



Spring 2022

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Indian Creek Nature Center
PO Box 286
Canton, NY 13617



From the Board President, Nick Hamilton-Honey

Appreciation & Gratitude

As I round out my last few months as Board of Directors President, I feel ephemeral much like this Carolina springbeauty (*Claytonia caroliniana*) and the trout lilies (*Erythronium Americanum*). Grateful to have been part of the leadership of the Indian Creek Nature Center and appreciative of the Board of Directors members and volunteers. Without your time, energy, and effort we could not do what we do. Thank you!

I am looking forward to this Spring and Summer at ICNC and what else the future holds. Our Annual Meeting will be Wednesday, April 27th at the Bend In The River pavilion. Please see page 2 for more information and how to register. Please join us! We will be outside and feel free to bring/wear a mask. We are excited to see folks live and in person!

Prior to the Annual Meeting, we will have a table at the Green Living Fair at Leithead Fieldhouse at the St. Lawrence University on Saturday, April 23rd. We will be beside Nature Up North and Nicandri Nature Center, providing information about future programs between our outdoor education organizations and how to get out and enjoy the incredible nature we have here in St. Lawrence County.

COVID derailed some of the programming over the last few years, but this year we will have a full line up and
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED...

more to be added even after this newsletter goes to print. Please check out our website, Facebook page, or Instagram for the latest. Programming will again include our Conservation Field Day with Canton Central School 5th Graders, forest walks, bird walks, and moth night.

This newsletter focuses on invasive species: how to identify them, what you might find at ICNC, and more. We plan to have a Zoom webinar about the invasive species found at Upper and Lower Lake WMA by St. Lawrence and Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) aquatic and terrestrial biologists Brittney Rogers and Robert Smith. This will be in May. You can participate in a water chestnut removal effort in the Oswegatchie River on Saturday, June 25th between the Eel Weir State Park and the east end of the Village of Heuvelton. This effort will slow the spread of water chestnut as it gets closer to the ICNC wetlands. Go to page 7 to find more information about this removal effort and how to register. If you are interested in volunteering to help, you must register by April 20th. Registration is required since lunch will be provided.

ICNC applied to the St. Lawrence University Public Interest Corps as a host site. We have been selected. Interviews, selection, offers and acceptance of an intern will happen over the end of March and beginning of April. We are excited to have a student work with us to help build our membership, expand our reach, help with education and programming, and organizing our digital files, including past documents and photos. You will be seeing more of those on our new website. Keep your eyes out for those or better yet, submit some to either our website or social media.

Before I sign off for this 2022 Spring Newsletter, I would be remiss if I did not thank Roger Hutchinson for all he continues to do for ICNC. Roger, we literally would not be here without you. Thank you for all your guidance, effort, time, and energy over these last almost 5 decades! It is very much appreciated! I would also be remiss if I did not thank John Ozard for all the effort, time, and energy spent to make our new website happen. Thank you, John, it looks amazing!

Indian Creek Nature Center Annual Meeting

Members and those interested in learning more about ICNC, please join us live and in person at 5:30pm on Wednesday, April 27th for our Annual Meeting.

This year we will hold a picnic at the Bend In The River Park pavilion in Canton. The park is located behind the Canton Recreation Offices, 90 Lincoln Street, off of Miner Street Road just south of downtown. Learn what has been going on at the Nature Center, visit with friends and fellow members, and enjoy local food!

Big Spoon will be catering this event and will need to know by April 20th what your preference will be for main item (vegan/vegetarian/meat and lactose free/gluten free-friendly options are available) and dessert. Please let us know if you have food allergies/dietary restrictions. Cost will be \$35 dollars per person. Please bring your own beverage.

Please join us and RSVP by sending an email to indiancreeknaturecenterny@gmail.com, calling or texting our president Nick at 413-885-5725, or send a note to arrive by April 20th to PO Box 286, Canton, NY 13617.

Spring and Summer 2022 Public Programs!

Outdoor programs will require mask and social distancing protocols.

Please check our website, Facebook, or Instagram for updates on programs

Public programs are provided free of charge by volunteer naturalists and educators.

All programs unless otherwise noted take place at Indian Creek Nature Center, meeting at the main back drive parking area off County Rt 14.

