

# A Publication of the Friends of Forsythe

Spring 2021



TAKING ACTION THROUGH EDUCATION

## MESSAGE FROM YOUR FRIENDS' BOARD



### OPEN BOARD POSITIONS

Friends of Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge have openings for two new board members on their 12-member board. If you are passionate about nature, enjoy working with teams and want to use your skills to support the activities at the Refuge, a position on the Friends of Forsythe Board would be perfect for you!

Currently, the Friends of Forsythe provides environmental education programs to schools, manages the Nature Store, and greets visitors in the Visitor Information Center, runs weekly Jitney tours of Wildlife Drive, funds and oversees the Osprey cam on our website, and organizes and fundraises for other special events and projects to support the Refuge. In addition, we maintain a website, Facebook page, YouTube channel and Instagram account for sharing exciting aspects of the wildlife and Refuge with wider audiences. We also produce a quarterly newsletter for Friends members. If you have skills and interest in environmental education/interpretation, fundraising, marketing and communications or other relevant expertise in running a successful non-profit organization, we would love to talk with you further.

**Board Positions**, 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](mailto:friendsofforsythe@gmail.com) or go to <https://friendsofforsythe.org/>

Regular board meetings are typically held at 5 PM on the second Thursday of each month at the Forsythe Refuge Headquarters at 800 Great Creek Road in Oceanville, NJ. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are currently holding Board Meetings via Zoom. If you are interested in contributing your time and talents as a board member, please contact Nominating Committee member Stephanie Sanchez (973-713-1468, [ssanz@aol.com](mailto:ssanz@aol.com)). To learn more about the Friends of Forsythe, including our mission, please visit: [friendsofforsythe.org](http://friendsofforsythe.org)

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## GARDENING FOR WINTER

Whether snow is blanketing your yard, ice is hanging from the branches or it is just a cold quiet day, winter is an excellent time to evaluate your yard's ability to support wildlife. Even non-native annuals and shrubs can supply plenty of food in spring, summer and early fall. Winter is the real test of an area's effectiveness as a sustaining habitat.

Take a look around your yard, paying particular attention to shrubs and smaller trees. Are they only interesting in the spring or summer? If so, consider replacing some with more productive native shrubs. In a sunny location, winterberryholly (*Ilex veritcillata*) is known for its clusters of beautiful



red berries. Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*) is less showy, but the waxy berries are a staple of Yellow-Rumped Warblers, as well as many other common backyard birds. Bayberry's dense foliage makes for a wonderful shelter from the elements and predators.

If you have a bit more shade, consider native inkberry holly (*Ilex glabra*). This shrub is great for smaller areas as it doesn't mind pruning. It does best in damp, sandy soil. The small black berries are not as noticeable as red holly berries, but are eaten by several bird species as well as raccoon, rabbit and opossum. The small flowers are a source of nectar and pollen for native bees. And the dense leaves provide shelter for resting birds. American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana* L) is another shrub that can handle part shade and can be pruned annually. The small white to lavender flowers have a mildly sweet fragrance but the berries are the real showstopper. In mid-autumn the small clusters of berries turn purple, as the foliage goes from medium green to chartreuse to yellow. The berries are retained on the branches even after the leaves are long gone. Mockingbirds, catbirds, brown thrashers and many varieties of thrushes, as well as fox, opossum and raccoons rely on the berries through winter. Be aware, there are many non-native varieties of beautyberry available in big box stores. Stick to the native.

So, while you are curled up with the hot beverage of your choice, consider adding one or two of these shrubs to your garden for added winter interest. You can find all of these in the Native Garden at Forsythe (the beautyberry is still very small and not yet producing flowers). You can find more information on these and other native plants at <http://www.plants.usda.gov>

Patti Cassidy

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## THE NATURE STORE AND ONLINE SHOPPING

Apparel



Hats



Earrings

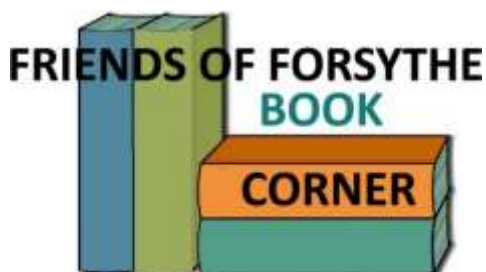


Tote Bags



If you are looking for that unusual 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, Fridays, and Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 2 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.

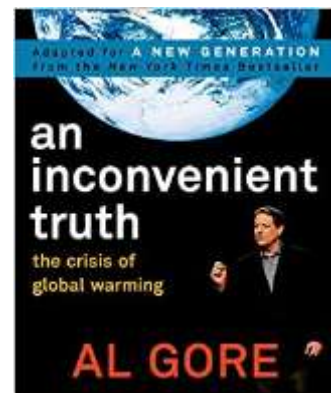
If you find you cannot travel to shop in person, please visit our online store at: <https://forsythenwr.myshopify.com/>



Like many of you, I've been cleaning out closets, sorting paperwork and photos, etc. to pass the time and accomplish something during the pandemic. While looking through my bookcases, I spotted ***An Inconvenient Truth*** by Al Gore and had the intention of skimming through it before donating. However, I have changed my mind and will be keeping it.

