

A Publication of the Friends of Forsythe

FALL 2020



GREAT BLUE HERON AT DAWN, BOB BOYD

TAKING ACTION THROUGH EDUCATION

MESSAGE FROM YOUR FRIENDS' BOARD



MEET THE NEW FRIENDS OF FORSYTHE PRESIDENT

Greetings! My name is Rae Griffiths, and I am excited to assume the role of President of the Friends of Forsythe NWR. I am a relatively new resident to south Jersey, having relocated to Upper Township in August 2019 from western Massachusetts after spending many years visiting the area, including Forsythe, to bird and recreate.



My background is in zoology and environmental education, and I have worked as a researcher and educator for many organizations including the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the

Message, continued on page 2

This newsletter is a publication of the FRIENDS OF FORSYTHE, a non-profit, 501(c)3, tax-exempt corporation that works closely with the Refuge. Friends are the bridge between the Refuge and the community, and contribute to its future by helping people understand that their actions today determine the legacy we leave for tomorrow.

Our mission is to support the purposes for which the Refuge was established and includes the following:

- For use as a sanctuary for migratory birds and non-migratory animals
- For protection of natural resources
- For the conservation of non-game, threatened and endangered species
- For promoting environmental education and experiences for children and adults
- For the development of other wildlife-oriented experiences that do not interfere with the primary mission of the Refuge.

We invite you to join. You can serve on the Board of Directors, assist as members of Advisory Committees, work in the Visitor Information Center and Nature Store, or provide your support by being a member. Please share your interest and experience. For more information, please email friendsofforsythe@gmail.com or go to <https://friendsofforsythe.org/>

Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Boston Museum of Science, and the New England Aquarium. From 2004-2019, I ran my own educational outreach program called *Teaching Creatures*, which brought live animals to schools, libraries, and community events throughout southern New England to teach about basic animal biology and natural history. In that time, I also became a MA certified early childhood educator.

Since moving to Upper Township, I have become the Cape May County Coordinator of the NJ Bluebird Society and joined the staff at The Wetlands Institute as a Customer Service Associate and Office Assistant. Look for my monthly story time programs, *Refuge Readings with Rae*, on the Friends FB page and website, and for video footage from the trail cameras I help to maintain on the refuge.



SAYING GOOD BYE AND GOOD LUCK

By Mar-Jo Attack

It has been my pleasure for the last few years working with Bill Harclerode at Edwin B. National Wildlife refuge. When Bill became president on the Friends of Forsythe Board, he brought us into the technology age. With his computer knowledge, he was able to install software that provides an automated method for updating and managing our membership list.

Bill established our Facebook page, worked with a designer for the website for Friends of Forsythe and kept them updated and current with happenings at Forsythe. In addition, he set up a website for volunteers to sign up for when they wanted to help on the Explorer Tours or work in the Visitors Center gift shop.

He helped coordinating the Boardwalk planks project and worked with Conserve Wildlife Foundation of

NJ to keep the Osprey webcam repaired or when maintenance was needed. He also managed the Friends newsletter and work towards the redesign of the FOF logo along with obtaining new shirts for volunteers. Bill applied for grants that would benefit FOF, one of which was an Enviroscape display that is used in Environmental Education school programs. When we had school groups come for a field day, Bill would be there sharing knowledge of the refuge with the children.

There were so many things that Bill did behind the scenes to improve our mission for the refuge that I think I counted that we needed 7 people to cover all his responsibilities. Best wishes on your new adventures, Bill.



TRAIL CAMERAS HELP US CAPTURE AND LEARN ABOUT SELDOM SEEN REFUGE VISITORS

By Rae Griffiths

We all know that Forsythe is a mecca for bird lovers. Each season brings new feathered friends.

Our beloved Osprey nest in the summer, shorebirds migrate through in late summer through fall, ducks and geese are plentiful in winter, and songbirds visit in their vibrant breeding plumage in springtime. But what about other animals that make the refuge their home? We see evidence of muskrat from the numerous lodges on the wildlife drive. We might catch a glimpse of an Eastern cottontail or a White-tailed deer, but for the most part, mammals are far more active at night when the refuge is closed.