Directions are available at <https://www.indiancreeknaturecenterny.org/> Please **RSVP** for programs by contacting indiancreeknaturecenterny@gmail.com with your name and group size.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (and Picnic!)

Join the Board Members for our annual meeting and an early spring "Picnic in the Park" at Canton's Bend-in-the-River Park. Food will be provided! Please RSVP so we know how much to provide. See the article elsewhere in this newsletter for more information, including cost.

Leader: Nick Hamilton-Honey

Date: Wednesday, **April 27**, starting at 5:30pm

FAMILY BIRDING AND NATURE WALK

Join us and our colleagues from Nature Up North for a walk at ICNC. Learn how to use easy and free apps on your phone to identify plants, birds, and other animals. We will have binoculars available if you would like to borrow them. All ages are welcome to this May Day family event.

Leaser: Nick Hamilton-Honey and Kayla Edmunds

Date: Sunday, **May 1**, 10:00am – 12:00noon

SPRING WILDFLOWERS AT ICNC

Spring ephemerals should be in full bloom and trees will be getting ready to leaf out at the Wildflower Loop; join botanist Anne Johnson at the East Entrance for an enjoyable springtime stroll around the loop and beyond.

Leader: Anne Johnson

Date: Saturday, **May 7**, 9:30am – 12:00noon
Rain date May 8th.

BIRDWALK – MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Join us for some spring birding on the Indian Creek Nature Center trails. Whether the birds are returning to Indian Creek to nest or just passing through, there will be lots of bird song and colorful species to observe. Binoculars, long pants, and insect repellent are recommended.

Leaders: Eileen Wheeler

Date: Saturday, **May 14**, starting at 8:00am

SPRING WORKDAY

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

Leader: Roger Hutchinson (315) 386-4795

Date: Saturday, **May 21**, 8:30am – 12:00noon

BUTTERFLIES AND DRAGONFLIES AT TAYLOR CREEK STATEFOREST

We'll start out exploring the dike at Buck Pond Road in Taylor Creek State Forest, park along the side of the road, or at a pulloff to the west (44.469141, -75.018467). If it is sunny there will be sure to be a good variety of dragonflies, damselflies, and butterflies right there. One of New York's rare dragonflies can often be seen flying there at that time. If time permits, we will explore parts of the nearby State Forest as well. Kids are welcome, and if you have an insect net feel free to bring it. Please register ahead of the date at natdisc@gmail.com.

Leader: Steven Daniel

Date: Saturday, **June 18**, 10:30am – 1:00pm

WATER CHESTNUT REMOVAL EFFORT

See information elsewhere in this newsletter!

Date: Saturday, **June 25**, 9:00am – 2:00pm

NATIONAL MOTH WEEK CELEBRATION AT INDIAN CREEK

Each year National Moth Week highlights the ecological importance and incredible biodiversity of moths with locally sponsored "moth night" events across the country and around the world. Join us at ICNC this July for a night of discovery in celebration of NMW. We will set up a black light and use sugar baits to attract a variety of moths for us to identify, photograph, and discuss. Bring a headlamp or flashlight, a camera, and your curiosity. Mosquito repellent might be helpful as well. (See NMW website for information <https://nationalmothweek.org>)

Leader: Ray Erickson

Date: Saturday, **July 23**, 9:00pm – 11:00pm

Rain date July 30, 9:00pm – 11:00pm

Invasive Plants at the Nature Center

by Anne Johnson with photos by Steven Daniel

A plant is considered invasive when it has the tendency to become so abundant that it takes over large portions of a habitat, eliminating other plants as it spreads, as well as the insects and organisms that rely on those plants. Most invasive plants are “from away”, that is, not native to the area in which they are causing problems, and therefore they have not evolved with natural checks on their population growth and health, such as insect or fungus predators.

Fortunately, at the Nature Center, we don't (currently) have the infestations of certain problem causing invasive plants that other natural areas have, but we do have at least two that bear keeping a sharp eye on. These are garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolate*, Fig. 1) and Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*, Fig. 2), both already on the Nature Center property.

