



Great Swamp Watershed Association

The Passaic River **WATERKEEPER®** ALLIANCE Affiliate

Across the Watershed

Fall-Winter 2017

Protecting our Waters and our Land for More Than 35 Years

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Great Swamp Watershed Association Earns National Recognition!

by Sally Rubin

At a time of political change, one thing is clear and consistent: Americans strongly support saving the open spaces they love. Great Swamp Watershed Association is thrilled to announce that we have achieved national recognition by joining a network of only 389 accredited land trusts across the nation that have demonstrated their commitment to professional excellence and to maintaining the public's trust in their work, out of a total of 1,363 land trusts across the United States. The Land Trust Alliance is an independent trade association for land trusts to help ensure the permanence of preserved land. It provides guidance with 88 best practices for organizations and helps organizations establish and main-



tain credibility for both the IRS and donors.

Two years ago, I wrote an article for this newsletter telling you we had registered for land trust accreditation and explaining that it was a two year intensive process. I just can't

believe that the two years have flown by. It was indeed an intensive process!

The process provided a detailed analysis and review of policies and procedures for both general governance of the organization and for our land preservation efforts. Sometimes it's difficult to focus on the details when we're busy conducting our programs and this process forced us to evaluate and improve or simply create and implement many important governance policies such as a records retention policy, gift acceptance policy, and privacy policy, as well as up to date job descriptions. Additionally, the

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Announcing Our 2017 Great Swamp Gala & Silent Auction

We sincerely hope you'll join us in celebrating 36 years of good work protecting the environment and serving the communities of the Great Swamp Watershed at our 2017 Great Swamp Gala & Silent Auction to take place at Brooklake Country Club, Florham Park, on October 12, 2017. Begin the evening with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, as you browse our amazing prize auction which includes luxury vacation stays, scrumptious dinners, specialty wines, gifts for the sports enthusiast, fun event tickets, behind-the-scenes special experiences and much more! Try your luck at our Fox Adventure Game and our traditional Cork Pull Game; every participant is a winner! A delicious sit-down dinner and dessert will follow.

This year we are proud to honor Christine Todd Whitman, former governor of New Jersey and former administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Her efforts over the years have made major impact on our state, due to her commitment to preserve green space, monitor our beaches, reduce air pollution, and advocate for clean water. Currently the President of The Whitman Strategy Group, a consulting firm specializing in energy and environmental issues, Christine Whitman has been at the forefront of helping leading companies find innovative solutions to environmental challenges.



Did you know that GSWA's Gala is our largest, and most important fundraiser of the year?

When you buy a ticket to the Gala, place an ad in our Gala Program & Auction Guide, or support us with a sponsorship, your participation helps fund enhancements to our educational programs and allows us to expand our water monitoring, land stewardship, and community outreach. In addition, you get to have a fantastic night out with your GSWA friends!

For information and tickets, visit us online at GreatSwamp.org
or email Debbie Rice at DRice@GreatSwamp.org

National Recognition *(continued from page 1)*

accreditation process included both a review of our land preservation policies and our land preservation files as well as a demonstration of financial stability. This helped us review details of the process and ensure that our files are well documented and that we have a detailed procedure for land preservation moving forward. If you have any questions or are curious, feel free to drop me a note or stop by and I would be happy to discuss the process or any of the details.

We are definitely a stronger organization for having gone through the rigorous two-year accreditation process. Accreditation recognizes that GSWA has demonstrated sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship. We are now well poised to move forward with land preservation as an important component of our mission because protecting water means protecting land too. If you are interested in preserving property, please contact me at srubin@GreatSwamp.org to discuss further. 🌲



Across the Watershed

is a publication of the **Great Swamp Watershed Association**.

GSWA is a member-supported non-profit organization that has been protecting the waters and the land of the Great Swamp Watershed for more than 35 years.

Editor: Sally Rubin

Designer: Ann Campbell

Contributors:

Hazel England
Tom Gilman
Wade Kirby
Marilyn Kitchell
Sandra LaVigne
Sue Levine
Kristina Necovska
Rick Porter
Dan Ross
Sally Rubin
Dorothy Wells

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Upcoming Events

Outdoor Programs

Downstream Adventures: High Mountain Hike

Wednesday, September 27, 5 - 7:30 p.m.

University Drive, Wayne, NJ

Cost: Free for members, \$10 suggested donation for non-members

Witness breathtaking views of New York City from one of the largest tracts of preserved land in New Jersey. Continue your exploration of the Watchung Mountains with our education associate, Dan Ross, and take the opportunity to explore this gorgeous Essex County Park. On this hike, you will explore new trail systems and find native wildlife in their preparation for the long cold months to follow. You truly won't want to miss this third installment of our downstream adventures series! **Please note:**

This is a difficult hike of considerable elevation. Registration required. Register online at GreatSwamp.org or call (973) 538-3500.

Columbus Day: "Nuts about the Fall" Monday, October 9, 10 - 11:30 a.m.

GSWA Conservation Management Area, 1 Tiger Lily Lane, Harding Township, NJ

Cost: Free for members, \$10 suggested donation for non-members

Join GSWA's Dan Ross on a journey through the forest as we step over brightly colored fallen leaves crunching under our feet and search for signs of fall! Learn why different trees' leaves turn vibrant colors in autumn, and which trees are responsible for depositing which nuts, seeds, and berries on the forest floor. This fun filled family event is intended for all ages, and we encourage

attendees to dress for the weather, and be on the look-out for squirrels and chipmunk busily stowing away their winter spoils! Register online at GreatSwamp.org or call (973) 538-3500.



Downstream Adventures Hike at Buttermilk Falls January 2016.

**“Back to Nature” Hike and Crafting Event
Wednesday, October 25, 4 – 6 p.m.**

*GSWA Conservation Management Area,
1 Tiger Lily Lane, Harding Township, NJ
Cost: \$20 members and non-members*

Great Swamp Watershed Association has teamed up with Madison Mud: A Clay Studio, to bring nature right into your own home. Sandra LaVigne, GSWA Director of Water Quality, will lead a hike at our Conservation Management Area. We will talk about fall foliage and get inspired to create our own bit of nature. Participants will have the opportunity along the hike to collect samples of leaves that inspire them and press them into an artistic clay tile. Melanie, of Madison Mud, will take the tiles, and glaze them with your choice of color. Tiles must be picked up at Madison Mud, Main St, Madison, date to be determined (approximately 10 days after the hike).

