

Indian Creek Nature Center Fall 2017

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Indian Creek Nature Center
PO BOX 286
Canton, NY 1617

On the web at:
www.indiancreeknaturecenter.us



From the Board President

Fall will soon be here, and Indian Creek Nature Center provides a close to home place to witness the beauty nature provides during this time of year. Come to Indian Creek to hear and view the fall migration of birds, the dragonflies and butterflies, or simply to enjoy the changing colors.

All of us at Indian creek would like to extend our gratitude to Blanche Town and Linnea Rowse for their service to Indian Creek Nature Center. Blanche retired from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in May after 30 years on the job and she will be missed. Blanche was our “go to” person for many years and never let us down. She made sure Indian Creek received the services, equipment and any other support we needed. Blanche mentioned that she would like to stay connected to Indian Creek and maybe even lead a program sometime. We all look forward to that happening. We would also like to thank Linnea for serving on the board of directors, leading bird walks and especially for introducing and implementing the Golden-winged warbler project to the Center. As the years pass and the Golden-winged warblers (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) raise their young along the trails of Indian Creek, all those who have the joy of seeing the birds will salute Linnea. Linnea has moved to Ohio and we wish her the best in her new home.

Following is an update on some projects at Indian Creek. Board member Bill Brown delivered plans for new trail signs to DEC in May. Unfortunately, due to the retirement of several key people at DEC that project has been slowed but not forgotten. The new
CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Fall 2017 and Winter 2018 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.

NIGHT SKY

Say goodbye to the summer sky with an evening of star gazing. You'll take a tour of the sky using a telescope, binoculars and the unaided eye. We'll explore the mythology behind some of the constellations, and view star clusters, the Andromeda galaxy, and Saturn. Feel free to bring your own binoculars. This program is always memorable so bring the kids and **please call to register**.

Leader: Jeff Miller (315) 229-5493

Date: September 23, 8:00pm – 9:30pm
(rain date Sept. 24)

FALL WORK DAY

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

Leader: Roger Hutchinson (315) 386-4795

Date: September 30, 8:30am – 12:00noon

FALL WARBLERS AND OTHER MIGRANTS

Come enjoy a Fall bird walk at ICNC. Participants will look for the wide variety of migratory birds that stop at Indian Creek to feed on berries and other foods during their journey South. Habitats that will be hiked include shrubland, marsh, wetland, and forest habitats along the Tower and Succession Trails. It is always fun to see some resident birds such as Black-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapillus*) and Northern Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) too. A spotting scope will be used to view birds on Lower Lake from the top of the observation tower. Bring binoculars! **Please call to register**.

Leaders: Eileen Wheeler (315) 386-2482 and Mary Beth Warburton (315) 268-0150 or msmarybeth.warburton@gmail.com

Date: October 1, 8:00am – ?

TREES AND SHRUBS – AUTUMN CHANGES

Every Fall, we delight in the fleeting beauty created by Nature's paintbrush, just before the leaves flutter to the ground to become a rich carpet that covers the forest floor. Let's explore the lore and the science of why leaves change color when summer wanes and winter approaches and why some trees drop their leaves while others retain them. We'll discover what determines the type and degree of coloration on a particular tree in a given year and how such things as weather conditions, sunlight and shade, and rainfall all play a part in the process. Please call to register.

Leader: Don O'Shea (315) 393-5137

Date: October 7, 9:30am – 11:30am

GEOLOGIC FEATURES OF THE NATURE CENTER AND THE NORTH COUNTRY

Join John Bursnall, Geology professor at St. Lawrence University, for a unique trip that will explore the fascinating geology of the area between Canton and Gouverneur. Meet John at the Main Entrance of Indian Creek Nature Center to begin a journey that will include visiting several rock outcroppings and road cuts along State Routes 11, 58 and a few others. John will explain the formations and participants will get closeup looks at some unique and beautiful rocks. This trip will be longer than others in the past to allow for exploring spots that are rarely visited. Dress appropriately, bring water, food and some may carpool if desired. **Please call John to register**.

Leader: John Bursnall (315) 344-7245

Date: October 21, 8:30am – 3:00pm

WINTER TRACKING

The ICNC hosts a wonderful array of interesting animals and fauna throughout the year. Peter O'Shea, local naturalist and author, will lead the group in identifying various creatures by their tracks and other unique features. If snow is sufficiently deep, trackers can bring their snowshoes or borrow them from the nature Center. If no snow, we'll scout the trails on foot. Dress appropriately and **please call to register**.

Leader: Peter O'Shea (315) 848-2178

Date: January 6, 2018, 10:00am – 12:00noon

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED...

signs, that will be placed at the trail heads may be ready before winter. Dick Edgers, from Redwood, is constructing new kiosks that will be located at the main entrance and east entrance and is hoping to have those completed before winter. Board member Roger Hutchinson has, for many years, coordinated a variety of projects at Indian Creek with the Youth Conservation Corp. This July, the YCC spent a couple of days trimming and clearing trails.

