

NATURE PRESERVES

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Save these Dates!

February 1, 2017: Deadline for submission to the February 2017 issue of *Nature Preserves*.

February 9, 2017: NSSWNY Quarterly Board Meeting, Hamburg Public Library, 6:00 PM

RENEWING OUR CONNECTIONS TO NATURE: DAVE BAUER'S CALL TO ENGAGE CHILDREN IN NATURE

BY STEPHANIE PARWULSKI, DAVE BAUER, AND RAY VAUGHAN



Our speaker at the October 16th NSSWNY fall membership meeting was Dave Bauer, a local children's book author. Dave gave an insightful presentation on the importance of children connecting with nature.

His presentation, entitled "Reimagining How We Might Renew Our Connections to Nature," was based partly on his newly released children's book, *What's Under That Rock, Papa?* Dave's book champions a message that encourages adults and children to spend quantity and quality time together in nature. It emphasizes the need to see our world through a new lens, one which nurtures an attitude of appreciation for our Earth—our home—by building a profound connection with our environment.

NSSWNY members are already well aware of the interconnected relationship we share with nature. We recognize that our environment is home, and that by caring for our environment, we create healthy spaces to live. We celebrate

the wholeness here—the ecological intertwining of environment, nature, and us—and the fact that we're all one! Yet there are many families in the U.S. and around the world that seem to be out of touch with nature. In his presentation, Dave talked about ways in which adults and children can work together to address and reverse this unhealthy trend.

A key aspect of nature discovery for children is through unstructured "creative nature play." Here, children utilize their rich capacity through the use of their senses, curiosity, and wonder to catalyze their nature experiences. These types of moments can occur in any outdoor space, even right in your own backyard! While creative nature play generally shouldn't be pre-planned—it usually works best when it just happens—here are some of the typical ingredients:

- A relatively unstructured experience in a natural or outdoor setting
- A child might be alone or with other children or an adult
- A child's natural curiosity often initiates the experience
- Settings include everyday, natural places—backyards, parks, sidewalks, schoolyards, playgrounds, ponds, creeks, woods...

Adults can help guide the experience, but let the children discover the things they find interesting and exciting!

- Allow your child to lead.
- A child will naturally be in nature. Encourage this innate ten-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1: BAUER PRESENTATION

dency! As an example, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grcCUtFaM_s

- Pause and assess your child’s innate curiosity and creativity. As a starting point, what is your child paying attention to?
- In other words, let your child’s perspective be the lens through which you look at nature.
- Remember that children use multi-sensory experiences to engage in their world. It might be a plant or animal, or a sound or a smell, or a pattern of sunlight and shade that intrigues them.

An adult acting as an effective nature mentor can show children his or her genuine interest in nature through attitude and behavior. If a child witnesses an adult demonstrating gratitude and thoughtfulness toward nature, the child will likely adopt this mentality, too.

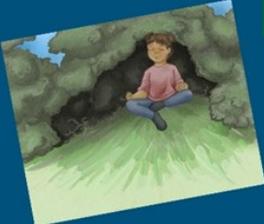
Dave also touched briefly on the question of how NSSWNY might gain more member involvement, particularly with respect to attracting younger new members. One suggestion from the audience was that NSSWNY might try setting up some events or programs in partnership with Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts. NSSWNY President Jackie Swift also invited Dave to bring small groups of WNY children out to one of our sanctuaries to enhance and deepen their nature experience. In general, the audience agreed that the goals of engaging children and attracting younger members were important, and we hope to include Dave in our ongoing discussion of these questions.

Dave acknowledged that while a back yard is a great place to get children started, it helps to have bigger/wilder/more ecologically diverse sites that provide the opportunity for kids’ interest in nature to keep growing. We in WNY are incredibly fortunate to have a variety of organizations and agencies that support environmental causes and provide us with a wide range of sites where nature can be found, enjoyed, and investigated. The organizations include not only NSSWNY but also the Buffalo Audubon Society, Western New York Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and NYS Parks. The many parks and sanctuaries that are available to us include, for example, the following:

- Allegany State Park
- Buckhorn Island State Park
- Buffalo Harbor State Park
- Erie County parks (Chestnut Ridge, Sprague Brook, Emery)

How Children Can Assist Engaging with Nature

- ★ A **shared** nature experience with a child is inspiring!
- ★ Your own backyard/neighborhood is a perfect place to start your nature excursions!
- ★ Examples from my book, *What’s Under That Rock, Papa?*, of achievable and inviting activities in nature include:



Finding a peaceful spot outside to sit, observe, and/or meditate



Wandering in a nearby park



Composting



Picking up litter



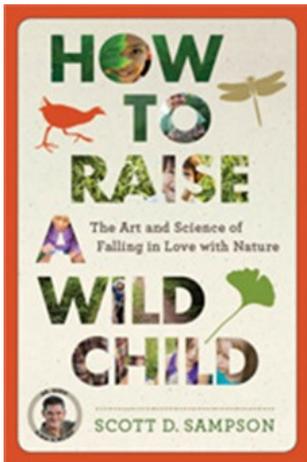
Searching for an intriguing plant, insect, or animal