Madison Mud has generously offered GSWA an additional fundraising opportunity! When you pick up your tile at the studio, if you chose to create your own hand building project, half the studio fee will be donated to GSWA. This opportunity will be available from the appointed pick up date through December 1, 2017. The fee for a project is \$30.00. You create a beautiful handmade piece of pottery and help to support GSWA at the same time! Further details available at the hike.

Space is limited and registration is required. Register online at *GreatSwamp.org* or call (973) 538-3500.

**Beaver Moon Hike
Friday, November 3, 7 – 9 p.m.**

*Primrose Farms, park at Barret Field, approx.
15 Brook Drive South, Harding Township, NJ
Cost: Free for members, \$10 suggested
donation for non-members*

November’s full moon is known as the “Beaver Moon.” According to the Old Farmer’s Almanac, Algonquin Native Americans and American colonists called the November moon the “Beaver Moon” because “this was the time to set beaver traps before the swamps froze, to ensure a supply of warm winter furs.” Join Great Swamp Watershed Association as we hike the moonlit trails, and listen for nighttime creatures. The open canopy cover and bright moonlight provide the perfect backdrop to hear and spot owls, as they become more active for the mating season. Registration required. Register online at *GreatSwamp.org* or call (973) 538-3500.

(more events on next page)

New Website Launch

GSWA is pleased to announce that our new website launched this past spring. If you have not yet had a chance to browse the new site, please take a look at *greatswamp.org*. We’d love to hear your feedback!

Upcoming Events *(continued from previous page)*

Volunteer Workday at the CMA **Sunday, November 19, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

*GSWA Conservation Management Area,
1 Tiger Lily Lane, Harding Township, NJ*

Help us maintain and improve our 53-acre Conservation Management Area (CMA) located in Harding Township, while burning off some calories before the gluttonous winter holidays. This natural gem includes areas of upland forest, swamp, and wetlands. Tasks will include trail maintenance, fence repair, and invasive plant removal, (there will also be lighter tasks available). Bring your best holiday-season energy and enthusiasm! Conditions may be wet and muddy. Long pants and sturdy shoes or boots are essential. We'll bring the coffee and donuts to fuel our work. Must be 12 years or older to participate. Registration required. Register online at GreatSwamp.org or call (973) 538-3500.

Downstream Adventures: Glenhurst Meadows

Saturday, November 25, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

*Meet at the trail head of Glenhurst Meadows,
approximately 185 Mountain Ave, Warren
Cost: Free for members, \$10 suggested
donation for non-members*

Still feeling full after your massive meal? Why not join GSWA's Dan Ross as he leads a hike through wetland fields and meadows alongside the meandering Passaic River and Cory's Brook. Don't miss this opportunity to discover this highly acclaimed birding location, while burning off some of those recently acquired guilty calories! This is a generally wet location so guests are encouraged to wear boots, and clothing that may get muddy. Please dress for the weather and



Cleanup at the CMA – CTW Workday, June 2017



**GSWA is blogging at
GreatSwamp.org/blog**

don't forget to bring those binoculars! Registration required. Register online at GreatSwamp.org, or by calling 973-538-3500.

Speaker Events

Annual Membership Meeting **Tuesday, September 26, 7 p.m.**

Kemmerer Library, Harding Township

Want to catch up on all the news from Great Swamp Watershed Association? Join us for wine and cheese at our annual membership meeting, immediately prior to our Evening Briefing on Environmentally Sound Cleaning Products at the Kemmerer Library, 19 Blue Mill Rd., Harding, NJ

**Evening Briefing: Environmentally Sound
Cleaning Products Workshop**
Tuesday, September 26, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Kemmerer Library, Harding Township

*Cost: Free for members, \$10 suggested
donation for non-members*

White vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice... no, not the ingredients in a salad dressing, but the basis of many environmentally safe cleaning products! Learn more about what ingredients in daily personal and household cleaning products you need to be wary of, how not all environmental labeled products are created equal, and why you should be concerned. Common ingredients in many household products can have detrimental environmental impacts on you, the local environment and our regional water supply. Enjoy a stimulating presentation followed by a hands-on make and take workshop where you can make your own samples of cleaning products to take home and try. Recipes to make additional products at home will be provided. Registration required. Register online at GreatSwamp.org or call (973) 538-3500. Space is limited to the first 15 to register.

Held in collaboration with the Harding Library.

**Breakfast Briefing: "Water Quality Report
Card"**

Tuesday, October 3th- 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

*Summit Public Library, 75 Main Street,
Summit, NJ*

*Cost: Free for members, \$10 suggested
donation for non-members*

Come out and learn about the water quality along your stretch of the Passaic River. Great Swamp Watershed Association will present the 2016 Water Quality Report Card as well as give an update on our new Downstream Passaic River expansion

sampling to date. Sandra LaVigne, Director of Water Quality Programs at GSWA, will present a brief talk on the status of our streams both throughout the Great Swamp Watershed as well as on the region of the Passaic River between Millington Gorge and Stanley Ave Park in Chatham. Registration required. Register online at GreatSwamp.org or call (973) 538-3500.

Stream Assessment Training
Saturday, October 21, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

*Summit Public Library, 75 Main Street,
Summit, NJ*

If you are interested in becoming a stream monitoring volunteer or just learning more about stream health, this is the training for you! An early-morning indoor classroom session helps you learn how to conduct a visual stream assessment and recognize

(more events on next page)



Volunteers learn to assess a stream.

Upcoming Events *(continued from ?)*

environmental factors that may impact stream health. A late-morning outdoor session helps you practice your new-found skills at a local stream site. By afternoon, you will be a fully trained visual-stream assessment volunteer ready to conduct a new assessment next spring! Tools and supplies are provided. Preferred volunteers are 15 or older. Includes indoor & outdoor sessions. Registration required. Register online at GreatSwamp.org, or call (973) 538-3500.

Crafting Workshops

Create your own Walking Stick Wednesday, September 13, 6 – 8:30 p.m.

*GSWA Headquarters, 568 Tempe Wick Road,
Morristown, NJ*

Cost: \$30 members and non-members

Join Great Swamp Watershed Association (GSWA) and retired science teacher turned walking-stick-guru Brad Koller for a fun-filled DIY workshop at GSWA's office. Learn how to make your very own walking stick to hit the trails with. You'll be able to choose from a variety of rough sticks, including red cedar, maple, beech, and iron wood, and walk away with a finished product and the knowledge of how to create one on your own! All tools and safety equipment will be provided. Space is limited. Registration required. Register online at GreatSwamp.org, or call (973) 538-3500.

