petraglia, FOW Board member and Program Committee Co-Chair, described the Watercolor Workshops that FOW hosted this summer, on three Sundays – June 27, and August 8 and 29.

Helen Geraghty, who studies botanical drawing at the New York Botanical Gardens, taught all three classes, which focused on subjects ranging from wildflowers to landscapes to cicadas. Noted local artist Kate Madsen joined Helen in leading the session on landscape painting.

About 18 eager participants attended each free class. Though the subjects varied, those at all three sessions shared the special ambiance of a lovely day outdoors, painting the glories of nature at the Wertheim Refuge. And each time, John said, "Everyone was involved for two hours. Everyone voiced their enjoyment of the event."

Helen described the June

workshop as "Wildflower Gems," and said, "Nothing captures the brilliance and delicacy of wildflowers like watercolor." Those attending this class learned how to draw the skeleton of a plant on tracing paper –



Artists Kate Madsen and Helen Geraghty taught the watercolor workshop on landscape painting. Here, Helen explains the connection between the candy marshmallows she and Kate hold and the lovely pink mallows that grow in the marsh along the Carmans River.

"watercolor is unforgiving so it's important to have a good plan of attack!" Helen said. They then added leaves and flowers, transferred the drawing to cold press watercolor paper, and learned how to manage color washes. Some of the flower portraits the students produced are shown below.



For the first August workshop, Kate and Helen guided their students in drawing the Carmans River using watercolors to wash in sky, water, grass and tree tones. They focused on painting the scene from the general to the specific by reversing the order of perception, starting with the vague and ending with the particular. The results were a fascinating study in the variety of ways different people can perceive and portray the same scene.

At the final workshop, Helen led the participants in an unusual class she called "Dog Day Cicadas."

"One of the most charming features of fall is the hum of the Tibicen cicada," Helen explained. "The males make a love call which is one of the loudest of all insect sounds."

This cicada has a fat body with transparent wings with green and brown markings. Under Helen's direction, the class unfolded and mounted cicada specimens, drew them on graph paper, transferred the drawings to mylar, then colored them with wax-based color pencils.

See related story on page 3.

FOW Focuses on Community Awareness



Ready to help visitors to FOW's table: (l-r) Connie Ludlam, Anita Cohen, John Petraglia, Linda Cox and Bob Heins.

The FOW table was a popular stop at the Community Awareness Day that the South Country Partnership sponsored on May 22, at the Hamlet Organic Garden in Brookhaven, to introduce people to resources available in the South Country Community. There was something for everyone, from Blue Grass Music to the Steel Band of the Boys & Girls Club of Bellport, and interesting exhibits from the Partnership's many members. As FOW President Claire Goad summed it up, "We gained some new members and everyone enjoyed themselves!"



Young volunteer Cailie Hafener (right) taught children who visited FOW's display to make bird feeders and necklaces using pine cones, shells and beads. FOW Board member Jim McGowan even persuaded some adults to give it a try!

Grant Grows Larger as Eagle Optics Matches \$400

If you've been at any FOW events recently, you've seen some of the fruits of Charlie Meinhold's labors, which resulted in FOW's receiving a \$2,400 grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NF&WF) earlier this year.

Thanks to the grant money, FOW now has facilities for hosting visitor programs at the Refuge (see stories on pages 1 and 3) and for participating in other community events (see story above). These include three easily erected canopies with sides, a beautiful banner for which the Linda Cox Design Group partnered with FOW, eight folding tables and 19 folding chairs. Many of these are pictured in use in this issue.

When this shopping spree was over, \$400 remained with which to buy some much-desired binoculars for visitors to use at FOW-sponsored birding events. The task of making

the acquisition went to FOW Board member Kathleen O'Connor who has led several bird walks at the Wertheim Refuge.

Last year, at the National Convention of NF&WF, Kathleen had met a representative from Wisconsin-based Eagle Optics. With their friendly and expert service, Kathleen said, "Eagle Optics is known throughout the birding community as *the* place to checkout optics."