As part of his presentation, Dave shared insights on other work being done on this same topic by environmental authors, particularly Richard Louv and Scott Sampson. Louv, the author of *Last Child in the Woods* and co-founder of the Children & Nature Network, reminds us that “We have such a brief opportunity to pass on to our children our love for this Earth, and to tell our stories. These are the moments when the world is made whole.” (Louv, p. 316.) Sampson, a dinosaur paleontologist and author of *How to Raise a Wild Child*, notes that “Rather than sharing knowledge and expertise, your chief goal as a nature mentor is to help instill a deep longing for nature.” (Sampson, p. 281.)

The same truth is beautifully captured in a quote by Rachel Carson: “If a child is to keep alive her inborn sense of wonder ... she needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with her the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.”

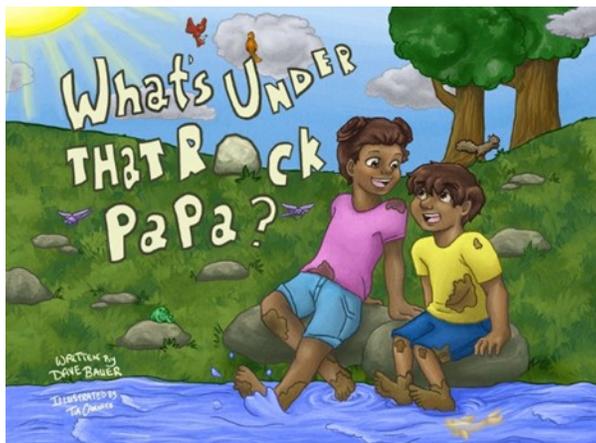
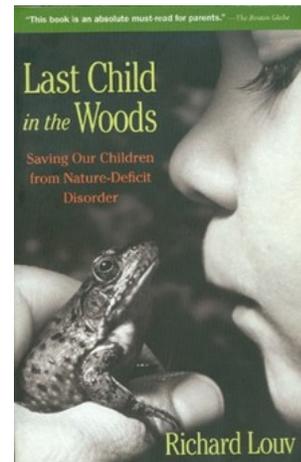


Dave Spiering (front) and daughter Hannah with Dave Bauer (rear)



- Undeveloped county parks (Eighteen Mile Creek, Boston Forest, Hunters Creek)
- County forests (Sardinia, Concord, Holland)
- Tiffit Nature Preserve, operated by the Buffalo Museum of Science
- Beaver Meadow Audubon Center and other properties preserved by the Buffalo Audubon Society
- Town parks (such as Nature View, in Amherst)
- Other nearby sites in Pennsylvania and Ontario

In conclusion, Dave said he sees encouraging evidence that children are becoming re-engaged in nature. He also expressed his appreciation for the dedication and legacy of NSSWNY and its members. Since our children are our future, we need to ensure that a message of love and respect for nature is exchanged between generations and that we will take positive steps in caring for our world. *May we all be a sign of hope, starting today!*



Resources and Credits:

Bauer, Dave, *What's Under That Rock, Papa?* (Brandylane Publishers, Inc., 2016). Author contact: davebauer@whatsunderthatrockpapa.com Phone: (716) 432-4294
 Dave's book website: <http://whatsunderthatrockpapa.com/>
 Dave's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/whatsunderthatrockpapa>
 Dave's new Creative Nature Play website: <http://creativenatureplay.com/>
 Louv, Richard, *Last Child in the Woods* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2008)
 Sampson, Scott D., *How to Raise a Wild Child* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015)
 Photo credits/sources:
 Louv book: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vastateparksstaff/13564964294>
 Sampson book: <http://www.scottsampson.net/uploads/images/wild-child-book-150.jpg>
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“It is the marriage of the soul with Nature that makes the intellect fruitful, and gives birth to imagination.”

—Henry David Thoreau

“The Earth has music for those who listen.”

—George Santayana



“If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere.”

—Vincent van Gogh

“Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees.”

—John Muir



Removing Invasive European Buckthorn at Houghton Bog

By Jeri Franklin, SUNY Fredonia



Houghton Bog is a fascinating gem located in Western New York. I recently had the privilege of visiting the bog on October 1 as part of the Plant Taxonomy class from SUNY-Fredonia. Prior to this outing, I had never been to a bog, and I did not know what to expect. We were accompanied by Jim Landau, Jacqueline Swift, and our instructor Jon Titus.

We carpoled to the access trail then took a short walk through the woods. We crossed the wooden planks that had been laid out for access through the forested swamp area. Then, the forest suddenly opened up to reveal the bog. At first glance, it looks like a field full of small plants and shrubs—that is, until you take a few more steps: then, you truly see the nature of your surroundings.

