

The Overlook

Summer 2006

Swallow Hollow Trail Reopened!

The Swallow Hollow Nature Trail was once again open for business on April 15, 2006 after five years of being closed to the public due to deficiencies. Approximately 340 people attended the opening ceremony in the Swallow Hollow Nature Trail parking lot. Over 1,000 people enjoyed the trail on the first weekend it was opened. And during the first month over 4,500 people walked the trail. What a great start!

Reopening the trail was taken on by the Friends of Iroquois NWR to assist the Refuge in getting this magnificent and very popular trail in Western NY, back open to the public - quite an undertaking by the newly formed group! Leveraged funding from different sources made this project proposal a reality. With the nature trail completed, the estimated total for the project is \$492,000. This total includes over 5,000 volunteer hours and other items donated to the project worth an estimated cost of \$112,500!

1,000 people walked trail the first weekend, 340 celebrated opening!

Friends Members were intricately involved with the trail rehab from start to finish including helping design the boardwalk and exhibit panels, gathering partners, fund raising, demolition of the old boardwalk, construction of new trails and being the liaison between the Refuge and contractor to keep construction activities moving forward.

The opening ceremony was enjoyed by all and Master of Ceremony, Carl Zenger, did a fabulous job interjecting planning, coordinating, and construction tidbits that kept the crowd entertained and connected all the speeches. Guest speakers for the opening ceremony included Morgan Jones and Carl Zenger, Friends of Iroquois NWR; Janet Day, Margaret L Wendt Foundation; Marilyn O'Connell, Wild Birds Unlimited; Steven Belk, Iroquois Job Corps Center; and Tony Leger, R5 Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System. The ceremony concluded with the donation of "biology equipment" to the Refuge from Ann Fournier, (a little something that she no longer needed in her kitchen and to help the declining Refuge budget). The "We Dedicate This Trail" declaration by the Reverend Cleveland was a crowd pleaser just before the ribbon was cut opening the trail.



There are many people to thank for making this project a success and getting the trail open for Refuge visitors to enjoy our nature resources and the Refuge's beauty. I would like to thank the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Wild Birds Unlimited, Iroquois NWR Staff, Refuge Volunteers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office Support Staff, Hadley, MA, Iroquois Job Corps Center, Wolfe Construction, Albion Elementary School, 5th Grade Class of 2005. Also thanks to those individuals that made the ceremony a success including Reverend Cleveland, Corfu-Pembroke Community Band, Pembroke Boy Scout Troop 64, Swallow Hollow Girl Scouts, Buffalo Audubon Society, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Above all, there is a group of folks that were dedicated, determined, and focused on getting this trail completed and it goes without saying that this is one project that we could not have completed without A LOT of help from our Friends! Thank you all!!

*Thomas Roster,
Refuge Manager*

Wildlife Update

As spring starts to fade into summer waterfowl migration through Iroquois NWR is nearing its end. Most of the ducks and geese that don't nest here have flown off to their northern breeding grounds fuelled by energy from the food they consumed while spending a few days or weeks at the Refuge. Local breeders like the many Canada geese that nest here are already seeing the results of their nesting efforts. Most goose broods have hatched and can be seen feeding in the grass near Refuge wetlands or swimming around the marshes in search of vegetation or insects.

As most of the migrant waterfowl leave by early May, many of the migrant songbirds just begin to arrive at the Refuge. Feeding primarily on insects, songbirds like vireos and warblers wait until most of the cold weather has past before they stop by the Refuge to refuel or start to nest. Their long migration from areas as far as South America and their small size mean that they arrive at Iroquois with very little fat reserve. They can't afford to get here too early because a severe snowstorm could eliminate their food supply and have fatal results. Fortunately, it looks as though we won't be seeing any snow for several months.

This is a great time of year to visit the Refuge and spend some time exercising your bird identification skills. Swallow Hollow and Kanyoo trails are both great spots to look for songbirds. Early in the morning is the best time to search, but some birds are active all day and should allow you at least a glimpse into their daily routine.