Irene Mazzochi, wildlife biologist for NYSDEC Region 6 has been involved with monitoring Black Terns at Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area for many seasons. Black Terns (*Chlidonias niger*) were listed as endangered in NYS in 2000 due to an ongoing decline in their numbers since the 1960s. Upper and Lower Lakes WMA is home to several breeding pair and Irene conducts breeding surveys each June to count the pairs. I had the pleasure of joining her this year while she performed her yearly survey and when we completed the survey we walked out to the John Green lean-to. While we scanned the view from the lean-to Irene came up with the idea of placing manmade platforms for Black Terns in the water in front of the lean-to. This would provide an excellent opportunity for people to observe the terns from the seclusion of the lean-to. Building the platforms is fairly simple and can be done during the winter so they can be put into place before the terns return in the spring. Anyone who is interested in helping with the project please contact me. I think everyone will enjoy reading the informative article about Black Terns in this newsletter.

Board member Anne Beaulieu has suggested placing some benches along some of the trails that do not have any, especially at the pond before the board walk. This would provide a quiet spot for observing birds, frogs and other wildlife. If anyone reading this has a design they would like to share, please contact me.

Remember to mark your calendars and sign up for the excellent programs that are being offered this fall and winter. John Bursnell's geology field trip, described later in this newsletter, will provide a rare opportunity to explore rock outcroppings and road cuts in the Canton/Gouverneur area. The leaders who volunteer their time to lead these fun and informative programs enjoy sharing their knowledge and always make these programs worthwhile.

Come to Indian Creek on September 30th and join in for the fall workday or just stop by to say hello and have a glass of apple cider.

You must not know too much, or be too precise or scientific about birds and trees and flowers... a certain free margin, and even vagueness—perhaps ignorance, credulity—helps your enjoyment of these things...

Walt Whitman (1819-1892; *Prose Works* 1892)

Mary Beth Warburton
President, ICNC Board



Springtime at Indian Creek Nature Center brings localized vernal wetlands to the woods. Many of our trails flood and bring breeding habitat for various insects and amphibians. For our human guests, the Center has many raised trails; but please be warned that in very wet years these too may be inundated with water.

Photo by Eileen Wheeler

Poetry Corner

THE STOPOVER

Fleet flying Geese
Arcing the V for landing
Wings cupped
Feet bracing onto cornfield stopover
Mostly Canada but some Snow
Air mates
Honking loudly through the touchdown
Two different calls
But the same echo
Joy of Earth
Underfoot
—JOAN HOWLETT



photo by Eileen Wheeler

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

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

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

The top right of your address includes 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"/> | City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ | |
| ICNC Life Member (nontransferable) | \$200 <input type="checkbox"/> | Phone _____ | |

Please consider an additional donation! \$_____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

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:

Black Terns



Black terns, *Chlidonias niger* (Linnaeus, 1758), should probably be considered a tropical marine bird, spending most of their time in tropical seas; but, they breed in temperate freshwater marshes, including the marshes of Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area adjacent to the Indian Creek Nature Center. It is possible that their recent northern expansion may be due to climate change and warming arctic regions. New York is at the southeastern edge of their breeding grounds. NY state surveys have shown the species at only 12 marshes in the state, collectively having only about 200 breeding pairs.



© Kurt Kirchmeier, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, June 2012.
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black_Tern/id

Studies have shown that black terns utilize muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) structures and are often associated with American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), American Coot (*Fulica americana*), Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), Pied-Billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), and Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*).

Black terns have dark breeding plumage with their head and chest black. Their wings are grey and their undertails are white. In Winter, they take on a whiter plumage with white chests and mostly white

heads with dark patches behind the eyes and over the back of the head. Their wings stay grey, but slightly lighter in shade.

Research has shown that sediment load due to excessive agriculture have reduced invertebrate and fish populations in many marsh systems that historically had black terns. Also reduced flooding have allowed native marsh plants to grow too thick for these birds. Invasive marsh plants such as phragmites (*Phragmites sp.*) and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) also can form thick monocultures that are not conducive habitat for these birds. Chemical contaminants, including organochlorines (e.g. PCBs) appear to play a role in their decline.



Indian Creek Nature Center plans to construct and distribute handmade black tern platforms on the marshes. It is our hope that these artificial habitats will be utilized by the terns just as normal floating mats of vegetation would be.

Information from the “Black Tern Guide: New York Natural Heritage Program”
<http://www.acris.nynhp.org/guide.php?id=6925&part=1>

Volunteer Interview – Kermit Morgan

Kermit Morgan has been interested and involved in environmental education from an early time.