As previously stated, neither I nor the majority of my classmates had ever been to a bog before. Our reluctance to venture out onto the thick layer of sphagnum moss was obvious at first. We carefully stepped and watched the water squeeze out around our feet. As with any other adventure, we soon became comfortable with our surroundings. Within a few short minutes, we were traipsing around in awe of the view.

We made up a diverse group, but one thing was consistent. The movements created by walking on the bog caught all of our attention. At first, the wave-like motion was frightening. Then it became a thing of wonder. Not only does your own movement create “waves,” but the movement of those around you can be felt as well.

Imagine a friend bouncing on the ground 10 feet away from you. Now, imagine feeling the ripple effect caused by their bouncing. This would not be unusual if you are on a trampoline, but it is an odd sensation when you are on what looks like solid ground.

Pitcher-plants (*Sarracenia purpurpea*) are one of the many natural beauties growing in the bog. The flowers of the pitcher plant are unique and will definitely catch your attention even when they are past flowering because of their unusual expanded style. Being fall, the colors were magnificent, such as the deep red sphagnum moss, and a few species were still in flower, such as bog laurel (*Kalmia polifolia*). Regardless of what is or isn't in bloom at the time of your visit, there are numerous things to explore. The bog is a unique acidic environment that caters to an adapted suite of species.



The purpose of our trip to the bog was to both learn about it and help preserve it. As a group, we were attempting to remove invasive European buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*), which is primarily invading the wet forests that ring the bog. European buckthorn grows rapidly, outcompetes native species, and eventually forms a dense monoculture that also deprives many wildlife species of the plant species they depend upon. By pulling and cutting buckthorn, we can slow down the rate at which it invades, thereby conserving the bog environment for future visitors. However, constant vigilance will be required.

I would highly recommend visiting the Houghton Bog. It was a wonderful experience that can be enjoyed by children and adults. If you would like to visit the Houghton Bog, NSSWNY and the Niagara Frontier Botanical Society run a trip there annually in late June (see below for a recap of the 2016 trip). There is nothing quite like getting out into nature and enjoying its beauty.

Traditional Field Trip to Houghton And Furman Preserves

by Jackie Swift

One of the highlights of the Society year is our annual June field trip to our Houghton and Furman Preserves in partnership with the Niagara Frontier Botanical Society (NFBS). This long-time traditional event was held on June 25th and led by Houghton Preserve Custodian Jim Landau and NFBS Botanist Ed Fuchs, to whom we are grateful for their guidance.

Twenty-one members and guests participated, including the Black family, who live on land adjoining the Houghton bog property. Relatives and new members Joy and Allen Black are orchid enthusiasts and traveled all the way from Virginia to join in the hike. Members of a Buffalo camera club came along, as well as two mycologists from Rochester. The list of additional attendees included Paul Bauer; Bryson, Carol, Mikayla, and Richard Black; William Cain; Mary Ann Cohorn; Richard J. Cook; Debbie Goodrich; Lindsey Leiterl; Brian Martin; Ruby Merritt; Kevin McNallie; Jia Passucci; Andrew Pifer; Charles Whertzler; and me.

Our nature explorers met early for this trip, 8:30 am at Sprague Brook Park. Houghton bog was the first destination due to its tendency to get very hot in summer sunshine, as was the case on this typical day in a drought season. With the region's rainfall total at eight inches below normal, sphagnum crunched under our feet. But Ed assured us that mosses are desiccant tolerant and recover immediately when water arrives. Though it looked parched, you could still stretch your hand into the thick mat and feel cool moisture below. Grass pinks were few and largely occurred near the forested perimeter of the bog. This ancient environment had its own kind of beauty, even in the dryness.



In contrast to the bog was the moisture-rich Furman fen. Fens are usually fed by mineral-rich surface water or groundwater—in the case of Furman, a spring. Fens are characterized by their water chemistry, which is pH neutral or alkaline, as opposed to a bog, which is acidic. A fen has relatively high dissolved mineral levels but few other plant nutrients. They are usually dominated by brown mosses as opposed to the sphagnums found at Houghton. The orchids were flourishing at Furman: rose pogonia, grass pinks, and the showy lady's slippers were abundant. On a hot, dry day, a fen is a refreshing place to be!

Additional note: Sometimes on field trips, funny things happen. Some NSSWNY members recall the late Jerry Lazarczyk sinking into a hole up to his waist at Furman. Now we have another amusing tale, definitely a Charlie Chaplin moment.



Showy lady's slipper (*Cypripedium reginae*) at the Furman Preserve

While in the single-file exiting line from the bog, Dick Cook behind me warned, "Lookout, you're about to walk into some poison sumac!" As I quickly swerved to avoid the shrub overhanging the path, the heel of my hiking boot caught the edge of the boardwalk. I fell backwards onto a mossy knob in the swamp forest, fortunately not the muck. The moss was so thick and soft and the tall ferns so beautiful, it was a green heaven in which I could have stayed all day. Not a hiker was in sight. Knowing that in this soft place I had no leverage to launch back onto the walkway, I yelled, "Hey, could someone give me a hand?" Quickly in all that green beauty, a hand appeared out of the north (thanks to Ed). I grabbed it, was propelled back into my group position, and the exit line proceeded. My husband, who was a witness to the episode, and I laughed hysterically about it for several days. The whole thing could not have been choreographed better.