Wreath Crafting Workshop: Crafting with Natives

Wednesday, November 8th 6:00-7:30pm

*GSWA Headquarters, 568 Tempe Wick Road,
Morristown, NJ*

Cost: \$20 members and non-members

Create incredible wreaths with the native plants growing all around us – and learn that choosing native plants is truly the way to go! By the end of this workshop, you'll be able to seek out and gather the best materials for your own seasonal wreath for years to come. Show off your crafting skills and take home a beautiful handmade autumn wreath to welcome guests to your home. Your crafting instructor will be GSWA's Dan Ross for this fun and informative workshop. All materials will be provided, but guests are encouraged to bring their own seasonal native plant materials as well! Space is limited. Registration required. Register online at GreatSwamp.org, or call (973) 538-3500. 🌿



Crafting with Natives workshop 2016

by Tom Gilman

This August I took a beautiful solo kayak trip down a river. I started in the hills of a county park, paddled through wilderness, two long sections of class 1 rapids, open stretches of sun bathed wild meadows, and dense forests. I passed deer, fish (jumped on my kayak even), herons, Canada geese, hawks and bald eagles. There were many trees leaning over the water, to kayak around and under. On the first day, I passed only three other craft, two kayaks and a canoe. There were a few short stretches of houses along the river, and about a dozen bridges, including some ancient stone railroad structures. I slept by a great meadows park and ended near a former water powered industrial city nestled aside a mountain. It was a 46-mile stretch of almost all wilderness.

I live in northern New Jersey with my family, a little less than an hour's drive west of NYC. I work in Manhattan on weekdays as an architect. So where did I go to get away from it all and have a long run of wilderness paddling? Pennsylvania? Upstate New York, Western Massachusetts, Vermont or beyond?

Nope. On Saturday morning my wife drove me 20 minutes west and I put in at the headwaters of the Passaic River. I went downstream in a day and half to Little Falls, just upriver of Paterson and its famous falls.

Wait, you ask, the Passaic River? Isn't that the toxic Newark superfund site, the one with the century of pollution including an Agent Orange plant? Doesn't that river go

through the densest populated state in the nation?

Yes, that same river.

A little background —

I'm 51 and have been an outdoors soul since I was able to walk. Hiking, biking, canoeing, anything outdoors. In recent years, I've looked for greater expanses of wilderness, land where I can roam for long stretches, where I can experience and really feel the land. It's a counter point to being a city architect to be sure, but it's also about hearing the land around me. In a quiet way. There's so much to hear.

For a little more than a decade, I've been taking the commuter train to the city. We cross over the Passaic River in the heart of the Newark toxicity. The river is walled in, covered with bridges every 50 yards — with innumerable pipes draining who knows what directly into the river. In the midst of this mess, I still find much beauty. The tidal rising, the changes in the season, even what floats down. And a voice. The river has a voice and I've tried to understand what it has to say.

Two years ago, we moved from South Orange further west to Chatham. We're now next to the over 7,000 acre Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. And a five minute walk from the Passaic River. Well upstream from the cities, the river is 10-20 yards wide, and often seems to move slowly if that. The water's silt and pace often makes it an impenetrable brown sheet of rippled glass.

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Exploring *(continued from previous page)*

Driving around for errands, visits, exploring, I've noticed the Passaic over and over. Sometimes winding through the parks we've explored, but also alongside and under busy roads en route to shopping centers. There is a long stretch of Central Northern New Jersey where the Passaic is ubiquitous, yet almost entirely unseen.

Last winter the idea popped into my head to canoe the whole river, from the headwaters to the Paterson Falls. I had no idea if this made any sense. Was there enough water? Did downed trees block the way every few yards? Where there falls unknown and potentially dangerous? On weekends I started scouting locations where I could see the river, mostly parks and bridges. It was a hard set of images to connect and I didn't have a good sense of what I was dealing with.



The Passaic River at River Rd in Long Hill.

Asking around for information, I was met with mostly blank stares.

On a train ride last winter I met a creative independent film maker. He told me about Mary Bruno, a North Arlington resident turned ecological activist and writer, who a decade ago had paddled the river from its headwaters to the ocean. It had been done. That was all I needed. I would figure the rest out. The trip was on!

As I studied Google maps in anticipation of a summer trip, I found that while the river went through many parks, they made up a small part of the total distance. Subdivision and industrial roads seemed to crowd the river in. Was there any beauty left after all that development?

I love the parks nearby in Northern New Jersey. South Mountain I can get happily lost in all day. Great Swamp has a calm that's hard to fathom in such a busy part of the world. Watchung, Passaic River County Park, Lord Sterling, they're all amazing.

But at the end of the day, they are limited in size. You can wander and explore, but stray outside and you're right back in suburbia. You need a very good sense of direction to stay 'lost' in these woods and out of built up areas. I've longed for more expansive realms nearby — the ability to just roam for days. It's surprisingly hard to find such stretches of land in the northeast. Many of us have our favorites (Ossipee Mountains in NH, one of my favorites) but it takes effort to find them.

What I have to report to you is this — such stretches exist right in our backyard. Literally under the bridges we cross over each day.

I was stunned how far I felt from civilization. However it happened, the river has barriers from the development around it almost the whole way. Beyond the known and lesser known parks, there are stretches of forest large and small that buffer almost the entire waterway. It's an amazing network and I'm stunned at how well it all connects. I was pleasantly astonished the whole way. I really encourage you to get out and experience this yourself as much as you can. If you're local, you'll understand the region

in a way that will lift your heart and connect you to the land.

I'll write some posts about my experience (check out paddlingthepassaic.com), and some will be important for kayaking and canoeing — water levels, rapids and drops, trees and poison ivy – some sections require a degree of experience. But also about some of the magic I encountered. I encourage you to get out and experience the graceful joy of the Passaic River. It's right next door! 🌲

GSWA Invites You to Support our “Wish List”

If you're wondering how member support is making a difference, here are just a few examples:

- \$25 buys a water quality test kit
- \$50 buys a pair of rubber knee boots for students to wear during field trips
- \$100 buys ten feet of boardwalk to help hikers traverse wetter portions of our trail system
- \$250 sponsors a community outreach presentation in a rural, suburban, or urban school



- \$500 helps fund advocacy programs that educate citizens of all ages about the importance of preserving and protecting our limited natural resources
- \$1,000 buys 100 plants to install at an urban school rain garden



If you would like to make a donation, visit GreatSwamp.org or call (973) 538-3500.

