

Indian Creek Nature Center Spring 2017

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A Message from the President of the ICNC Board

As I write my president's message, it is snowing and 14 degrees but the calendar says Spring is only 37 days away. As we bid farewell to the winter of 2017, I would like to mention that Peter O'Shea's tracking field trip brought out 13 enthusiastic trackers to Indian Creek Nature Center who enjoyed searching the trails for over two hours. Snowshoe Hare (*Lepus americanus*), Eastern Coyote (*Canis latrans x Canis lycaon*), Porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) and American Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) were some of the tracks identified. After being in the field with Peter, participants returned home with great memories and new knowledge about the natural world. As I left ICNC after the field trip that day I caught a glimpse of a Long-tailed Weasel (*Mustela frenata*) scampering

over logs and a Snowshoe Hare trying its best to hide in the shrubs.

Our Spring-Summer newsletter is introducing a new column that will highlight a selected volunteer who has dedicated many hours and in some cases, years to ICNC. We are so pleased to be featuring Alison Charles in the first column. Many of you are fortunate to know Alison personally, but for those of you who have not met her, this brief interview will provide a small glimpse into her story and her connection to ICNC, which in her case includes years of dedicated service to ICNC. It will take several newsletters to highlight the many volunteers who are deserving of special recognition, but it is a worthwhile endeavor.

This newsletter is packed with announcements of the several

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Indian Creek Nature Center
PO BOX 286
CANTON, NY 13617

On the Web
<http://www.indiancreeknaturecenter.us/>

Spring and Summer 2017 Public Programs!

Public programs are provided free of charge by volunteer naturalists and educators. We ask that you **register** with the program leader **prior** to the date of the event by calling or emailing the leaders.

Unless otherwise noted, groups will meet at the Nature Center Main Entrance parking lot.

Please remember that the 315 area code now demands 10-digit dialing!

WEEKLY BIRDING AT ICNC

Join us for weekly trips to the various habitats of the Nature Center and beyond to see what is happening in the bird world.

Leaders: Ann Beaulieu 315-353-5123,
Joan Howlett 315-353- 5123,
Ann Spencer 315-379-1383

Dates: Tuesdays April 4,11,18, 25 May 2, 9, 23, 30, meet at 8:00 a.m.

SPRING WORK DAY

Join Board members for a workday to set the Center in order for the summer. Tools will be supplied, or bring your own. There's plenty of work for all.

Leader: Roger Hutchinson 315-386-4795

Date: Saturday, April 22, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00

POND EXPLORATION

Join naturalist Pat Burdick in a pond exploration using dip nets to capture amphibians and macro invertebrates. We'll use magnifiers and field guides to learn about the animals we capture.

Leader: Pat Burdick 315-386-1244.

Date: Saturday, May 13, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00

SPRING BIRDING AT ICNC

May is the perfect time to search for wood warblers returning to their breeding grounds.

Leaders: Eileen Wheeler and Mary Beth Warburton 315-268-0150

Date: Tuesday, May 16, 7:30 a.m.

BIRD WALK AT GRAND LAKES RESERVE

Join Linnea Rowse, Field Conservationist for Audubon New York, for a bird walk at Indian River Lakes Conservancy's Grand Lakes Reserve. May marks the beginning of warbler season in the north country; plan to look and listen for breeding Golden-winged Warblers, Cerulean Warblers, and many more! Meet at the second IRLC parking lot on Burns Road. To reach the trailhead from the

village of Redwood, drive east on Cottage Hill Road for 3 miles, then bear left onto Burns Road for 1.75 miles to the 2nd IRLC parking area.

Leader: Linnea Rowse: lmrowse@gmail.com or 952-451-0096.

Date: Sunday, May 21, 7:30 a.m.

INVASIVE SPECIES WORKSHOP

The Environmental Management Council Invasive Species Committee will provide a special presentation for EMC members and other interested parties. Please see the full article later in this newsletter!

Leaders: Don O'Shea 315-393-5137 and others.

Date: Wednesday, May 24, 12:00 noon – ?; Rain date May 31; others TBA

CANOE/KAYAK THE MARSH

An easy paddle to enjoy the early summer color and birds. Binoculars, camera, and insect repellent are desirable. Meet at the start of the DEC Middle Access Road on CR 14, 1.6 miles from NY 68. Please call ahead for time and to register.

Leader: Mark Lee 315-265-2723

Date: Saturday, June 3, call for time and to verify meeting place.

BUTTERFLIES, DRAGONS, and DAMSELS

A leisurely walk to discover what butterflies, dragonflies, and damselflies are out and about. As we seek out the colorful butterflies, we'll discuss adaptations that help them survive, the plants they lay eggs on, and those they get nectar from. Some dragonflies and damselflies will be breeding nearby in a shallow pond. We'll learn about their lives as we observe their fascinating behaviors. Meet at the end of the access road (note DEC Sign) about a mile north (towards Canton) of the Nature Center drive on the east side of Rt. 14. Ticks are common these days, so please dress appropriately.

