

River Talk

Newsletter of the Carantouan Greenway



Spring 2023

Greenway Looking for Website Volunteer...and a few more



Our trails are maintained for year-round use. We also have trail work days to cut back on shrubs that grow into the trails. On occasion we need to resort to heavy duty volunteers such as Benjamin Borko pictured here with his saw.

Did you know that the Carantouan Greenway is an entirely volunteer run organization? A few of the vital services our volunteers provide are maintaining the trails and property, leading hikes, doing educational presentations, handling finances, writing grants and creating newsletters, just to name a few.

Our current website was created years ago and technical support for it is being phased out. The Greenway is currently searching for a volunteer to update, and possibly maintain, our website. Perhaps you know someone who fills the bill. Can you create a children's activity, trail maintenance, PR, or do public outreach? Certainly you have a skill that fits the Greenway's needs. We'd love to hear your ideas. Not only are you doing something worthwhile and appreciated, volunteering has the added benefit of making you feel good when you share your generosity. It's a win-win situation. Contact the Greenway at carantouan@gmail.com



Redwing blackbird



Tree swallow

Visitor Shares Photos

Jim Cole always finds lots of opportunities to snap some great shots of birds at Wildwood Reserve.

Bluebird Boxes

For the last five-plus years Carantouan president John Palmer has been maintaining a trail of bluebird nesting boxes. We soon learned however, that the arriving tree swallows would dominate the boxes and we had no successful nesting by bluebirds.

The literature suggested that we try to place additional boxes close to the already installed boxes as the tree swallows will not permit other tree swallows close to them but would permit bluebirds to use closely placed nests. Jim Cole took this photo of a pair of nesting bluebirds resting on their chosen nest box at our Wildwood Reserve.



Winter Turns to Spring



Most mornings I walk Wildwood trails with sunflower seeds with a woodpecker enhanced seed mix. My most common followers are the black, white with shades of gray being chickadees, nuthatches and titmice. This winter I have been followed and harassed by this male downy woodpecker. There are two woodpeckers that look alike; the downy and the hairy. The hairy is larger (9-11 inches) with solid white outer tail feathers and prefers to stay more hidden in the larger trees. They are both hole nesters and are both common at bird feeders locally, searching for seeds and suet. From our first meeting this little guy (6-7 inches) has flown around me to get my attention and drop him (I know it is a him by the red on his head) some seeds. This particular bird is a challenged bird with an odd wing (not visible) and oddly positioned barred right-sided tail feathers. If I pass him by he will fly right by me to get my attention and shows no fear of me, which is why I could get this photo of him sitting on the base of a large sugar maple waiting for more peanuts at one of my favorite drop spots. The bill looks large in this photo but it is about half the head length, which is typical for the downy as opposed to the much larger bill of the hairy. ~ M. Borko



The snow covered fruiting capsules of the exotic purple loosestrife line much of the wetter sections at Wildwood. Purple loosestrife is an exotic or introduced species that was selected, by gardeners, for its racemes of magenta flowers. Because of its invasiveness our government has introduced two beetle species to feed on its leaves and roots in the hope of controlling its explosive population expansion. Our populations have been reduced but still quite viable. Enjoy their flowers in August as you walk our wettest area between the cattails and phragmites.



The iced woody branches of silky or swamp dogwood forecast Spring will be forthcoming. Silky dogwood has reddish bark and will in May have a panicle of four-parted tiny white flowers. The plant has a brown pith and typical dogwood leaves where the veins curve to the tip of the leaf. In the fall there will be developing blue drupes that are highly sought after by numerous bird species. It is the dominant shrub at our Wildwood Reserve.

Photo Contest



Capture the migrating gray catbird sitting atop one of the two new Catbird Trail signs at Wildwood Reserve in Waverly and win a \$100 prize. The catbirds will be arriving soon, turning their attention to building nests with grape vine. Send your photo to carantouan@gmail.com.

Alder



One-and-a-half inch pendulent male (pollen producing) catkins hanging adjacent to reddish female (ovary containing) flowers waiting to be wind pollinated. The often multi-stemmed *Alnus rugosa*, aka alder, blooms at the end of March and the beginning of April before leaves emerge to reduce the chances of wind pollination. In the Fall we should look for its pine cone-like seed container. The alder prefers wet areas and is a pain for fishermen as they cast their lines along streams.

White-throated Sparrow



One more photo from Jim Cole, just one of the many birds at home at Wildwood. A full listing of the birds spotted there can be found on Cornell Lab of O's e-bird site.

Good Reads

Learn More About Conservation and Nature



In 1948 Aldo Leopold wrote his classic *A Sand County Almanac* and sketches here and there. Leopold was saddened by the abuse of land being treated as a commodity rather than like our endemic native Indians, a natural part of the community to be shared and treated with respect. The tides, the winds and sunsets are all taken for granted along with the land, flowers, trees and wildlife. Instead we live with our alleged higher standard of living with plastics, artificial hormones and toxic pesticides. Our frustrations of today are not much different than what Leopold wrote about in 1948.

In the 1940s Rachel L. Carson, author of *Silent Spring* studied at Pennsylvania College for Women, John Hopkins University and at the Marine Biological Lab at Woods Hole. She taught at John Hopkins, was a marine biologist and editor and chief of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. With extensive research under her belt she documented and lobbied for changes such as the elimination of DDT, which had devastated the Osprey and Bald Eagle populations. She had the science to back up Aldo Leopold's feelings of frustration. In addition to *Silent Spring*, Ms. Carson also wrote *The Sea Around Us*, *The Edge Of The Sea*, and *Under The Sea Wind*.

More Good Reads

The Eye of The Elephant by Delia and Mark Owens

H is for Hawk by Helen Macdonald

Of Wolves and Men by Barry Lopez

One Man's Wilderness by Sam Keith

The Lure of the Falcon by Gerald Summers

Desert Solitaire by Edward Abbey

Grizzly Years by Doug Peacock

Teewinot by Jack Turner

Winds of Skilak by Bonnie Rose Ward

On The Wild Edge by David Petersen.

Friends of the Carantouan Greenway

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