My Day With the GSWA

Sally Rubin was kind enough recently to share her day, and her staff, with me. I have worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 15 years, both at Great Swamp NWR and at Wallkill River NWR. I'm part of a USFWS leadership development program which requires cross-experiential job shadows of our choosing, following reflection on our individual strengths and goals. A wildlife biologist and former visitor services specialist, my content expertise is in conservation/education and wildlife (habitat) management. I wanted to explore the world of conservation non-profits; to shadow a leader who is visionary, effective, and grounded; and to engage with an organization I could learn from as well as partner with into the future. Sally and the GSWA fit all three. Here's what I learned:

The GSWA has cultivated quite a network of partners, board and advisory council members, and dedicated membership. They have embraced an exciting mission expansion alongside a cumbersome land trust accreditation process, which positions

the organization well for long-term growth and relevance to a society increasingly distant from nature. They are run by volunteers and staff incredibly dedicated to the resources they serve, and quite talented in the work they do, even as they master tasks that would not typically befall their job descriptions. They are a leader in serving the community — through well-testing and water quality monitoring programs, educational programming, and service to partners such as the National Park Service and the USFWS. They are innovative and fun, hosting Friendraisers and other social events that keep their membership engaged and growing in size and knowledge. And lastly, they are individuals that I'm proud to stand beside as we work to cultivate the next generation of conservation stewards. Cheers to you all for a job well done.

Marilyn Kitchell, Wildlife Biologist
Wallkill River, Cherry Valley and
Shawangunk Grasslands
National Wildlife Refuges

Interested in volunteering?

If you are interested in getting actively involved in efforts to protect and preserve the watershed, GSWA has a number of volunteer opportunities (see GreatSwamp.org/volunteer/).

Please send an email to volunteer@GreatSwamp.org if you would like to volunteer!

Where Have All the Fireflies Gone?

by Dan Ross, Education Associate

With cooler weather approaching and the days growing shorter, it seems only fitting to spend just a bit more time outdoors at the end of a busy day taking in the late summer bug noises, and the awe-inspiring sunsets. Yes, the fall will soon be here, but that's no excuse not to relish the few remaining days on the summer calendar.

Peering off my back deck admiring the busy bumble bees flitting back and forth between the bee balm and phlox, whose blooms have begun to diminish and lose their luster, I can't help but notice something is missing. That this year, and indeed many of the years past, I find myself making an ominous observation; where have all the fireflies gone?

If your childhood was anything like mine, surely you remember the long summer nights that seemed to last forever, running with glee barefoot through the back yard attempting to capture as many of these seemingly mythical creatures as possible. Squirreling them away into a glass mason jar with holes punched in foil along the top and all the creature comforts they would need to survive, for the night at least! Retiring off to my bedroom to scrutinize these fascinating insects with light-up rear ends, and pondering exactly how it was

that they pulled off this stunningly magical accomplishment.

Unfortunately, however, it seems to be increasingly likely that younger generations may not be experiencing quite the same childhood memories. Though there is no current consensus as to the exact cause of their dwindling numbers, most researchers tend to cite a few main factors that are facts of life here in the Garden State; development, light pollution, and the overuse of pesticides.

Fireflies, which are actually a type of beetle, make their homes in decaying organic matter, leaf piles and decaying wood such as rotten logs and fallen trees. They typically remain in the area in which they are born and seldom stray particularly far, and prefer to live near moist wooded forests, or along streams and wetlands.

Unfortunately for them, and perhaps for us as well, these are the very types

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Fireflies *(continued from previous page)*

of habitats that are the most threatened by encroaching development and have been rapidly disappearing for decades. Partnered with increased logging, pollution and copious use of pesticides, firefly habitat and their natural prey have been increasingly besieged.

As daunting as these challenges are, fireflies are also believed to be suffering from yet another obstacle stemming from the high population density we are all familiar with; increased light pollution. Both sexes of fireflies rely on their bio-luminescence, which they are able to achieve through a complex reaction between trace elements of oxygen, calcium, magnesium, and a naturally occurring chemical called luciferin, as a vital means of communication.

Some species synchronize their flashes, sometimes across large groups of thousands of insects, while others take various alternative approaches, yet every species of firefly speaks this common language. Scientists believe they rely on bio-luminescence for a host of reasons which include; attracting potential mates, defending their territory, and warning off would be predators. However, scientists now believe that anthropogenic light pollution may be interrupting these complex flashing patterns.

In some studies, scientists have even observed that synchronous fireflies get momentarily out of synch after a car's headlights pass, suggesting that even slight disruptions to these patterns can have unforeseen consequences. Excess light pollution from our houses, cars, businesses,

and lampposts may all contribute to making it more difficult for fireflies to communicate with each other during the mating season, which in turn leads to fewer firefly larvae being born the following season, further exacerbating the issue.

Where fireflies once had uninterrupted forests and fields to live and mate, we have since replaced this habitat with sprawling, well-lit, manicured lawns, and these fanciful insects from childhood memories are now unfortunately paying the price.

But there are still small steps that we can all take to save fireflies including, turning off unnecessary exterior lights at night, allowing leaves and logs to decompose naturally, and avoiding the over-use of pesticides around the house. On an even broader scale, making the case for limits to over-development and the protection of wetlands and forest corridors is another step towards protecting these and other susceptible critters that call these places home.

Here at GSWA, we tirelessly advocate for watershed friendly land use decisions, fight to protect our fragile wetlands and intact woodland corridors, and encourage residents to be mindful of the chemicals sprayed around their homes. We ask you to join us in our fight to protect those who do not have a voice, and whenever possible, turn off that porchlight before you retire for the evening. The fireflies will thank you, and so do we, because a world without the magic of summer fireflies is not one that we would like to consider, and neither should future generations. 🌳

Lessons learned through National Park Service’s “Every Kid in the Park Initiative”

by Dan Ross, Education Associate

Over the summer, GSWA was asked to collaborate with Morristown National Historical Park in Jockey Hollow to help lead several days’ worth of educational programming aimed at getting urban youth out into nature in a wonderful program called “Every Kid in the Park,” or EKIP. Hundreds of bright-eyed, eager third graders from North Star Academy Charter School in Newark were bussed to the park and had the opportunity to rotate through various educational stations, learning as they went along.

Stations and activities ranged from an introduction to benthic freshwater macroinvertebrates (aquatic insects that can tell us volumes about water quality), wilderness survival training from outdoor retailer REI,

Yoga exercises, and historical games from the 1800’s led by Jockey Hollow’s dedicated and well-versed staff. The disparity between the activities provided an atmosphere of engaged learning and something for everyone who attended. To be certain, a good time was truly had by all!