I am sure we would've made Charlie proud.



Pitcher plants (*Sarracenia purpurea*) at the Houghton Preserve

Fall Geology Hike to the Sweetland Preserve



On Saturday, September 24, Ray Vaughan led a group of about 22 on this year’s geology hike to NSSWNY’s Rodger Sweetland Memorial Preserve Falls on the South Branch of Cattaraugus Creek. Participants included a few NSSWNY board members, *Nature Preserves* editor Steve McCabe, other NSSWNY members, and a few guests we encountered and invited to join us—including a photography student from the Rochester Institute of Technology who toted his large format camera and tripod and took photos throughout our trip. In addition to Ray, there were two other geologists on the hike: NSSWNY member Gil Wiswall and retired SUNY Fredonia geology professor Mike Wilson.

As usual, we started our two-mile hike to Sweetland from the New York State Multiple Use Area at the Forty Bridge. Before leading the group through the 400-foot-deep bedrock gorge (see photo at upper left), Ray briefly described how the bedrock was formed by sedimentary processes more than 300 million years ago and how the bedrock layers, or “beds,” were eroded relatively recently to form the gorge, probably within the past 15,000 years. These geologic processes are covered in more detail in “The Geology of Zoar Valley and the Cattaraugus Creek Watershed” by Ray and two coauthors, published in January 2013 as *NSSWNY Monograph in the Natural Sciences*, Vol. I. PDF copies of this may be requested from Ray (rcv9@verizon.net) or from editor Steve McCabe (mccabe.steve@verizon.net).

En route to Sweetland, we stopped to examine the small fault and associated fold that can be seen in the bedrock wall of the gorge (see two photos at lower right). The three geologists offered somewhat different interpretations of how this fold and fault were formed.

As we ate lunch at Sweetland Falls, Ray and Gil talked briefly about the waterfall and why it happens to be where it is. Falls are typically found in places where an erosion-resistant caprock forms the brink of the waterfall, as at Niagara Falls—where erosion-resistant Lockport dolostone is the caprock—but we had not previously identified an erosion-resistant bed at the brink of Sweetland Falls.

On this trip, Gil observed a conglomerate bed near the brink of the falls. Conglomerates are coarse-grained sedimentary rocks in which pebbles or other rounded fragments are encased in a matrix of finer-grained sedimentary rock. Since conglomerates tend to be erosion-resistant, the presence of such a bed at Sweetland could explain why a waterfall—as opposed to a series of rapids—is found there.

Unlike the previous week, when the hike was originally scheduled but was subsequently postponed when more than two inches of rain fell in the South Branch basin, we had beautiful weather for this hike, and wading across the creek was easier than usual because of the low water level. (It’s always necessary to ford the creek twice in each direction, in places where it’s either impossible or too risky to walk at the base of the high cliffs of the gorge wall.) This hike is generally a popular event, and we’ll try to offer it again next year.



Charles Sibley and the Woodpeckers at Your Feeder

By Gerry Rising

Over my lifetime, we have witnessed some remarkable paradigm shifts in science. Perhaps the best known is the acceptance in geology of plate tectonics, the idea first offered by Alfred Wegener that the surface of the Earth is divided into large regions that shift over time. For example, eons ago Africa and South America fit together like jigsaw puzzle pieces. (Although Wegener first presented this idea in 1912, it was not widely accepted until the 1960s, when new evidence was brought to bear in support of it.)

Another striking change has been in the basis for classification of all living things on Earth, on the so-called "Tree of Life." You may recall your school biology book illustrating the various life forms by this tree diagram, with larger branches representing divisions like plants and animals, offshoots standing for groups like families and genera, while the outermost twigs are finally species like the scarlet tanager, common buttercup, monarch butterfly, gray fox, sea cucumber, *E. coli*, and, yes, human being.

Until about forty years ago, this diagram was not only considerably less complicated (it didn't separate bacteria, for example) but it was determined solely on the basis of similar physical structures. For example, lineages among animals with skulls could be determined partly by differences in their jaws.

Classification today is instead largely based on molecular biology: DNA differences separate those Tree of Life branches. While the genetic analysis largely confirms the earlier physical divisions, many differences have been discovered. If, for example, you look at a modern bird field guide, you find the order of species presentation unlike that of earlier guides. Earlier, the loon appeared on the first page; now, it follows all the waterfowl and even the game birds.

I had the great good fortune of enjoying the friendship of one of the first ornithologists who worked on this reclassification. I defended a widely criticized position taken by Charles Sibley, and he wrote to thank me. Based on this encounter, we developed a friendship and corresponded as he continued his work at Cornell and other universities until his death in 1998. According to his Wikipedia entry, "He had an immense influence on the scientific classification of birds, and the work that Sibley initiated has substantially altered our understanding of the evolutionary history of modern birds."