Though garlic mustard can make a tasty addition to a salad, it is not a plant you want to encourage as it can become the sole component of the



Figure 1: Garlic Mustard



Figure 3: Oriental Bittersweet understory in rich woods, driving out native wildflowers. Oriental bittersweet spreads rapidly

and forms dense tangles, suffocating and strangling the plants on which it climbs. Both the non-native Oriental bittersweet and the native American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*, Fig. 3) occur on the Nature Center; you can distinguish the two by



Figure 2: American Bittersweet

the shape of the leaves and the way the fruit is held (Oriental bittersweet leaves are quite round and will have a few fruit at nodes up and down the branch, whereas American bittersweet has more elliptic leaves and a cluster of fruit only at the end of the branch).

There are also three potentially problematic plants that are found nearby that could pose large threats in the future. These are pale swallow-wart (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*), common reed (also known by its scientific name, *Phragmites australis*, Fig. 4), and European water chestnut (*Trapa natans*, Figs. 5 & 6).

If you have ever been to the Robert G. Wehle State Park at Henderson Harbor, you have seen how bad swallow-wort can get, becoming the sole component in fields and in the understory of woodlands. An easy to see infestation in our county occurs on both sides of NY 37 just east of the St. Lawrence State Park and golf course. It is found elsewhere in St. Lawrence County as well, with numbers and populations increasing yearly.

Common reed multiplies and spreads by fast growing rhizomes, forming dense thickets rapidly. Many people have noticed the large patches of this tall swaying grass (taller than cattails) along roadsides in wet areas. There are several large patches that seem to expand in size yearly along NY 68 in the vicinity of the wildlife management area, as well as in many other places in the county.



Figure 4: Phragmites

Water chestnut, a huge problem downstate, has now unfortunately made its way to the North Country. It was first noticed in the Oswegatchie River near Heuvelton in 2019. It was reported to the state



Figure 5: Pond with European water chestnut.



Figure 6: Close-up European water chestnut.

invasive plant database (iMapInvasives

<https://www.imapinvasives.org/>) and described as “a few small clumps and individual plants” and “still possible to control by harvesting”. By 2021 it had become overwhelming, clogging an entire side bay of the river and beginning to travel down the river into Black Lake. We sincerely hope both of these invasive plants keep far away from the Nature Center; although, water chestnut does continue to creep upstream from Heuvelton.

There are other plants considered invasive that are already firmly established at the Nature Center; these include frog’s bit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*, Fig. 7), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*, Fig. 8), European honeysuckle (*Lonicera x bella*, Fig. 9), and common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*, Fig. 10).



Figure 7: Frog's Bit

Frog’s bit and purple loosestrife can be found in wet areas throughout the Center. Frog’s bit, originally from Europe, came to us as

an escape from the Ottawa Arboretum back in the 1970s and now clogs areas of many of the slower moving waterways in the St. Lawrence River Valley. Its mini-water lily like leaves can cover the surface of the water, preventing light from reaching other plants below them.

Purple loosestrife is an invasive species that

because of successful biological control has become reduced in numbers. After an initial population explosion throughout many wetlands in the county, beetles that feed on the plant in its place of origin (Eurasia) were raised at Cornell University and released a number of years ago. Purple loosestrife populations seem to have subsided since and now blend in with other wetland vegetation much less obtrusively.



Figure 8: Purple Loosestrife



Figure 9: European Honeysuckle

European honeysuckle and common buckthorn can form dense thickets in old fields and young woods. They lose their leaves late in the year and

start growing them early in the spring. This helps them out-compete the slower to leaf-out native species for light and nutrients. You may be glad to see shrubs with green leaves against a backdrop of bare twigs and branches early in the spring, but if you look closely they usually turn out to be one of these unwanted shrubs. And beware of ticks when in the midst of honeysuckle as they have been found to be particularly fond of and prevalent on this non-native species.



Figure 10: Common Buckthorn

Of course, other non-native plants are present (and even abundant) in places on the Nature Center but are not considered as problematic as the plants just mentioned.

Do you have something to say about your experience at the ICNC?

If so, please contact Indian Creek at: indiancreeknaturecenterny@gmail.com or send us a Message through Facebook.

If you have photos or other items for the newsletter, please send materials to the editor, via email trybulj@potsdam.edu

Poetry Corner

RIVER LATE SPRING

In this river
Rapids stipple shallow ledge shale
Ride big boulders
Adirondack erratics
The river feeds as well as runs
Kingfisher rattling from a snag
Jack-in-the-pulpit in the marsh
Fauna and flora flourish
Bursting with song and scent
And motions seen and unseen
...Who knows if the hum that resonates
Between water, sky and river's edge
Brokers peace that surpasses understanding
But it surely comes close.