We were delighted to hear that the students particularly enjoyed their opportunity to interact with live macroinvertebrates, and it certainly proved a challenge to keep their excitement contained long enough to provide background information on why we study these insects, in particular. The students’ reactions to the live macros ranged from shock and trepidation to gradual acceptance and, in

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GSWA’s Kristina Necovska teaches students about measuring stream health with macroinvertebrates.



Students listed or drew their favorite macroinvertebrate of the day.

some cases, even embrace. Though some of the students arrived not particularly fond of creepy crawlies, they were nearly unanimous in their appreciation of the role these insects play in water quality monitoring by the time they left our station en route to learn more throughout the day!

True, some of the preserved samples may have been utilized to taunt and tease fellow squeamish classmates and teachers, but it was surely all done in the name of science! From the menacing looking hellgrammites, leeches, crane flies and monster dragonflies to the adorable scuds, mayflies, caddisflies, and crayfish, each newly discovered macro fished out provided a sense of awe and discovery. Screams of excitement rang throughout the park and left other groups wondering what exactly it was that we had in our mysterious, bubbling, white plastic tubs.

While it was evident that the students enjoyed their time at the park, in a rare

excursion from the hustle of the crowded city, I couldn't help but be struck by the notion that these wonderful programs are far too few and far between in a world where simply getting outdoors and enjoying nature is becoming increasingly more of a privilege, and less a right of passage.

In an effort to learn more about how best to approach teaching underserved communities about issues such as water quality and environmental issues, I endeavored to learn more about Newark's charter schools' approach to teaching and I was surprised to learn that when students enter North Star Academy Charter School they are often significantly behind their state peers.

In fact, according to the school's website, "their test scores are often below the Newark District average, which is one of the lowest performing districts in the state. Students at North Star are chosen from among

Newark residents by random lottery, and nearly all North Star students are students of color. Eighty percent of students qualify for free/reduced price lunch, and ninety percent of their parents never graduated from college.” Unfortunately, activities we tend to take for granted like recess time, hiking, camping, and taking leisurely nature walks are all but foreign concepts to these students. Opportunities to embrace hands on learning through field trips such as EKIP are one of the best ways to engage their curiosities, and ensure truly memorable learning experiences. Research has shown that we retain far more of the information we receive through direct hands on learning, immersion, and repetition. Indeed, that is the basis for the shift towards STEM focused curriculums and Next Generation Science Standards. It is certainly encouraging to learn that there are such wonderful schools that are striving to set these students up for

success and provide them with the tools and nurturing necessary for them to overcome the odds which have surely been stacked against them.

When I agreed to take on the programing, I thought that I would be teaching these kids about bugs, and water quality, but what I didn’t anticipate is that they would actually end up teaching me! Our differences are truly what makes this country great, and every opportunity to work with diverse groups is another chance to open our minds to new perspectives. It is always so rewarding to witness the moment when students make the connection between everyday actions such as polluting and their real-time consequences on our environment. In the future, I certainly hope to see more and more programs like EKIP that seek to nourish our childhood innocence and connection with nature, for it is undeniable that when we lose ourselves in nature, we truly find ourselves. 🌲



Students learn hands-on how to identify macroinvertebrates from Primrose Brook.

Doings Downstream – Water Quality and Outreach

by Sandra LaVigne, Director of Water Quality Programs

In 2017, GSWA expanded our mission and role as Passaic River Waterkeeper to include new water quality monitoring sites downstream on the Passaic River. Historically our monitoring ended at Millington Gorge, the outflow of the Passaic and its four main tributaries from the Great Swamp Watershed. With our new goals in mind, we selected four new downstream sites from Millington through Chatham and developed a sampling strategy to begin collecting baseline data for this area. As of this newsletter we have conducted two rounds of chemical monitoring, one round of visual assessments, our annual macro-invertebrate sampling and our bacteria monitoring. While some of these results will not be available to review until later in the year (namely the macroinvertebrate data), we have begun to examine the data on hand from our new sites.

Looking at the chemical data for our four new downstream sites, some of the results are as expected but others have been a bit of a surprise. As expected, nutrient levels increase as we move downstream from Millington gorge. Total phosphorus increases significantly from the gorge to our third site, Passaic River Park in Berkeley Heights, but then decreases slightly between sites 3 and 4 (site 4 is Stanley Avenue Park in Chatham). During our first round of sampling, collected February 23, 2017, the phosphorus levels only exceeded state standards at the third site. However, in our

latest round of data the phosphorus levels exceeded the state standard at all four of the new downstream sites. It was also exceeded at the historic Millington gorge site. This may be due in part to the dry conditions we had leading up to our sampling date which made flow volume in the Passaic River lower.

The biggest jump in the numbers occurs between sites 1 and 2. It is between these sites that the Dead River, a major tributary, enters the Passaic River system. One possibility is that increased nutrient levels from this system are impacting the Passaic. However,



Stream Team volunteers perform visual assessments on Passaic River downstream at Glenhurst Meadows Park.

we are also examining the impacts of effluent from waste water treatment plants and where it enters the system. One of our great Stream Team volunteers, Roger Edwards, has been exploring the number and location of all the waste water treatment plants in the downstream area where we are currently sampling. The influence of effluent on the stream can be exacerbated when the flow of the stream is lower.

Nitrate levels, another important nutrient in our rivers, followed a similar pattern to that of the phosphorus. While they increased heading downstream, the nitrate levels meet the state standards at all sites. The levels of increase may also be attributable to waste water effluent in some areas and we will continue to explore the data as more comes in.

Total dissolved solids, a measure of dissolved substances in the water that can partially be equated to salts in the water, also show increases as we head downstream. This parameter is likely being influenced by the increase of road surfaces and overall impervious surfaces in the downstream areas. As expected, the levels at all sites decreased from the first sampling in February to the second round in June. The usage of road salt to keep our roadways and parking lots safe during times of icy weather has a measurable impact on the waterways in our area.

With only one round of visual assessments from our Stream Team for these downstream sites, we have only a very baseline set of data to look at. Results came in as expected

though, due to specific site location selection, aligning with areas where the river can easily be accessed, some of the numbers may be skewed towards better overall results. Of the sites which were assessed, again we do see a trend in decreasing quality as we head into the more developed areas downstream.