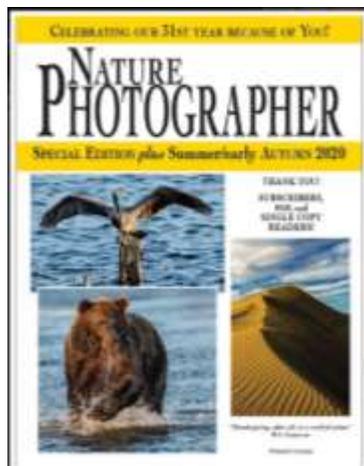
In an effort to learn about and share more wildlife with visitors, the Friends of Forsythe purchased two motion-activated, infrared trail cameras, and placed them at different spots around the refuge to capture the nighttime (and sometimes daytime) activities of the furry creatures at the refuge. This isn't to say that the cameras don't capture their

fair share of bird activity too, and we look forward to sharing it all with you, both on our Facebook page and through our website <http://friendsofforsythe.org>

Check these spots regularly for footage from the cameras, and let us know how you like seeing some of the more elusive refuge regulars!



NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER MAGAZINE SUMMER/EARLY FALL 2020



The latest issue of **Nature Photographer Magazine** contains an article by FOF Board member Susan Puder on photographing Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, entitled “New Jersey Shore Birding”. The six-page article

describes the Refuge and the photo opportunities that are available on the wildlife drive during the fall and winter seasons. The magazine is available at their website: naturephotographermag.com and at retailers like Barnes and Nobles.

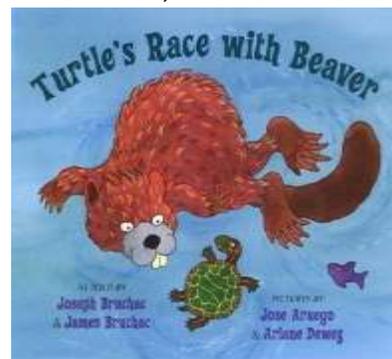


FRIENDS BEGIN OFFERING A MONTHLY STORY TIME PROGRAM - *Refuge Readings with Rae*

This past year, COVID-19 greatly impacted the in-person activities we could offer at the refuge and beyond. Both on-site and off-site environmental education programs were halted, on-site lectures had to be canceled or offered via remote platforms, and the Visitor Information Center remains mostly closed.

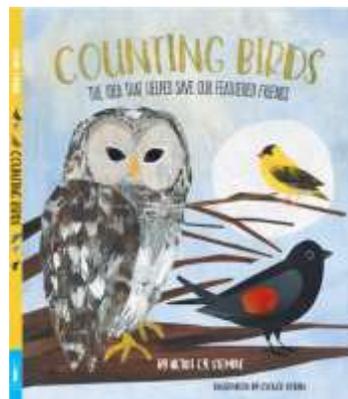
In an attempt to connect with visitors in the new virtual world, the Friends of Forsythe launched **Refuge Readings with Rae** in October to bring the beauty of the refuge along with high-quality children’s literature into your home. On the second Tuesday of each month, we will air a new reading of a specially selected children’s book, in keeping with monthly themes but always focused on nature and wildlife.

October’s book is ***Outside In***, by Deborah Underwood, in celebration of National Wildlife



Refuge Week, which was October 10– 17. November features ***Turtle’s Race with Beaver***, a retelling of a Seneca Indian tale by Joseph and James Bruchac in celebration of

Native American Heritage month.



In December, we will learn more about the origins of the Christmas bird count with ***Counting Birds: The Idea that Helped Save Our Feathered Friends*** by Heidi E.Y. Stemple.

These story readings will be available through Facebook, Instagram and on the Friends of Forsythe website, and will continue monthly through the spring and summer of 2021 and beyond. We hope you enjoy them!



WINNERS OF THE FRIENDS OF FORSYTHE 2020 PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION ARE ANNOUNCED

By Susan Puder

The Friends of Forsythe announced the winners of the 2020 Juried Photographic Competition on August 29. Due to the coronavirus, the competition was conducted as a virtual event with over 190 entries for the open category and 16 entries for students. Our judges, Kevin Karlson and Dale Rosselet evaluated all the entries, which was a difficult task, as all the photos were outstanding again this year.

After careful consideration, the **Open First Place Award went to Bob Boyd with “Hooded Mergansers”**.



For the Student Category, First Place was awarded to Gregory Fischer for “Rail Trail.”



We thank all who entered this year and the fine work done by our judges. Keep an eye open for the FOF 2021 Juried Photographic Competition coming next spring. So, get out there and take those award-winning photographs at E. B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.



THE AMAZING REFUGE RACE

By Keena Graham



On September 26th in celebration of **National Public Lands Day**, Edwin B. Forsythe NWR hosted its first photo scavenger hunt to introduce

visitors to different parts of the nearly 50,000-acre refuge that runs over 50 miles along the Jersey shore.