I feel that I was especially fortunate because Sibley remained a controversial figure with an acid tongue. According to his friend Richard Schodde, "lesser mortals were not tolerated easily and, as has been said by others, collegiate friends were few." I saw instead the gracious side of this famous scientist, and I was deeply saddened by his death in 1998.



(L) Downy Woodpecker (*Picooides pubescens*) (R) Hairy Woodpecker (*Leuconotopicus villosus*)

I thought of Sibley when I read an interesting technical paper in *The Condor* by Amy Weibel and William Moore about downy and hairy woodpeckers. I am convinced that Sibley would have been delighted to read it. (I cannot recommend it to non-scientists, however, as it is rife with technical language including words like synapomorphies, intron, homoplasies, clade, and dimorphism.)

If you have a bird feeding station, you surely know these two woodpecker species. They are not at all easy to tell apart. The hairy woodpecker is slightly larger than the downy and has a larger bill; except for a feather or two, that's it. (Males of both species have a red rear crown dot.) The only species I know that look more alike are the alder and willow flycatchers that even banders cannot differentiate.

It turns out, however, that these two woodpeckers belong to distinct groups, and tracing back along their branches, you pass through three divisions for the downy and two for the hairy before you reach a common branch-ancestor. Although this is a bit like tracing your own genealogy back to your forebears, these ornithological branches each stand for many generations.

Thus, these two look-alikes represent convergent evolution: two different branches leading to twigs with similar characteristics. Other examples of convergent evolution are monarch and vice roy butterflies (also appearance), bats and birds (flight), porcupines and hedgehogs (quills), and koalas and humans (fingerprints).

Weibel and Moore trace how the woodpeckers' physical characteristics changed in parallel with their molecular changes, some turned on and then off over time, but finally leading to this remarkable similarity.

What caused this final convergence? The authors offer several possibilities related to flocking, aggression, and territoriality, but these remain untested hypotheses. Molecular analysis provides no help here.

Note: This essay is to appear in the second volume of Rising's *Birds and Birdwatchers: 100 Brief Essays* to be published in 2017. The first volume is available from local bookstores and on Amazon.com.

In His Footsteps: Walking the John Muir Way by Steve McCabe



The Way winds along the base of the Campsie Fells, just west of Strathblane, in East Dunbartonshire.



Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) is the national flower of Scotland; we saw it daily.



The Way descending into Balloch from the north, framed by ancient European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*).

The John Muir Way, a 134-mile hiking trail across Scotland, opened in 2014 to honor the pioneering environmentalist whose name it bears. Ironically, having left Scotland as a boy, Muir would make his most significant contributions to preserving natural areas here in the U.S. rather than in his native country. Muir is the father of our National Park system, and many of the American West's most significant National Parks and Wilderness Areas—especially in California and the high Sierra—exist because of his preservation efforts.

Extending from Helensburgh at the mouth of the River Clyde on the west coast to Muir's boyhood home, which now serves as a museum in his honor in the Village of Dunbar on the east coast, the trail encompasses the full spectrum of terrain and habitat Muir's native country offers. This past July, my family and I walked the trail. Our hike varied from city streets in Edinburgh to single-track footpaths through barley fields. But at every turn, we were rewarded with beautiful scenery and the opportunity to experience the country and its flora, fauna, and people—all at ground level. The trail is also routed to ensure that hikers do not miss an opportunity to see not only the country's vast geologic and natural features, such as volcanic plugs, bogs, fens, old growth forests, and extensive wetland complexes, but also visit some of the antiquities, historic features, and best museums to be found in the United Kingdom. The Kelvin and Hunterian museums in Glasgow; the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Scotland's National Academy; and the Scottish Ornithologists' Club in Aberlady all show the Scots' keen interest in cataloging and sharing their knowledge of the natural world.

We found the trail to be well marked, and the mapping and advice in Sandra Bardwell's Rucksack Reader guide *The John Muir Way* was spot-on in highlighting features worth exploring during each of its ten sections. We averaged about 14 miles each day; except for a few of the sections at the western end of the trail that involved some fairly steep grades, the remainder of the trail was mostly flat.

I took 1,886 photos over the course of 15 days, and I've shared a few of them here; go to www.johnmuirway.org for even more.



Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) (Invasive!)



Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)



White bellflower (*Campanula latifolia*, var. *alba*)



Yellow loosestrife (*Lysimachia punctata*)



Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*)

Anyone interested in walking the John Muir Way should feel free to contact me; I'd be happy to share details and offer specific advice based on our experience. Here are few lessons we learned:



The European black slug (*Arion ater*)

- **Build in a rest day every three days or so.** While the 14-mile-per-day average section length is not arduous, walking the sections continuously takes a cumulative toll. Resting every third day would have helped our stamina and bolstered our spirits.