We have also been building our outreach efforts in our new expanded downstream areas. We have held two very successful Stream Assessment Training sessions which have brought in new volunteers for our Stream Team who bring with them an important understanding of the issues and concerns in the downstream area. Our training sessions were both held at the Long Hill Township Library. Coming this fall we hope to continue this trend with further training sessions held in the Summit area. Hazel England, GSWA's Director of Education and Outreach, organized a Passaic River Clean-up in Clifton to further our downstream connections. Working with NY/NJ Baykeeper, we headed out to Dundee Island Park and cleaned up the riverbank along the shoreline. Educating the public on the importance of keeping the river banks clean for the overall health of the water is an important step in getting our downstream areas back to a healthier state.

What about our historic range you ask? We are still working vigilantly to monitor and protect the waters throughout the Great Swamp watershed. With eleven monitoring

(continued on next page)

New Board Member: Anthony F. DellaPelle

We are pleased to announce that Anthony F. DellaPelle joined the Board of Trustees this past June. Tony is a partner with McKirdy, Riskin, Olson & DellaPelle, in Morristown. He has practiced eminent domain, condemnation, redevelopment and real estate tax appeal law for over 25 years. Tony has been a trustee at his alma mater, Franklin & Marshall College, and a past president of the Franklin & Marshall College Alumni Association. He

was also a member of the board of the New Jersey Hall of Fame Foundation as well as a long time trustee and officer of the New Jersey Association of the Deaf-Blind.



Tony is another addition to a spectacular board. Welcome Tony! 🌱

Downstream *(continued from previous page)*



sites within the historic GSWA region, we are still keeping a close eye on the health of our streams. Sampling to date shows results within our normal expected ranges for these areas. Loantaka Brook continues to have higher levels of impairment than our other streams while the upstream Passaic continues to shine as a beacon of health.

As always, we here at the GSWA depend on our amazing volunteers to help us collect our data throughout the watershed. If you are interested in helping to collect water quality data at any of our locations please contact Sandra LaVigne, Director of Water Quality Programs: sandral@GreatSwamp.org. 🌱

Downstream sampling location behind the Homegoods in Warren

Interns Abound at Great Swamp Watershed this Summer!

by Hazel England, Director of Education, Outreach, and Land Stewardship

If you paid a visit to the GSWA offices on certain days this summer, you might have assumed that we had doubled our staff — so many green GSWA T-shirt-clad people were to be found weeding, cleaning water quality equipment, or hard at work on laptops in every nook and cranny of the building. In a way our staff had grown, albeit temporarily, as our ranks were swelled this summer by an unprecedented number of seasonal interns allowing us to handle a truly ambitious summer teaching, stewardship and water quality testing load. They have come to us by diverse means, but almost all are majoring in environmental science or engineering to some degree. Before all eight head back to college or out into the wider world, we thought we'd introduce them all and highlight some of the tasks they have helped out on over the last months.

Zack Biskup and **Matt Whittle**, both rising seniors studying Environmental Science, attend William Paterson University in Wayne, NJ. They have both been working with us since January, after learning of intern opportunities while on an ecosystem services class field trip to the CMA last fall taught by Dr. Nikki Davi, with whom we have a long standing relationship on a host of programming and intern collaborations. Their fellow classmate **Alexa Fiumarelli** also interned this spring, as part of a mandatory work placement graduation requirement for her human health major at William Paterson — she helped run our April well-

testing program, and helped with several in-school and field trip school programs, especially loved working with urban students from Newark and Paterson who arrived in the hundreds to Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. She has now graduated and is undertaking summer classes at Rutgers and considering what she wants to be now that she is all grown up!

Through the cold, dreary days of winter, Alexa, Zack and Matt helped us create hands-on teaching activities for students' use during in-school presentations and at outreach events. Alexa worked hard to make a super-sized identification board that students of all ages can interact with to learn about the macro-invertebrates that inhabit the streams of the Passaic River basin, and which they may encounter on a class field trip or program. Zack meantime created a "Where am I" activity for use with GSWA's prized Passaic River topographic model where participants look at a picture and follow the written clues to find an exact location within the Passaic Watershed contained on the model. Matt slaved over his laptop creating a detailed database of native plants, listing habitat requirements and benefit to wildlife along with availability from local area nurseries. This list will be put to good use as we work with two Paterson schools to choose plants that will thrive in rain gardens to be installed in their schools, and which will also be particularly beneficial for wildlife.

(continued on next page)

Interns *(continued from previous page)*

As the weather warmed, the activities moved outside and Zack and Matt helped lead work groups and prepared us for our busy stewardship season. Highlights of their internship so far are the delicious catered corporate lunches on workdays with groups such as Goldman Sachs and BASF and being “fired” on a regular basis by Sandra LaVigne or myself when they forget something — Zack tells us his record for a day is five times! Matt has led stewardship workdays with his fellow William Paterson students as part of the university’s civic engagement program.

Our intern ranks were swelled as summer began with the arrival of **Erin Heller**, a Civic Scholar intern from Drew University. GSWA has had a long and fruitful relationship with Drew University, and we have had more than ten summer and intern-for-credit interns over the years. Erin helped with GSWA’s special events such as the Scavenger Hunt and House tour, aided in chemical and macro-invertebrate sampling and researched content for the Watershed Friendly Living portion of the new website. As a fencer at Drew, Erin also gained valuable upper body strength training and conditioning while helping lift heavy lumber to stack at the Conservation Management Area in advance of a workday.

Alexa spoke so highly of her time interning with us that she managed to convince her younger brother **Michael**, a rising sophomore engineering student at Rutgers University, to intern this summer, allowing us to maintain our Fiumarelli presence! Mike helped with weekly stewardship tasks, additionally helping with chemical and bacterial water sampling — he seemed to take a particular shine to wearing GSWA’s hip waders — he

was often to be found styling whilst wearing them whether he was shoveling mulch or weeding around the office, in addition to wading in the streams of Great Swamp! Mike worked with long-time volunteer Steve Gruber on some boardwalk construction at the Conservation Management Area, gaining an edge over the other engineering students on the correct way to build boardwalk so that they would not warp!