When Kathleen approached Eagle's Manager Tim Austin for a discount, she said, "He outdid himself! He gave FOW a matching grant of \$400 toward the binoculars!"

With our funds doubled to \$800, FOW was able to purchase six binoculars. Said Kathleen, "Come join us on our next birding trip and we can loan you a pair for the day!"

Time of Transition for Wertheim Refuge's Staff

Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic recently shared with FOW that the Long Island NWR Complex must say "farewell" to three talented employees – Mark Maghini, Bill Stewart and Andrea Stewart.

In mid-August, Mark Maghini, who had worked as a Wildlife Biologist since January 1999, transferred to Rhode Island NWR Complex as their Deputy Refuge Manager. "Mark will have a great opportunity to apply his expertise and experience as he expands his work from an oversight of a biological program to the daily oversight of all Refuge programs – maintenance,

law enforcement, public use, outreach, administrative, personnel management, and biological – at a series of five refuges along the Rhode Island coast," said Patricia.

Before heading to his new Refuge, Mark said, "I've enjoyed the opportunity to work with others in establishing the Refuge Complex as a leader in implementing habitat management techniques that are new to Long Island, such as *Phragmites* control and a comprehensive salt marsh restoration method that should substantially reduce the use of mosquito larvicides. I look forward to working with the highly motivated and creative

staff and their volunteers to achieve great things for the Rhode Island Refuges!"

Bill and Andrea Stewart, have enjoyed their challenging work at the LI Complex, but they couldn't pass up the opportunity to live within an hour of their families. That's why, within the next few months, Bill, Andrea and their two children will head upstate, where they'll both have new professional opportunities at 8,000-acre Montezuma NWR, located near Seneca Falls, New York. Bill who has been the LI Complex's Deputy Refuge Manager since August 1999, has accepted the same position at Montezuma. An-

drea, who became Outdoor Recreation Planner on June 2000, will also continue her work at Montezuma.

"The expertise, creativity, and hard work of both Bill and Andrea are reflected in the improved Refuge facilities, programs, and daily operations for visitors, staff, and the resource at each of the nine units of the Complex," said Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic, who added, "Although transfers are a common occurrence for Refuge employees, it's still sad to lose good employees – but it's also wonderful to see them advance in their careers and personal lives."

Watercolor Workshops Provide 'Positive Experience'

The watercolor workshops described on page 1 were so unique that, after the first one, Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic emailed C. Max Schenk, Director of Friends and Constituent Outreach for the National Wildlife Refuge Association:

"FOW sponsored a wildflower watercolor workshop . . . it was a TOTAL SUCCESS! While Helen taught the 'sold-out' audience how to paint with watercolors, she also interpreted the lifecycle of the plant, insects that used the plant, and other interesting information. . . ."



Helen Geraghty leads the Wildflower Watercolor Workshop in June.

This was FOW's second workshop at the Refuge this year and both were professional, fun, and very successful with the public. . . . FOW is attracting folks who have never visited or have never heard of the Refuge; those individuals are leaving the Refuge with a positive experience and favorable image of NWRs/

FWS. Talk about phenomenal outreach! FOW is sure making my work a whole lot easier!

And Max Schenk replied: *"Congratulations to you, the Refuge and the group! What a great success story and grand idea for an event."*

He also asked Patricia to send event details so: *"We can put it out on our list serve to share with others that may want to try and do the same."*

Surveys Reveal Rare Birds

For the fourth year in a row, reports Refuge Biologist Florence James, Wertheim staff and volunteers have conducted the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region 5 breeding bird surveys, looking and listening for forest and marsh breeding birds throughout various habitats within the Refuge, including grasslands, oak/pine forest, and marshlands.

Thanks to the expertise of volunteer birders Ernie Lewis and Sally Swain, who surveyed over 120 points on the Refuge this summer, more than 100 species of birds were noted as nesting at Wertheim.