This book was published in 2006 and is as relevant today as it was then. If statistics from the

intervening years were added to the many charts and scientific data, it would be perfectly up to date. That, however, points out the heartbreaking aspect of this - none of the problems have been solved nor sufficient progress made over the past 15 years. Gore calls climate change a moral and spiritual crisis that should be made into a generational mission calling for bold action. The word "inconvenient" in the title stems from the fact that individuals in addition to powerful interests and corporations will be forced to change their ways of life and doing business to adapt to and slow the changes.



Though not a political book, Gore points out that environmental laws and regulations are strengthened during Democratic administrations and then weakened or repealed during Republican ones. Scattered throughout the book are pleasant sections on the history of his life and family. A lucky coincidence that was partially responsible for his life-long interest in the environment was that during college, Gore was a student of Professor Roger Ravelle. Ravelle was the first scientist to measure and make the world aware of the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in the 1950s.

In your hands, it is a beautiful book with impressive though often disturbing photographs, views from space, and very easy-to-understand charts and diagrams. I recall also that it was made into a documentary which I watched many years ago. All major components of the problem are covered including greenhouse gases, warming, and rising oceans, plastics, overpopulation, receding glaciers, shifting of the seasons with its effect on wildlife, etc. I'm sure the audience for this newsletter is well aware of them all. One

example that was new to me, however, was the story of Lake Chad in Africa.

This section explains that 40 years ago, Lake Chad was as big as Lake Erie. Now, due to declining rainfall caused by climate shift and ever-intensifying human use, it has shrunk to 1/20th of its original size. This has led to the collapse of human livelihoods and the creation of millions of climate refugees. This type of catastrophe is being replicated all over the world with the loss of rivers, water, ice, and permafrost which will lead to critical water shortages.

Near the end of the book, many suggestions were made as to how to fight this problem, most likely familiar to all of us. But there was one that was I had heard of but didn't really understand. That was the purchase of carbon offsets to counteract your personal carbon footprint. I looked up the suggested websites and found that they contained calculators to estimate your carbon footprint and then you donated an amount of money to "carbon"-reducing projects" around the world. Interesting.

If any of you have this book in your collection, I recommend you pull it out. It will serve as a reminder of any concepts that have become fuzzy or if you need a simple explanation to give to someone else. One of the last suggestions was that you support an environmental group. That's just what all of you are doing by being a good friend of the Forsythe NWR!

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## FORSYTHE BIG YEAR

For the last two years, Forsythe has put on a Big Year, a friendly competition to see who could see the most species of birds on refuge properties in a calendar year. In both 2019 and 2020, local bird enthusiast, Lester Block, was honored with that title. This past year, even amidst the pandemic, he observed 218 species of birds at different refuge sites. We are excited to be doing it again for 2021. All the rules and prize information can be found

below or at

<https://www.fws.gov/nwrs/threecolumn.aspx?id=6442451205>

### RULES:

- Species must be observed on EB Forsythe NWR between **January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021**
- All observations must be made from roads and trails open to public access. **NO ACCESS TO CLOSED AREAS IS PERMITTED AS A PART OF THIS COMPETITION.**
- Contest is based on the honor system. Be honest!
- You may track your species in any way. You may track your bird sightings on eBird, but that is not required.
- Submissions to compete for prizes must be made **January 1, 2022-January 8, 2022**
- Submissions, including NAME and PHONE NUMBER will be sent to: [forsythe@fws.gov](mailto:forsythe@fws.gov)

### FORSYTHE BIG NATURE YEAR PRIZES

(Prizes are donated from Friends of Forsythe (FOF))

#### Most bird species seen on EB Forsythe NWR (from a minimum of 3 different Townships)

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Name on trophy to be displayed at Visitor Information Center;  
Plaque; \$50 FOF gift card

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize \$30 FOF gift card

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize \$20 FOF gift card

#### Most bird species seen by youth 16 years and under

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Plaque; \$25 FOF gift card

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize \$20 FOF gift card

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize \$10 FOF gift card

**Please spread** the word, visit the refuge sites and keep track of all the different species of birds you are seeing during your visits. Maybe you will be the next winner and have your name engraved on this beautiful trophy that was generously donated by refuge supporters, Kristina & Brett Matteo.