Fresh home from a semester studying overseas in Ireland, and with her original internship plans having evaporated, we were lucky to pick up **Ellie Dolan**, thanks to a chance conversation between GSWA trustee Micheal Dee and one of his hockey-playing friends. A rising senior at Scripps Institute in California majoring in Environmental Studies and Economics, Ellie has helped with a variety of tasks, from attack weeding in GSWA’s rain garden, to learning how to identify and pull invasive water chestnut at the Great Swamp Refuge. She, along with Sewanee University Sophomore **Elyse Harris** were part of the all girl crew who pulled trash from the Passaic River at Pulaski Park in Garfield on a sweltering 95°F day wearing chest waders for several hours — as they wrung perspiration from their dripping socks and poured it from their boots, both agreed it was a proven weight loss method! Elyse and Ellie have helped with myriad indoor and outdoor tasks from data entry, to invasive removal during weekly stewardship days at the Conservation Management Area, bacterial and chemical sampling, GIS map making and writing for our electronic newsletter. Elyse also learned first hand and at great personal cost, just how to identify



Zack Biskup works with students from Newark at the EKIP program.

poison ivy as she weeded the poison ivy-laden beds around the GSWA office!!

Our intern crew was rounded out by occasional intern **Stephanie Cabrera**. A student at Passaic County Community College, and a resident of Paterson, Stephanie managed to intern occasionally, despite holding down another couple of summer jobs. She gained valuable experience during her days chemical sampling with Sandra LaVigne and during rainy invasive species removal workdays at the Conservation Management Area, as the crew worked during the downpours that seemed to accompany any day scheduled for outdoor field work, clipping and clearing trails and battling the giant patches of multiflora rose along the banks of the Silver Brook.

Hosting interns, though time intensive for the staff who plan and coordinate their time, is a win-win situation for Great Swamp Watershed Association. Interns gain valuable field and office skills that they can add to

their resumes, and gain insight along the way into the workings of an environmental non-profit and a broader variety of environmental careers they may enter upon graduation. GSWA gains young, enthusiastic helping hands during the busy field work season, allowing us to increase our summer task list and to accomplish many of those back burner tasks that are needed, but which we never seem to get around to.

A huge thanks to Alexa, Zack, Matt, Erin, Mike, Stephanie, Ellie and Elyse for all your help and hard work — Dominicks Pizza will miss your business on intern pizza lunch days, and we will miss you, as the office will seem quiet without you all as you return to college. Keep in touch.

If you are interested in a possible term time or summer internship, contact Hazel England, Director of Outreach and Education at hazele@GreatSwamp.org, or Sandra LaVigne, Director of Water Quality at sandral@GreatSwamp.org. 🌲

Tackling the European Water Chestnut at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge: a True Partnership

by Dorothy M. Wells, Ph.D., Wildlife Biologist, Great Swamp NWR & Great Thicket NWR

This summer Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) worked with multiple groups and volunteers to carry out an amazing effort to beat back an infestation of European water chestnut, an invasive aquatic plant introduced into the United States the 1800s. It all started late last summer, when Sean Knox, a Frostburg State University graduate student, found the plant while conducting a waterfowl study in the Refuge's five wetland impoundments. This sparked a two-week effort by Refuge staff and volunteers to search for additional infestations and attempt to eradicate the plant before seeds fell.

Water chestnut is an extremely hardy, annual floating plant that forms dense impenetrable mats. Each nut can produce 10 to 15 plants, and each plant, up to 20 seeds that fall from the plant in late summer. Although it was too late in the season last year for significant control, this year, the Refuge was ready. Staff from Great Swamp NWR, Wallkill River NWR, Cherry Valley NWR and our summer interns, along with many partners including the Friends of Great Swamp NWR, Great Swamp Watershed Association, Groundwork Elizabeth, and Groundwork Yonkers joined forces to combat this nasty invasive plant. Beginning



Volunteers Chuck Gullage and Steve Skrobasz prepare to launch GSWA's drone.



GSWA's drone searching for water chestnut in a refuge impoundment..



Interns with Hazel England on one of the final water chestnut removal days.

in June through July, the various groups and volunteers scoured the area of the infestation with canoes and kayaks, some borrowed from the Somerset County Park Commission, pulling water chestnut plants from the Refuge impoundments for disposal. Over 270 hours were spent controlling the major infestation, and branching out to the east and west to search for, and control, additional, smaller patches. The season ended with the

Refuge partnering with the Great Swamp Watershed Association to test the use of a drone for identifying water chestnut plants in areas that were inaccessible by canoe. While control of the European water chestnut will be an ongoing effort, it is clear that this plant will not become a regular resident of Great Swamp NWR, thanks to the incredible efforts of all of the caring Refuge volunteers and Partners. 🌲

Please be sure to let us know if you change your e-mail address. Send a note with your name, address, and old e-mail address to knecovska@GreatSwamp.org so you don't miss out on our monthly e-newsletters.

Where the River Meets the Road

The Passaic River winds its way from its source, rising as a tiny stream behind Mendham High School, and flowing on to enter Newark Bay more than 80 miles downstream as a mighty river. Along its journey, it passes through tens of diverse communities, from rural, to suburban, to urban, often flowing by busy New Jersey residents unseen as it snakes along under and alongside the roads we drive on a daily basis.

A glance at GSWA’s colorful three-dimensional Passaic River region topographic model highlights the convoluted path of the river’s journey, and spotlights the change in the character of the land it flows through. As the river moves through

upstream areas, it passes through thousands of acres of protected open space such as the Morristown National Historical Park, Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, and GSWA’s own Conservation Management Area — these preserved open spaces show up as green on our model. Downstream, the river encounters more populous, urban, blacktop-heavy communities which appear as a denser gray on our topographic model.

A drop of water falling as rain in the headwaters region has a good chance of soaking into the ground before reaching the river, traveling as it will through the leaf litter and vegetation of the protected headwaters region before entering one of the five streams of Great Swamp Watershed.



Along the way, it may pick up some soil or sediment, or perhaps a little remnant salt from winter road salting operations. Lower down in the suburban communities that adjoin the river, a raindrop might pick up some fertilizer or pesticide from an overzealous homeowner, whereas a raindrop falling on the downstream, more impervious surfaces of the urban Passaic communities of the lower reaches, might gather some nitrogen and bacteria-laden pet waste from a careless dog-walker, or some oil or gas compounds from a leaky car.

In an effort to capture the many places along its length where the Passaic River meets the road, we need your help! We want to learn more about the many places the Passaic intersects with the roads, parks, and communities that border it.



Beautiful bridge as the Passaic River runs under Tempe Wick Road in Mendham, near the headwaters of the river.

We are challenging you to snap a picture of the Passaic River, its headwaters or tributaries — under a bridge, alongside a street, behind the supermarket you use. Tell us what are the nearest cross streets or GPS location so that we can pinpoint the exact location where you took the picture. Your photo can be as artistic as you like!!