—Joan Gail Howlett



Jack-in-the-pulpit, *Arisaema triphyllum*
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arisaema_a_triphyllum_Bob_Hunter_Memorial_Park.jpg

Visit our new website!

Keep up with information about Indian Creek Nature Center!

On the web: <https://www.indiancreeknaturecenterny.org/>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndianCreekNatureCenterNY/>

On Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/indiancreeknaturecenterny/>

All memberships are now on a calendar year schedule.

If you are a **LIFE** member or if you have already paid your membership for **2022**, Thank You!

If not, consider becoming a MEMBER of the Indian Creek Nature Center!

Student member (in school or college) \$10

Senior Citizen member \$10

Individual member \$20

Family membership \$30

ICNC Patron \$100

ICNC Life Member (nontransferable) \$200

Membership for 2022 New Renewal

Please notify us of any address changes!

Name _____

Address _____

Please consider an additional donation! \$ _____

City _____

Members!

State _____ ZIP _____

Do you want your newsletter sent to you:

By email

By regular mail

both email and regular mail

Phone _____

Email _____

We **never** share member emails or contact information with any outside entities.

Please make checks payable to: **Indian Creek Nature Center**; PO Box 286; Canton, NY 13617

You can also join or renew through PayPal on our website:

<https://www.indiancreeknaturecenterny.org/membership>

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.

SLELO PRISM

Oswegatchie River Water Chestnut Removal Effort

There is an infestation of European water chestnut (see our article on invasives on page 4) on the Oswegatchie River between Eel Weir State Park and the east end of the Village of Heuvelton.

On **Saturday, June 25th, 2022**, the St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management is sponsoring a water chestnut removal effort including manual hand-pulls conducted by agency staff, partners, and volunteers, along with using mechanical harvesters. The Village of Heuvelton Fire Department is donating lunch for this event.

There are three tracks for this event.

- Track 1 – Village of Heuvelton boat launch to the Eel Weir State Park, approximately 4 hours.
- Track 2 – First session hand-pull in conjunction with mechanical harvesters above the dam east of the Village of Heuvelton where Libson Creek drains into the Oswegatchie River. Approximately 2 hours.
- Track 3 – Second session hand-pull in conjunction with mechanical harvesters above the dam east of the Village of Heuvelton where Libson Creek drains into the Oswegatchie River. Approximately 2 hours.

If you plan to provide any services, equipment, or will volunteer to hand-pull please indicate your intention on this form (regardless of if you've already agreed to do so in other meetings or verbally). We are using your responses to this form to organize the event.

Register by June 21: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdvYH2CVxQ8sWGCg3-4cJ5JmOmINDQd7XF03qV_vC3stZBrHA/viewform

More details regarding logistics will be emailed to the address you provide in the registration form as the event approaches. The above logistics are subject to change.

Please contact Megan.Pistolese@tnc.org with any questions you may have.

Nature in Focus: BOLO – Be On the Look Out!



By Jan Trybula



Besides the invasive plants listed elsewhere, there are many other invasive species in the North Country. Most people have heard of the Emerald Ash Borer, *Agrilus planipennis*, an invasive metallic beetle from eastern Asia. It was first identified in the US in southeastern Michigan in 2002. Since then, it has become widely distributed around the Great Lakes, the Appalachian Mountains, and the Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys and found less commonly in a few other areas. In New York, they reached the North Country around 2017. For a small insect, it is of great concern because as its name implies, the female lays eggs on ash trees of various species (*Fraxinus sp.*) and the larvae burrow under the bark, and eventually bore D-shaped holes on their way out. This disruption can greatly affect the health of the tree and large infestations can cause woodpeckers to strip off large amounts of bark. There are native borers that are not dangerous to this extent, so be cautious identifying. Although here, it is still important to track its progress and try to control it.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerald_ash_borer
<https://nystateparks.blog/tag/emerald-ash-borer/>

INDIAN CREEK NATURE CENTER
PO BOX 286
CANTON, NY 13617

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Indian Creek Nature Center
RENSSELAER FALLS, NEW YORK