- **Bring two pairs of shoes, and carry a hiking staff.** Light hiking boots or walking shoes are entirely adequate, but you will almost certainly encounter rain. Having a dry pair of shoes for the next day is wise. A light hiking staff is helpful not only for stability on the steeper sections at the western end of the

Way but also for the narrower paths where footing is not always clear. When not needed, it's easy enough to collapse the staff and stow it in your pack.

- **Pack enough food and water for each day's section.** While small pubs and restaurants are generally found along each section, many stretches are without them or would require a significant detour. Having fruit and snacks and a full water bottle will ensure you make it through or do not have to detour for food.

The John Muir Way runs past Waterston House (at right, above and below), headquarters of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, in Aberlady, East Lothian. It is a beautiful facility, well staffed and maintained, that serves as the central repository for Scottish birding records.



Conewango Preserve Bird Walk, May 22, 2016

Jim Landau

On Saturday, May 22, Mark and Alice Alessi, Ron Cook, and I met at the Conewango Wetlands Preserve in South Dayton with the intention to survey the bird species present and add any new ones to the cumulative bird list for the preserve. An enjoyable time was had by all. The 17 species listed below were seen or heard by all on May 22. Over the course of enjoying a pleasant spring morning, we added four new species to the preserve list, three of which (great crested flycatcher, warbling vireo, and Baltimore oriole) we can reasonably assume to be probable nesters.

17 Birds Seen or Heard at Conewango Wetlands Preserve on May 22, 2016	Cumulative List of 56 Birds Seen or Heard at Conewango Wetlands Preserve through November 2016		
<p>Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>) Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>) Mourning Dove (<i>Zenaid macroura</i>) Northern Flicker (<i>Colaptes auratus</i>) Great Crested Flycatcher (<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>) Warbling Vireo (<i>Vireo gilvus</i>) Tree Swallow (<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>) American Robin (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>) Gray Catbird (<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>) Yellow Warbler (<i>Dendroica petechia</i>) Common Yellowthroat (<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>) Chipping Sparrow (<i>Spizella passerina</i>) Song Sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>) Red-winged Blackbird (<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>) Common Grackle (<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>) Baltimore Oriole (<i>Icterus galbula</i>) American Goldfinch (<i>Carduelis tristis</i>)</p>	<p>Canada Goose Cliff Swallow Wood Duck Barn Swallow Mallard White-breasted Nuthatch Ring-necked Pheasant House Wren Wild Turkey Sedge Wren Great Blue Heron Eastern Bluebird Turkey Vulture American Robin Osprey Gray Catbird Northern Harrier European Starling Broad-winged Hawk Cedar Waxwing</p>	<p>Red-tailed Hawk Common Yellowthroat Wilson's Snipe Yellow Warbler American Woodcock Chipping Sparrow Mourning Dove Song Sparrow Black-billed Cuckoo Swamp Sparrow Chimney Swift Bobolink Belted Kingfisher Red-winged Blackbird Hairy Woodpecker Rusty Blackbird Northern Flicker Common Grackle Pileated Woodpecker Brown-headed Cowbird American Kestrel</p>	<p>Orchard Oriole Olive-sided Flycatcher Baltimore Oriole Eastern Wood-Pewee Purple Finch Willow Flycatcher American Goldfinch Great Crested Flycatcher Eastern Kingbird Warbling Vireo Blue Jay American Crow Common Raven Tree Swallow Northern Rough-winged Swallow</p>

Sweetland Preserve Custodian Retiring

Steve McCabe, the preserve custodian for the Rodger Sweetland Memorial Preserve, announced his retirement from his position, effective December 31. Steve has held the custodial role since NSSWNY purchased and established the Sweetland Preserve in 2006, when the preserve property was suffering from a decades-old pattern of overuse, vandalism, and abuse and was the site of frequent injuries and deaths. However, by working with The Nature Conservancy and other private property landowners on the South Branch of Cattaraugus Creek, NSSWNY has helped transform the Sweetland Preserve, the adjoining Deer Lick Preserve, and the South Branch gorge downstream to the New York State Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area into a clean, quiet, and safe habitat for native flora and fauna.

NSSWNY welcomes hearing from any member who would like to take on the custodian position at the Sweetland Preserve after Steve's retirement. The preserve custodian's primary responsibilities include monitoring the preserve, maintaining its annual posting signage and associated paperwork, and serving as the point of contact for scheduling and leading visitation to the preserve for scientific study, such as the ongoing botanical inventory and management plan survey process, as well as NSSWNY-sponsored public events, such as the Outreach and Education Program, regular cleanup hikes, and the annual fall geology hike (see p. 6). Members interested in learning more about the Sweetland custodian role may contact Steve directly or any board member if they would like to apply for the position.

Field Notes from Our Preserves

Conewango Wetlands Preserve. NYSDEC Wildlife Technician Peter Ionoco visited the sanctuary to do sampling of frogs for genetic testing to determine their exact species. In three attempts, he failed to obtain the data he needed, but he will return next year for another attempt. A WNYPRISM (Western New York Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management) crew came to the preserve in August to help remove Eurasian honeysuckle using digging and pruning methods.