Then tell us in twenty words or less, what is going on around and in the river at that point. We will map the pictures and your mini river report cards and show the information on our website as a feature of “where the river meets the road”.

Send your photos and report cards to info@GreatSwamp.org and note the subject line “where the river meets the road.”

Goodbye Kelly, Hello Val

Kelly Martin, Director of Communications and Membership, left in June after five years at GSWA. Kelly started as a volunteer shortly after graduating college and then joined the staff where she grew from a part time membership associate into the integral role of Director of Communications and Membership. We watched as Kelly met her new boyfriend, Chris, whom she married, and then watched as our carefree college kid became a mom to adorable Sam. We wish Kelly, Chris, and Sam only the best and we miss them all!

On the bright side, **Val Thorpe** joined the GSWA staff as Director of Communications and Membership in August 2017. Val is responsible for external communications, including the organization's public relations efforts, social media, website content, and

marketing materials. In addition, she creates and plans development events, and oversees the membership database.

In her many years working in the corporate world, Val discovered her true passion for non-profit work through corporate partnerships with Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and The United Way. An intricate path led her to the Musconetcong Watershed Association, where she was able to weave her background in communications, marketing, and special event planning into the inner workings of an environmental nonprofit.

This is where everything came into focus, and her commitment to protecting the environment became crystal clear. As a lifelong camper and hiker, and an advocate of all things outdoors, Val believes this is where she can make her strongest impact. 🌲



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and join the cause on

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From the Financial Corner

by Sue Levine, Director of Finance and Human Resources

We are in the final stages of closing our fiscal year ending June 30th and preparing for the annual audit. I am happy to report that GSWA has successfully achieved our budget with a total income of \$702,000 and a net income of approximately \$5,000. This reflects a 10% growth in income from the prior fiscal year as we continue to expand programs both within our region as well as further downstream. As our dedicated and focused staff continues to accomplish amazing programs and educational events throughout the Passaic River Watershed, our Board of Trustees continues to review how we can best care

for our most valuable resource, our staff. The Board of Trustees has recently approved a retirement savings plan with a matching component which will be implemented in the near term. The Endowment Fund, which is now over \$1 million, continues to be a strong contributing factor to the long term stability of GSWA and will aid GSWA in Land Preservation efforts in the region. We have spent the last several years formalizing the governance and operations of GSWA so that we can continue to have a lasting impact on protecting the water in our region. Thank you for all that you do to help us achieve our goals. 🌱

Across the Watershed is also available electronically

Help reduce our print and mailing costs by signing up for electronic delivery of future issues of **Across the Watershed** at GreatSwamp.org or send an e-mail with your name and address (so we can identify you in our member database) to knecovska@GreatSwamp.org. By giving GSWA your e-mail address, you'll also receive our monthly e-newsletter, which provides timely information

on upcoming programs and events along with news on what's happening in and around the watershed.

Your e-mail address will be used solely for the purpose of sharing information with you about GSWA-related programs and events. We will not provide your e-mail address to any other person or entity without your permission.

From the Development Office

by Wade Kirby, Director of Development

As I conclude my first seven months as Director of Development of the GSWA, I have come to appreciate all the diversified components that contribute to the fulfillment of our mission. While the primary objective of my work is to solicit and acknowledge the generous gifts from our constituency, I have also been able to participate in hikes, paddle downstream on the Passaic River, sample some of New Jersey's edible plants including dandelion wine, and take a private tour of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. To say that no two days are the same at the GSWA would be a gross understatement! The most valuable thing I've learned is to never take this beautiful natural resource for granted.

I want to thank all the individuals, businesses, corporations and foundations that contribute to the successful execution of our mission. I am privileged to work with a devoted staff and Board of Trustees, all of whom are specialists in their area of expertise. As I examine the financial support from all sources, having concluded our fiscal

year on June 30, I am gratified in knowing that we are poised for success in the year to come. This is especially important as we make inroads with our downstream expansion toward Newark Bay, which will benefit the drinking water for over 2,000,000 people.

And now...a challenge. Why not consider an annual Sustaining Membership? This would entail a monthly gift of support at an amount of your choosing that might be consistent, or could vary from month to month. We have learned that giving monthly over a period of twelve months establishes a profound connection between you and the organization you support. Let me know what you think.

Our October 12th Fall Gala, at which we will honor former governor of New Jersey Christine Todd Whitman, rapidly approaches! Watch for your invitation, and in the meantime, please join us for our events and experience the joy of learning so much about this environment that surrounds us. 🌿

GSWA Experts Available to Speak to Area Groups

Do you wonder, "What is in my water?" or "What can I do to ensure clean water for my children?" These and other questions about water quality, land preservation and local efforts to protect the environment can be answered by GSWA's Speakers Bureau, who will present interesting, hands-on presentations that will educate and inspire members of your local club or group. Call today for more details: (973) 538-3500.

Thank You Investors Bank!

by Rick Porter, Director of Institutional Relations

Great Swamp Watershed Association (“GSWA”) is very grateful for its relationship with Investors Bank, and the Investors Foundation.

For the past four years, GSWA has been a beneficiary of the generous support and commitment to our mission from both the Investors Foundation, and the Investors Bank branch in Madison, New Jersey.

The Investors Foundation has provided multiple grant awards that have allowed GSWA to continually enhance and expand its valuable and unique environmental education programs and public events. In addition, the bank has been a featured underwriter of our annual Gala Celebration for several years.

The Bank’s branch in Madison, New Jersey, managed by Nadine Vitro, a dedicated member of our Board of Trustees, has further contributed to GSWA’s growth and success through its generous support of our public events and activities, such as the

annual Great Swamp Scavenger Hunt and our popular Home and Garden Tour.

Their support has helped our education staff present in-school, and outdoor, environmental education classes to more than 2,000 children so far this year... a record number for GSWA. Over 1,200 children and adults participated the past year in our more than 40 public events that ranged from our popular “breakfast briefings,” on topics like environmentally friendly cleaning products, to exciting hikes and nature-friendly workshops.

These programs and events are at the core of our commitment to build an awareness and understanding in people of the integral connection between their health and quality of life, and the health of our waters and lands. From this understanding, citizens of our communities can take more defined actions to protect the environment for their benefit today, and for the benefit of generations to come. 🌲

Know Someone Who Would Like to Become a Member?

GSWA relies on members like you to help protect our watershed’s natural resources. So please pass this newsletter along, and encourage your friends and neighbors to join us! Visit www.GreatSwamp.org for more information.



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