Leader: Steven Daniel, natdisc@gmail.com or 585-732-7095

Date: Saturday, July 8, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE!

PROGRAMS CONTINUED...

GRASSES, SEDGES, AND RUSHES (OH MY)

We will take a look at these under-appreciated plants and see how many different kinds we can find on a short walk around the ponds and upland trail. Bring a hand lens or magnifying glass.

Leader: Anne Johnson 315-322-4058 or ritzko@northnet.org

Date: Saturday, July 15, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00

WILD EDIBLE PLANTS, PLUS A LITTLE MEDICINE

Learn some of the historic and current uses of many common wild plants, both native and naturalized. Focus is on edible plants, but will touch on herbal medicine as well. Come dressed for the weather, and for ticks, too.

Leader: Paul Hetzler, Horticulture and Natural Resources Educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County, 315-379-9191, ext. 232.

Date: Friday, July 22, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

North Country Visitors!

This Winter the North Country received some very special guests. At a few locations locals were amazed to see Great Grey Owls, *Strix nebulosa*. These large owls are normally seen in the boreal forests to our north or the high mountain west. But every so often, like this year, they can be seen in the North Country. Amazing! Photo: Eileen Wheeler



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED...

events that ICNC will be hosting in the coming months, so be sure to read through the newsletter and mark your calendars and don't forget to check our website at <http://www.indiancreeknaturecenter.us/>.

The annual Conservation Field Day will be held on May 25th. Anyone interested in volunteering to help out should contact me at msmartybeth.warburton@gmail.com.

As we move through Spring into Summer, I hope many of you will have an opportunity to walk the trails, sit awhile in the John Green lean-to and listen to the delightful chorus of Spring Peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*). By the way, DEC is in the process of creating many new signs for the trails. Some other things to look for at ICNC during these months that will surely brighten your day include the blooming of delicate Spring wildflowers such as Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*), Star Flower (*Trientalis borealis*), White and Yellow Violets (*Viola spp.*), Blue Flag (*Iris versicolor*) and Lady Slippers (*Cypripedium sp.*).

Several species of birds that grace us with their presence such as the Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), Black and White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*), Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*), Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), the always entertaining mimic, the Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) and the peppy Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*) will be searching for places to build nests and raise their chicks at Indian Creek. Last summer the Lowland Trail was home to a pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. What a treat it is to watch these little, pale blue-gray bundles of energy flit from branch to branch. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher image on our front page is provided by www.masterimages.org. I will end with a little poem by Vanessa Sorenson that describes this little bird so perfectly, and wish you all a glorious Spring.

A blue-gray fairy arrives
Tail flitting
Spring will follow

Mary Beth Warburton
President, ICNC Board

At the Nature Center!

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL INVASIVE SPECIES WORKSHOP

As part of an educational outreach on threats posed by invasive species in our area, the Environmental Management Council Invasive Species Committee will provide a special presentation for EMC members and other interested parties on Wednesday, May 24th, from 12:00 noon until its completion in late afternoon. A substantial number of invasive species can be found at the Nature Center and nearby sites.

Don O'Shea, EMC Invasive Species Chair, will join other presenters (including DEC and ICNC personnel) in conducting this program. We will begin the

program at the Main Entrance parking lot, looking at several segments around this area, before proceeding along the roadway and travelling a short distance along CR 14 to the East Entrance area, and finally checking out one or more nearby sites. We will address several topics including: invasive species identification and life cycles; their impact on native species, human health, the economy and the environment; and ways to detect, manage and prevent invasives from becoming even more widespread.

This program is open to the public, but space is limited, so pre-registration is required. Call prior to the program date to reserve a spot. Vehicle access may be a problem at some sites, so car-pooling is recommended. Wear comfortable walking shoes, dress appropriately for weather and site conditions, and bring bug protection. Meet at the pavilion near the Main Entrance parking lot.

Leaders: Don O'Shea 315-393-5137 and others.

Date: Wednesday, May 24, 12:00 noon – ? Rain date May 31; others TBA

Please consider becoming a member of the Indian Creek Nature Center!

If you have already paid your membership for this year, Thank You!

To the right of your address is a series of letters and numbers. The first letter and numbers are the season and year that your membership expires. The last letter identifies your membership category. We send complimentary newsletters to schools, libraries, and other entities.

Student member (in school or college)	\$10 <input type="checkbox"/>	Membership for 20_____	New <input type="checkbox"/>	Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Citizen member	\$10 <input type="checkbox"/>	Please notify us of any address changes!		
Individual member	\$20 <input type="checkbox"/>	Name _____		
Family membership	\$30 <input type="checkbox"/>	Address _____		
ICNC Patron	\$100 <input type="checkbox"/>			
ICNC Life Member (nontransferable)	\$200 <input type="checkbox"/>			

Please consider an additional donation! \$ _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
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Please make checks payable to: **Indian Creek Nature Center** PO Box 286 Canton, NY 13617

See what you've been missing! Receive the ICNC Newsletter by email as a PDF file to see the images in color!!