Prizes consisted of items that would help people to continue to live their outdoor lifestyles, such as camping gear, fishing poles and outdoor cooking.



Although the weather was rainy, 20 people took on the challenge and enjoyed traveling through the refuge with family and friends even if they didn't win. This event could not have happened without the hard work of our volunteers and the constant support from

the Friends of Forsythe NWR. We are sure to schedule more small events that adhere to the CDC's guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID-19.



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCH July 23, 2020

By Stephanie Sanchez

We could not miss the chance to thank our volunteers even in this crazy year! So instead of our usual in-



person luncheon, a "walk-through" party was arranged at the local Galloway deli - Bellino's Market. Keena reached out to all volunteers to give them a chance to sign up for their favorite sub, sides, and dessert in advance.

They then came over at their assigned times to pick them up and were welcomed by masked Refuge Staff and Friends of Forsythe Board members. Keena, Josh, and Sandy set up a charming red carpet with photo ops for this Hollywood-themed event. Volunteers were presented with well-earned swag-



filled goodie bags to show our appreciation for all the help they give to the Refuge. The take-out food was delicious and generous - mine lasted for days! Thank you Bellino's!



Special presentations were also made to **Sue Puder as Friends of Forsythe Friend of the Year**



and to **Nancy Lynch as Refuge Volunteer of the Year.**



Things had been closed down since March, so it was great to welcome and refreshing to see each other again over our masks and chat a little with safe social distancing. A good time was had by all!



HOLIDAY SHOPPING AT FORSYTHE

If you are looking for that unusual holiday or birthday gift for the bird watcher in your life, or just want to support Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, store items are available at the multi-purpose room at the Visitor Information Center at 800 Great Creek Road, Oceanville, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m



A variety of items are for sale, including hats, socks, t-shirts, sweatshirts, pocket field guides, magnets, earrings, bookmarks, totes, cups, and bookmarks.



All sales are through the Friends of Forsythe NWR organization and profits go towards our mission of providing support and services to the Refuge.



All visitors are required to wear a mask and follow social distancing as detailed by the CDC.

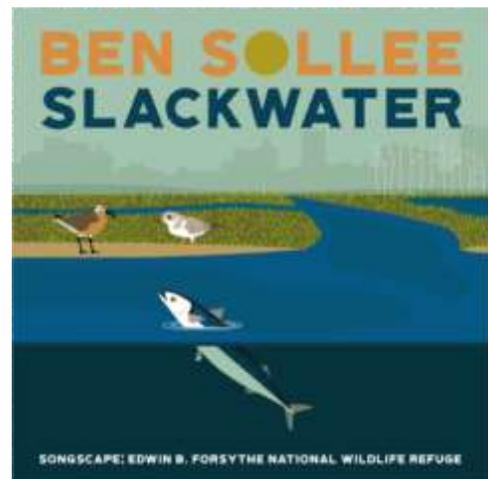
So, here's your one-stop shopping location for gifts or for yourself. If you find you cannot travel to shop in person, please visit our online store at:

<https://forsythe-nwr.myshopify.com/>



“SLACKWATER” AN ODE TO FORSYTHE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

From Sustain's Website



Two years ago, Ben Sollee with the organization Sustain, partnered with Forsythe NWR and the

Rutger's Marine Field Station to spend time inspired by the environs.

Sollee, a cellist and native of Kentucky, was immersed in all that the Great Bay has to offer- birding, kayaking, hiking, fishing, and more. We were also extremely fortunate to have partnered with the Rutgers University marine scientists! They accompanied Sollee on a research vessel to learn the ins and outs of the estuaries' fish, shellfish, and marine mammals. Sollee has turned those experiences into fodder for a new song, **Slackwater**, inspired by the refuge and the impacts of climate change.

Emmy Award-winning videographer, [Mallory Cunningham](#), created the music video. She is a longtime collaborator with Sollee, filming "Ditch the Van" about his cycle-powered tours.

Public lands are threatened by movements to privatize ownership and by dismal funding, which we hope to combat by exposing audiences to their grandeur. Songscales craft emotional connections between listeners and lands. By getting people to care about and value Forsythe NWR, we will help ensure its public land forever, as it was meant to be.

Sollee created this song as part of Sustain Music and Nature's Songscape program. Songscales pair bands with public land areas to create new music and new supporters for public lands. Purchase the song online to support the Friends of Forsythe NWR, Sustain, and Sollee.

https://sym.ffm.to/bensollee_slackwater

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<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofForsytheNWR/>