Furman Preserve. A new bridge/boardwalk was built this summer by custodian and carpenter Ken Fudalik. In a botanical survey, Jon and Priscilla Titus discovered native buckthorn.

In Memoriam

NSSWNY was saddened to learn of the passing of one of its members recently.

On June 5, Arthur McLelland "Art" Nisbet, a NSSWNY member since 1988, passed away in Buffalo General Medical Center. He was 98. In addition to being an avid sports fan, Art was an award-winning photographer and enjoyed golfing and fishing in the northern Canadian wilderness.

NSSWNY extends its heartfelt condolences to the Nisbet family for its loss.

Fall Members' Meeting Held on October 16

The business portion of the Fall Membership Meeting was conducted by President Courtney Swift. She began with announcements and then an update on the Land Acquisition Committee's purchase of hellbender salamander habitat on Ischua Creek in Cattaraugus County. The purchase is proceeding well and on course for closing soon, as directed by our legal counsel, Jack Elliott. Herpetologist Ken Roblee answered questions about the importance of the site, which protects the largest known hellbender population in New York State that is likely the northernmost group in the hellbender range.



(L to R) Suzanne Pilon, Marian Ahles, and Donna Schweikert enjoy the fall membership meeting.

Next, as part of a birthday tribute, member Donna Schweikert read a biographical note that she authored for her mother Marion Ahles. Marion was applauded for her 100-year-long amazing life, a milestone she reached on September 13. Punch and cupcakes were enjoyed as part of the celebration.

During Mr. Bauer's talk (see cover story), Marion told of a favorite childhood nature playtime: creating mud pies for her mailman. When polled by the speaker about ideas to get younger members involved,

those present expressed interest in adding children's activities, such as special field trips, to our events calendar.

In attendance were the following members and guests: Marion Ahles, Bill Boehm, Suzanne Pilon, Ken Roblee and his granddaughter, McKinley Callahan (a high school sophomore), Donna Schweikert, Dave Spiering and his four year old daughter Hannah, Jackie Courtney Swift, Ray Vaughan, Rebecca Wightman, Howard Wilson, and Dave Bauer.

Your Year-End Contribution Can Help NSSWNY Grow



As 2016 comes to a close and you complete your year of charitable giving, please remember NSSWNY. We welcome your year-end donation, which will be added to our Land Acquisition Fund for establishing new sanctuaries. And best of all, your donation to NSSWNY

in any amount between now and December 31 can be applied to your 2016 charitable deductions when you complete your tax filings by next April 15.

As an all-volunteer organization, our overhead costs are minimal, and we operate efficiently with every dollar being utilized wisely. Won't you make a contribution today?

You may use the convenient Paypal link on our website at nsswny.org or send your check to our post office address. NSSWNY is a 501(c)3 educational corporation, so your donation is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Member News

Howard Wilson recently fell and broke a femur. He is home from rehab and is doing well. Feel free to contact him with wishes for a speedy recovery: 143 Puritan Road, Tonawanda, NY 14150. (716) 471-4438. Howard, why did you pick such a large bone to break? We wish you well in your recovery!

Phyllis Gresham writes that she is reminded "of many happy days spent with NSSWNY both on the trails and at our own cabin. It is one of the activities I miss the most since we left WNY. Here I still walk, we have Weeds and Seeds, a botanical group which is part of SCCF, and I also do plants and birding at Ding Darling NWR. I am the chair of the Vegetation Committee for the city and, of course, our major focus is native plants! Honestly, so many members of NSSWNY set me on a course here; it is a fine organization and I will certainly continue support. Best to all, especially Dick and Dorothy [Rosche]." If you would like to contact Phyllis, she can be reached at 355 Poinciana Circle, Sanibel, FL 33957 or millflower@aol.com



Welcome, New Members

Bridget Adams, Frank Broughton, Joan Loring, Carol Murphy, Kathy O'Connor-Mullen, James Rauch, Donna Rudnicki, and Julia Torres

Thank You to Our Generous Donors

Leonard De Francisco, Don & Irene Hedger, Kalista Lehrer, Jim Beckerich, Twan & Casey Leenders, Joan Loring, Andrew Pifer, Donna Rudnicki, Joanne & John Schlegel, Donna Schweikert, Donald Shelters, Michael Siuta, Julia Torres, Raymond & Sheila Vaughan, and Gil Wiswall.

And Special Thanks to Our Sustaining-Level Donors

Bob Laing & Elizabeth Birardi,
Dori Lewis & Dave Howard,
Ted Lee, and Phil Utley

Commentary:

A Lesson from *Modern Times*

Many of us enjoy a good movie now and then. A recent favorite of mine has been Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*. In the description of this 1936 classic, "the Little Tramp shuffles bravely forward into a maze of technology and the rapidly changing shape of society. Although barely in control of his own fate, he demonstrates pluck and endurance in the face of unstoppable forces." This hilarious movie tells a story of human fortitude and creativity in the face of enormous challenges.

