

# A Publication of the Friends of Forsythe

SPRING 2023



photo by Sue Puder

## The Return of the Osprey Camera!

At long last, after several seasons of troubleshooting aging and failing equipment, we are very happy to report that a brand new Osprey nesting platform and camera system were successfully installed off of the boardwalk by the Leeds Eco-Trail on Thursday March 2, 2023. Working with key partners and collaborators, we were able to completely replace the platform and camera set-up originally installed in 2013. Friends of Forsythe would like to extend our sincerest thanks to:

- Ben Wurst of Conserve Wildlife of New Jersey for the materials, construction and installation of the platform and all of his knowledge about Osprey.
- Jim Ginn for providing the two cameras, streaming services, infinite technological expertise and cupcakes!
- Dave Frederick and Taylor Schmidt for all their help getting all the heavy stuff out into the marsh!
- The Refuge maintenance staff, Roger, Shawn and Frank for taking down the old platform and hauling it out of the marsh!
- Derek Weikel and Matej Kosyk of You Need LED for their electronic expertise.
- Michele Danley for leading the project and coordinating all the moving parts.

Ospreys, 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/>

**Ospreys**, continued from page 1

- Chuck and Martha Becker and the Klem Family Foundation for their financial support of this project.

Keep up with the everything going on in the nest by watching the live stream at [www.friendsofforsythe.org](http://www.friendsofforsythe.org) or come see the live stream in full glory on our 96" Media Wall in the Visitor Information Center at the refuge in Oceanville!



Ben Wurst, Rae Griffiths and Dave Frederick carry the nest pole out to the site.



Dave Frederick, Taylor Schmidt and Ben Wurst (L to R) ready to install the platform!



## Annual Controlled Burn at Refuge



The annual controlled burn at the refuge was on March 9, which closed the refuge and the Visitors Information Center for the day. The purpose of the prescribed burns is to remove the invasive plants that outcompete native vegetation within the same landscape. Because the invasive plants we are trying to control are very aggressive, eradicating them is an ongoing process, which could take years to successfully complete.

The primary goal of the burn is to encourage native freshwater vegetation growing within the western portions of the West Pool, and to replace the invasive Chinese bush clover, spotted knapweed, and weeping love grass in the fields along the Wildlife Drive with native grasses and shrub growth. Native vegetation is more beneficial to wildlife than invasives in that native plants provide more diverse resources for food and natural cover.





## April is Coming, and so are Piping Plovers

The piping plover was listed as a protected species under the federal Endangered Species Act in



1986. Along the Atlantic Coast the species is designated as threatened, which means that the population will continue to decline if it is not protected. The piping plover has been State-listed as endangered in New Jersey since 1984.

The Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge has developed site-specific beach management plans in cooperation with local beach managers and the NJDEP to manage and protect the piping plover and other beach species, including at the Holgate and Little Beach units.

Piping plovers inhabit New Jersey beaches between March and August, arriving at their breeding grounds in late March through early April. Protection and management for the species involves a wide range of strategies including protective symbolic fencing, nest enclosures to deter predators, restrictions on off-road vehicles and recreational usage in nesting areas, and development of site-specific management plans.

Now the Friends of Forsythe has created a way for you to help protect and save the species by symbolically adopting a piping plover. When you 'adopt' a Piping Plover, you will receive an adoption kit with a plush Plover chick, a lapel pin, a piping plover sticker, a Forsythe NWR window sticker, information on plovers, a reusable Forsythe shopping bag, and an official Piping Plover Adoption Certificate. All this plus helping

the Refuge to monitor and protect nesting sites during the breeding season for only \$100! In addition, at the conclusion of the nesting season, you will receive via email a final summary report on how our population of plovers did over the summer.

The Piping Plover Adoption Kit is only available for purchase at the Nature Store in the Visitor's Information Center in Oceanville beginning April 1, 2023.



Please consider helping the refuge protect and save piping plovers for future generations by adopting one today.



## Forsythe Refuge Works with Atlantic City Boys & Girls Club

About 2 years ago the refuge began working to assess how we communicate with and engage our community. We sought feedback from partners in Atlantic County and identified some different ways to use our resources to focus on specific relationships. We are now about to begin our third summer camp with the Atlantic City Boys & Girls Club as well as our second summer camp with the AC Office of Multicultural Affairs, and just this week we started a new partnership with AC Office of Youth Services. These programs target older teens, middle schoolers, and kids in grammar school. These camps are just a few hours a week on the refuge, and we focus on teaching outdoor skills ranging from nature observation to planting native gardens to archery. While our overall environmental education program has been hard

for us to support due to poor staffing levels in visitor services, these targeted partnerships are working well. If you are interested in volunteering to help us implement programs, please contact Tracy Neal.

In addition to the camps, we are working with the Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program on a variety of habitat projects in Atlantic City. We have started a coalition of partners we've named the Atlantic City Open Space Group and we have 'adopted' Fisherman's Park (1<sup>st</sup> Ward) to redesign it to be more inviting and to include native plants that support pollinators and migratory birds. We are working with Atlantic County Institute of Technology students to develop a design that will be submitted to the city. Some funding has even been secured! Additionally, we are providing technical assistance to support vegetation choices in the city as construction projects occur and we have a great relationship with the Atlantic City Shade Tree Committee.