Please send me **both** email and printed newsletter

Please send me **only** an email newsletter

Email _____

Indian Creek Nature Center is run by North Country Conservation – Education Associates, Inc. a section 501(c)(3) organization that relies on memberships, grantors, and donors. Your donations are tax deductible.

Nature in Focus: Winter tracking



In early January, naturalist and author Peter O'Shea led a group of nature lovers in search of traces of winter life. Snow is a good medium for holding tracks of various animals. It is always surprising how much activity there is during the Winter months. Peter and others spent time on the trails and the boardwalk and found tracks of mice and dogs to name just a few. They also saw evidence of beaver (*Castor canadensis*) activity. Here are some images of our intrepid adventurers!



Donated mounts

The Robert Moses State Park Nature Center in Massena, NY has donated a number of mammal and bird mounts to the Indian Creek Nature Center for programming. The mounts will be primarily housed at the SUNY Potsdam Department of Biology Museum until such time as proper facility can be available at ICNC.

Volunteer Interview – Alison Charles

This newsletter we start a new column where we interview volunteers who have given many years of service to Indian Creek Nature Center.

Ann: From where and when did you come to St. Lawrence county?

AC: I came to St. Lawrence Co. in 1990. I lived in a number of places in Canada, England and US, including 30 years in Schenectady, and just before coming here I lived in Syracuse.

Ann: Where is your present home?

AC: I currently live in Waddington.

Ann: What is your occupation/profession?

AC: Retired Chemist

Ann: Please describe your association with ICNC. How long have you been involved? What positions have you held?

What projects have you been involved with? What was your favorite project?



AC: Since around 1991 till present. Was on the Board twice, once in early 90s and again ~2005-2008. I have served as Vice President, Secretary, and Newsletter editor. I have been involved with Conservation Field Days, seeking grants, helping organize Bird List, I helped organize the Annual Dinner. I did a few programs – Nature Photography, Snowshoeing and I have pulled a lot of nails and helped with general upkeep. I think my favorite was helping with the school volunteers.

Ann: What is your most memorable experience at ICNC?

AC: On a Spring canoe trip in the marsh flushing a Least Bittern from its nest, and watching it while it hovered nearby. Canoeing the marsh in the early morning is magical. Second best would be early Spring on the Wildflower Trail.

Ann: Any suggestions?

AC: As far as suggestions, we need money more than anything. When I was on the Nature Conservancy Board in Syracuse they had some of the same troubles. Science experts are not necessarily good fund raisers and publicity experts, so they recruited for the board people who had a proven record in these fields and who were able to spend a lot of volunteer time on it. It was very successful, but of course they had a larger community to draw on.

Volunteers on the move

It is with a touch of sadness that we bid farewell to Armond and Ann Spencer. Both have helped Indian Creek Nature Center in so many ways over the years. Lately, Ann has been a very active member of the Board of Directors and has also led many programs over the years. Most recently, Ann has presented programs on bird watching and winter activities including snowshoeing. Ann was also instrumental in securing snowshoes for the Center. The Board would like to thank the Spencers for all their time and dedication to the center as they move out of the area. May your journeys bring you happiness and joy of all the great wild things. We will remember your dedication fondly!

Indian Creek Nature Center Annual General Meeting & Dinner!



We are proud to present

SPIDERS OF THE NORTH COUNTRY

by **Dr. John Barthelme**

Associate Professor Emeritus of St. Lawrence University



Spiders are fascinating creatures! Dr. Barthelme will present an overview of North Country spiders giving special attention to their diversity, ecology, and mating behavior. He promises lots of photos! John will also discuss spider evolution, travels to collect specimens in Zanzibar, Madagascar, Kenya, and Morocco, as well the effects of dangerous spider bites.

The meeting will be on Wednesday, April 25th at Sergi's Italian Restaurant in Potsdam, NY. Reception begins at 5:30 with a cash bar. Buffet-style dinner including antipasto salads, veggie and meat dishes, as well as sides and desert, will start at 6:00. Talk begins about 7:00.

The cost is \$25.00 per person. Please make reservation and payments by April 20.

If you have questions, please contact our president, Mary Beth Warburton at 315 268 0150 or mmarybeth.warburton@gmail.com

people attending _____ X \$25.00 per person = total amount enclosed _____

Please make checks payable to: **Indian Creek Nature Center**

PO Box 286, Canton, NY 13617

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Do you have some photos of your time at the ICNC? Or do you have something to say about your experience at the Center? If so, please send materials to the newsletter editor, Jan Trybula. Send submissions via email (trybulj@potsdam.edu) or to: Indian Creek Nature Center, PO BOX 286, Canton, NY 13617.

INDIAN CREEK NATURE CENTER
PO BOX 286
CANTON, NY 13617

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