A modern day version of *Modern Times* might tell the tale of Charlie battling climate change, a changeable condition. Just as in the original production, I imagine in the last scene he would shuffle confidently into the sunset, having turned the crisis around in the nick of time.

Since two years before the movie was produced, our NSSWNY has protected rare habitats and sites of geologic importance. Today, it turns out that preserving the natural world is a critical piece in solving the climate crisis. Nature Conservancy scientists estimate that worldwide we can achieve about a third of the reduction in carbon emissions needed by 2030, avoiding the worst effects of climate change, by protecting and restoring nature's carbon storage capacity.

Consider forest management as one example.

Cutting down trees and destroying habitat not only emits carbon but also reduces our planet's overall capacity to store carbon. If we cut trees, living tissues decompose, and carbon stored in the roots, trunks, branches, and leaves is released. And it's a double-whammy because the trees are no longer alive to absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere. When forests and other ecosystems are left alone, not only is carbon absorbed but flora and fauna thrive.

So when you see those giant trees at Alexander or enjoy the beauty of the ancient, undisturbed bog at Houghton, pat yourself on the back for helping solve the climate crisis. It's exciting to realize that we are part of the solution along with other habitat-preservation groups around the world. As we establish and manage sanctuaries for biodiversity, we not only preserve rarity but also add to and protect the health of all beings.

It has been a great honor to do this work in the past year with all of you.

Thank you for your continued, essential support in the right choices for our precious Earth.



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The Nature Sanctuary Society of Western New York, Inc., acquires, owns, and manages preserves for the protection, stewardship, and conservation of native plants and animals and their habitats, and promotes educational programs and scientific research relative to nature preserves.

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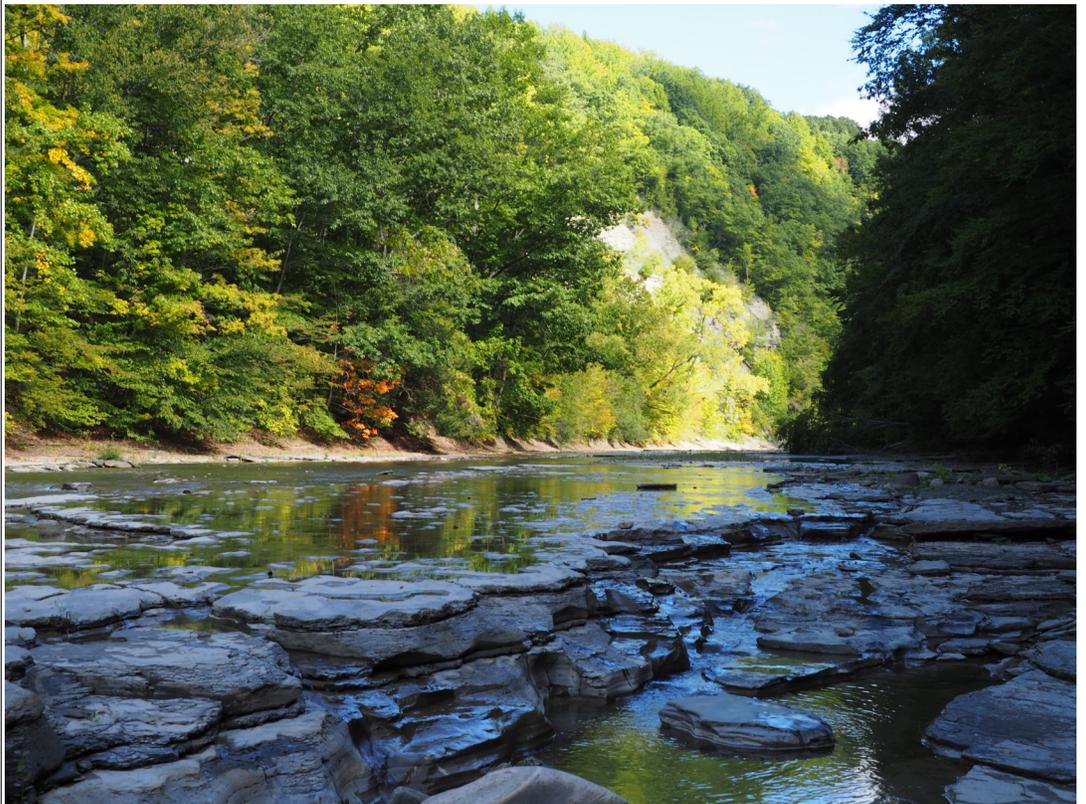
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The South Branch of Cattaraugus Creek, at the mouth of Deer Lick Creek, during NSSWNY's Geology Hike to the Rodger Sweetland Memorial Preserve on September 17. Your support as a member of NSSWNY has helped reclaim and preserve the South Branch gorge ecosystem.