Kermit grew up in Hermon, NY and graduated from Hermon High School followed by Cornell University and later St. Lawrence University.

After Cornell, he married Marian Green and had a two-year commitment as an Air Force Officer. A lifelong teacher, he taught in Gouverneur High School for 8 years and at SUNY Canton from 1966–1990. All five of their daughters have also been involved in education. After retirement Kermit and his family set up a maple operation on their property and made syrup for several years.

Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring* in 1962 which foretold problems with pesticides and the environment. This ignited the Environmental Movement. The first conservation field days were established following this great interest. This grew to several locations in St. Lawrence County. Earth Day was established on April 22, 1970 which further increased awareness.

Many educators from our high schools and the colleges in the area felt the need for increased environmental education and the Indian Creek Nature Center was incorporated in 1972. The time was right to work with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to set aside a portion of Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area as a Center. This was established by the Commissioner's order on June 6, 1974. It remains to this day. Kermit has been involved since the beginning of the first field days to the present.

He has held the offices of President and Vice-president many times and provided wise leadership to the organization.

Some of the highlights Kermit recalls are: the numerous conservation field days over the years which he coordinated, the work with presenters, and the present difficulty getting field days scheduled with full school schedules and less environmental awareness and concern. He strongly feels that the Nature Center is an “Unknown Gem in Our Backyard”, that education of the young is of great importance, and that he would like to see reinvigorated interest in the opportunity for the young to experience nature.

Many projects have been completed over the years. The board walk was a major project which he, Paul Hafer, and the Youth Conservation Corps worked on over two summers. Another accomplishment was to receive permission to have canoe trips on the ULLWMA. This necessitated many hours of work and coordination with DEC and now this opportunity has been enjoyed by many.



Kermit specifically would like to recognize several who have been instrumental in the formation and operation of the Center: Mr. George Field, St. Lawrence County Cooperative Extension; Dr. Paul Hafer, SUNY Potsdam; Dr. John Green, St. Lawrence University. He also would like to thank Roger Hutchinson and the other men and women of DEC for their dedication, assistance, and interest.

The Board, past and present, thank Kermit for his wise guidance over so many years.

ICNC Birdseed Sale 2017 – New prices this year!

The birdseed sale is one of the fundraisers for the ICNC and we need your financial support! Your purchases are, in part, a contribution toward maintenance, overhead, and programs at the ICNC. Please use the form below, or copy this page.

Please Keep This Copy for Your Records!

| <u>Wt.</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Qty.</u> | <u>Price</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 20 lbs | Choice Blend | _____ | \$14.00 | _____ |
| 40 lbs | Choice Blend | _____ | \$26.00 | _____ |
| 20 lbs | Premium Blend | _____ | \$17.50 | _____ |
| 40 lbs | Premium Blend | _____ | \$32.50 | _____ |
| 20 lbs | Just Desserts | _____ | \$33.00 | _____ |
| 18 lbs | Cardinal Blend | _____ | \$16.50 | _____ |
| 20 lbs | Finch Blend | _____ | \$28.00 | _____ |
| 20 lbs | Chickadee Blend | _____ | \$22.50 | _____ |
| 30 lbs | Value Blend | _____ | \$14.00 | _____ |
| 25 lbs | Black Oil Sunflower | _____ | \$12.50 | _____ |
| 50 lbs | Black Oil Sunflower | _____ | \$24.00 | _____ |
| 40 lbs | Striped Sunflower | _____ | \$30.00 | _____ |
| 25 lbs | Sunflower Kernels | _____ | \$33.00 | _____ |
| 50 lbs | Cracked Corn | _____ | \$14.00 | _____ |
| 10 lbs | Nyger (Niger Thistle) | _____ | \$18.50 | _____ |
| 25 lbs | Nyger (Niger Thistle) | _____ | \$40.00 | _____ |
| Ea. | Nutty Butter Suet | _____ | \$ 1.25 | _____ |
| Ea. | High Energy Suet | _____ | \$ 1.25 | _____ |

Total Enclosed = \$ _____ (Check # _____)

Call Roger at 315-386-4795 if you have questions.

Mail your order & payment by **Monday, Oct 16**

to: **Roger Hutchinson**
c/o Indian Creek Nature Center
4 Orebed Road
Canton, NY 13617

Pick up order on **Saturday, October 28**, 9:00-2:00
at ICNC, County Rd 14, Rensselaer Falls, NY

Please Return This Copy with Your Order!

| <u>Wt.</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Qty.</u> | <u>Price</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
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| Ea. | High Energy Suet | _____ | \$ 1.25 | _____ |

Total Enclosed = \$ _____ (Check # _____)

Make Checks Payable to: Indian Creek Nature Center

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____

Phone: _____

INDIAN CREEK NATURE CENTER
PO BOX 286
CANTON, NY 13617

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