Neotropical birds, or songbirds, travel great distances in spring and fall between North and South America. In spring and early summer, many migrants resided in the Refuge to breed their young, including these birds, rare for Long Island: black-poll warbler, pine warbler, yellow-billed cuckoo, bay-breasted warbler, indigo bunting, and eastern bluebird.

To conduct Marshbird Breeding Surveys, staff and volunteers walked through the Refuge's vast salt marshes, playing rail callback tapes and listening

for any response. Virginia and king rails responded and one least bittern was observed. Also noted were New York State's listed species of special concern, the sharp-tailed and seaside marsh sparrows.

A special thanks to Anne Meinhold and Frank Piccininni who escorted birders on the Refuge.

Ospreycam: 3 Chicks Survive

Last issue, we reported that four eggs were nestled in an osprey nest in an undisclosed location on the Wertheim Refuge. Then, we were all able to see the drama that followed by tuning into the Ospreycam sponsored by the Post-Morrow Foundation and accessible on the internet at www.postmorrow.org.

In the months since then, all four eggs hatched – on May 13, 15, 17 and 20. All survived until sometime during the first night in June, when the fourth chick died. Nature can be harsh,



The three young ospreys with one of their parents, in July.

but, happily, as of late August, the three remaining chicks have survived, fledged and been given names – CZ, Spirit and Peace – by some of the observers who have left comments on the website.

Children's Corner – Find the Birds of Long Island

Created by FOW Board Member Faith McCutcheon

To solve this word search puzzle, look for the names of all the birds listed below and circle them as you find them. The words can be found spelled left to right, right to left, up and down or down and up, on a diagonal slant and backwards!

Birds

EGRET

HERON

TEAL

DOVE

GULL

WREN

ARCTIC TERN

WILD TURKEY

BALD EAGLE

WOODCOCK

WOOD DUCK

SANDPIPER

WARBLER

CARDINAL

CATBIRD

MALLARD

OSPREY

SPARROW

TANAGER

TOWHEE

ROBIN

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK

GREAT HORNED OWL

RED-TAILED HAWK

PIPING PLOVER

CANADA GOOSE



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Visit our Website: www.Friendsof Wertheim.org

Wetlands Restoration Planting Complete

Several FOW members can be spotted in the mud-stained group at right, most of whom had spent the hours before planting spartina plugs on the wetlands along the Beaver Dam Creek that is the subject of a major restoration project. The project is being coordinated by Ducks Unlimited's Cindy Patterson (shown



digging a hole toward the right of the photo at left), and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is a project partner. These photos were taken June 13, the last of several planting days this spring. When the volunteers finished on this day, they were rewarded with the barbecue feast that Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic had prepared to thank them for working so hard to restore these wetlands to their former emerald glory, as seen in the strip of spartina that lies between the volunteers and the *Phragmites* in the photo at left.

Coming Up, But Only One Date Set

At press time, a date was available for only one of two key events coming up in the next months. As soon as more details are known, we'll post them on our website, www.friendsofwertheim.org.

We'll also send emails to everyone who included their email address with their membership and everyone who has signed up for email alerts by clicking the link at the bottom of the FOW home page.

- **Yard Sale** – Once again, FOW asks that you put aside those “gently used” items gathering dust in your garage or attic and donate them to our yard sale, which will be at the Old South Haven Presbyterian Church in Brookhaven Hamlet toward the end of September.

- **Annual Meeting, Sunday, November 14, at 2 p.m.** – Will be held at the Post-Morrow Foundation Annex, 16 Bay Road, Brookhaven Hamlet, and include an interesting program, elections and delicious refreshments.

Be a True Friend – Become a Member!

FOW MEMBERSHIP

Please renew / establish a one-year membership for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Individual membership – only \$10

Family membership – an incredible bargain at \$15

If enrolling more than one member, please provide information for each person. Send check, payable to Friends of Wertheim NWR, to: PO Box 376, Brookhaven NY 11719