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## THE OWL AND THE FALCON

By Susan Puder

I'm sure you've heard the tale of The Owl and the Pussycat by Edward Lear, but here's a tale of a Snowy Owl and a Peregrine Falcon. Most winters the E. B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge hosts several Snowy Owls, and this December a first-year female decided to visit the Wildlife Drive for a few days of respite. The day I visited the drive, her sojourn was interrupted by a Peregrine Falcon who didn't appreciate her being in his territory. A small crowd had formed to photograph and



view the owl sitting on the south dike tower, keeping a distance away as to not disturb her. After taking several dozen photos on an overcast gray cold

day, I was getting ready to pack it in, when all of sudden in comes a dive-bombing Peregrine. Now, the owl is 23" in length, wingspan of 52", and



weighs in at 4 pounds. The falcon, by contrast is 16" in length, with a wingspan of 41", and is a featherweight in comparison at 1.6 pounds. However, the Peregrine is the fastest animal on earth, with stoops (dives) at over 200 mph. And he was not happy with the visitor from the tundra.

On the other hand, the owl kept an eye on this pesky and loud neighbor, but



she felt pretty secure in her position and wasn't about to give in or even acknowledge this acrobat in the air. This went on for about 20 minutes before the falcon just gave up and took off. But he did provide us photographers with some of the best photo ops of a Peregrine ever. He would fly by low and then hover and call out to intimidate the owl, all to no effect. I later posted some photos, and saw that the falcon had been banded, and an observer wrote me that this one and the brother had been born on the Betsy Ross Bridge over the Delaware between NJ and Philadelphia, and they were now being seen in the Galloway area. Very cool. Moral of this tale, hanging around the Wildlife Drive can provide some great moments in nature. Take your time and enjoy.

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It is with a heavy heart we announce the passing of long time Forsythe volunteer **Evonne Kaminski**. Evonne was a lifelong gardener and



began working in our garden more than 20 years ago. She and a handful of other volunteers helped establish the plantings around the old administration building, filling it with many native plants. She was heavily involved in transplanting as many specimens as possible to the new VIC once construction was complete, and remained an ever-present worker in the new garden. A retired elementary school teacher, Evonne continued to learn all she could about gardening, particularly about native plants. She was part of the inaugural Atlantic County Master Gardener class, and faithfully attended the annual Woody Plant and Perennial Plant Conferences held at Swarthmore

College. Besides gardening, Evonne loved to talk about her family, especially her great-grandchildren, and was very active in her church. We will miss her smiling face in the garden.

Thursday mornings won't be the same without her.

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## VIDEO DISPLAY WALL COMING SOON!



The Friends of Forsythe are excited to announce an ambitious project to install a state-of-the-art multimedia video display in the entryway of the Visitor Information Center at 800 Great Creek Road in Oceanville, NJ. The organization has received a generous grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to fund 50% of the costs associated with the project.

The wall will consist of an impressive 98-inch ultra-HD monitor that can be divided or “tiled” into 4 simultaneous 46” displays. Complete with touch-screen control, the display will allow the Friends to showcase a combination of entertaining and informative content such as the live 24/7 Osprey Camera, footage from various trail-cameras (some including night vision!), upcoming events and news, recent refuge sightings from the E-Bird database, and more!

The organization has started a GoFundMe to help raise the other 50% of the project-cost. The goal is \$12,000 and can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/friends-of->

[forsythe-video-and-media-wall?utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_medium=copy\\_l ink&utm\\_campaign=p\\_cf+share-flow-1](https://www.gofundme.com/f/friends-of-forsythe-video-and-media-wall?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_l ink&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1)



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## 2021 JURIED PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION Celebrating the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge



Credit: Pat Steo

Details on Website Soon



**WILDLIFE LIKES US AT**  
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofForsytheNWR/>

## GOOD LUCK POINT PROJECT

### Salt marsh and shoreline management using dredge material



Edwin B. Forsythe  
National Wildlife Refuge

#### Salt marsh sediment placement in "waffle ponds"



E.B. Forsythe NWR in partnership with the NJ Dept. of Transportation recently completed a project that used dredge material to improve coastal habitats, with funding from the Department of Interior's Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resilience Program and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's National Coastal Resilience Fund.

Salt marshes in many parts of the state are showing signs of significant vegetation loss at their edges and also in the marsh interior. This is particularly true in the northern Barnegat Bay, where Good Luck Point is located.

We used silt from maintenance of nearby state-managed channels to reverse the development of "waffle ponds" that have expanded to occupy much of the former marsh area. The silt was used to raise elevations across approximately 5 acres so that vegetation can recover.

*The refuge's nearly 40,000 acres of salt marsh span three New Jersey Atlantic coast counties and provide habitat for hundreds of fish and wildlife species while sheltering both the natural and developed coastline from storms and wave action.*

Along the shoreline of Barnegat Bay, we used sandy material to nourish a 0.3 mile stretch of beach. Using sand in this way protects the marsh from erosion, since beaches can withstand the wave action from the open bay far better than salt marsh.

#### Shoreline sand-nourishment