I'm thrilled about our progress and am looking forward to continued growth with our new partners. I especially appreciate the support we have from the Friends of Forsythe and their interest in continuing to engage with new audiences.



Refuge Manager Virginia Rettig looks for monarch butterfly caterpillars on milkweed with teens at the Atlantic City Boys & Girls Club



Kids show off their new garden at Sovereign Avenue School as a part of the AC Office of Multicultural Affairs Summer Camp



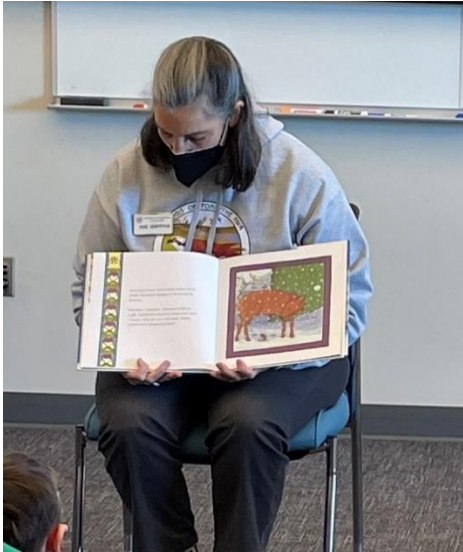
## Nature Story Hours Draw Young Visitors to the Refuge

2023 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Friends of Forsythe, and to help commemorate this milestone, Friend's Volunteer Rae Griffiths began a monthly Nature Story Hour on January 25<sup>th</sup>. The first program drew 23 visitors to the Visitor Information Center for cookies, hot chocolate and readings of some beloved nature-centered children's books. Children ages 1 to 10 years old came to enjoy readings of award-winning book Owl Moon by Jane Yolen and Rabbit's Gift told by George Shannon, a Chinese folktale in honor of the Lunar Year of the Rabbit.

On February 26<sup>th</sup>, nine friends came to enjoy warm apple cider and stories about snow, including the biography, Snowflake Bentley by Jacqueline Briggs Martin and The Snowy Nap by Jan Brett. On **Saturday March 25<sup>th</sup>**, Rae will read stories about Amphibians and on **Friday April 14<sup>th</sup>**, we will explore the world of reptiles. Nature Story Hours run from **10 -11 a.m.** in the Visitor Information Center (VIC) or outside if weather permits. Light refreshments are served, and the

program is FREE to the public, though any donations to the Friends are greatly appreciated.

March's story books will be The Salamander Room by Anne Mazur and The Frog House by Barbara Garrison. April's books will be Little Skink's Tail by Janet Halfmann and Turtle Splash: Countdown at the Pond by Cathryn Falwell. We hope you can join us; watch our website calendar for more to come this spring/summer!



## Jitney Tours

With warmer weather around the corner, we are looking forward to the spring bird migration. The Jitney tours will start back up on Saturday, March 18, 2023. They are scheduled every Saturday until June 24, 2023. There is a break during July and



August for greenhead fly season, but they may start up again in September. The tour will start in the Visitors Information Center (VIC) parking lot at 11:00 a.m. and return to the VIC at approximately at 1:00 p.m.

The Jitneys hold 12 people with access for one wheelchair. The tours include a naturalist interpreter on board that will talk about the history of Forsythe and help identify some of the birds along the drive. There are binoculars available to borrow for the tour if needed.

Sign up by calling 609-652-1665 between the hours of 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Wednesdays thru Sundays. The tours are provided free by Friends of Forsythe, but donations are greatly appreciated.



## HOFNOD Time!

By Susan Ricciardi  
Board Member, Friends of Forsythe

The days are getting longer, the daffodils are out...that means Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs will be here soon!

This event, regularly attended by 60 to 100 area children ages 5 to 12, is a hit at our own Patriot Lake here in Galloway Township. The Friends of Forsythe and our refuge staff work together for a successful event every year. This year, we are networking with the State of New Jersey and will be part of a larger contingent of lakes around the state taking part in the program.

Children will be able to learn different topics like responsible fishing, the environment, safety and much more from an array of booths. You can become part of this fishing derby by calling (609) 652-1665 and registering.

The event is June 3, 2023, from 9 a.m. to noon and is open to children ages 5 to 12. It is completely FREE!. Each child must be accompanied by an adult.

See you there!



Our monthly FRIENDS MEETINGS are  
the **SECOND MONDAY** of each month  
at the  
**EDWIN B. FORSYTHE NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
Administrative Building  
800 Great Creek Road  
Oceanville, NJ 08231

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## Fifth Annual Friends of Forsythe Photographic Competition

The Fifth Annual Friends of Forsythe Photographic Competition will begin accepting submissions on March 31 and run through to August 5, 2023. The rules and prospectus will be available on our website by late March. So, start getting those great images of E. B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge ready.

**Wildlife Likes us at**

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