No visit to the Refuge is complete without a look at the bald eagle's nest in Cayuga Pool. This year the Cayuga nest contains one eaglet that was hatched in late April. The nest in Mohawk Pool has three eaglets, but is not viewable from any public viewing area. The third eagle nest in the area is in Windmill Marsh on Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area. That nest contains 3 eaglets and is viewable from the observation area on Albion Road. Stop by the Refuge Office on Casey Road for directions or to get an update on eagles or anything else happening on the Refuge.

*Paul Hess
Refuge Biologist*



While you can't see the gander in this photo, he is nearby! Once the goslings hatch both parents raise them and the family stays together for one full year. The following year the same pair will likely breed again and raise a new brood.



The yellow-rumped warbler has the widest breeding distribution of any North American warbler and can be found any place there is a forest. The female lays 4-5 eggs in a cup nest, often nesting twice a year. Yellow rumps eat primarily insects and some fruit in the winter.

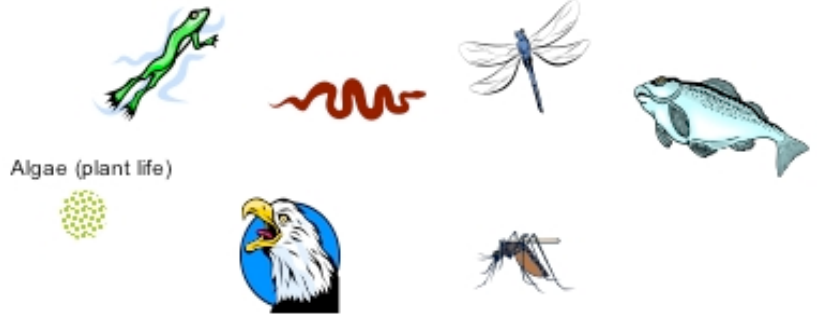


Not exactly take-home-cuddly-cute but eaglets are well taken care of by the male and female bald eagles. They are fed a steady diet of fish with an occasional bird. The adults capture and tear fish (or bird) into small strips offering food to the eaglets. The eaglets snatch the food and swallow it whole. Precious!

And Now for Something Fun!

Wildlife Food Web

A **food web** shows how each living thing gets its food. Some animals eat plants and some animals eat other animals. Each link in this web is food for the next link. A food web starts with plant life and ends with an animal. Draw a line from the critter that will be eaten to the critter that will eat it. Some critters may have more than one link to them. Decide which animal will be the top of the food chain. **Answers on page 5.**



ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

The Adopt-A-Highway trash pick-up on Route 63 was conducted on March 30, 2006. The section that the Friends of Iroquois NWR is responsible for starts just north of Roberts Road and runs for 3.2 miles north on both sides of the road to Dunlop/Fletcher-Chapel Roads. We did not do this section last year due to the intense focus on the Swallow Hollow project. Thirty-six bags of trash were picked up plus several car tires, various car parts and miscellaneous metal and plastic pieces! Many thanks to Nancy Chenoweth, Dorothy Gerhart, Jeff Graves, Lucas Roggen, Al Nice, Bob Schmidt, Charles Silvermail, Don Swanson and Carl Zenger. Special thanks goes to Carl and Bob who coordinated the day's activity. Friends of INWR sponsored a refreshing lunch break. Thanks to Phyllis Zenger for preparing a lunch enjoyed by all. Thanks also to Doug Domedion for his encouragement and articles in the paper asking for help and reporting the results. Already there is litter showing up along this section of Route 63. **We will be holding another pick up day this fall so if you would like to help support the Friends and the Refuge in this way call Dorothy at the Refuge (585-948-5445 Ext.200) so you can be included in the next pick up day!**

Spring Bluebird Update by Carl Zenger



The spring of 2006 has started off fairly well as far as bluebird nesting activity. To date we have had seven nesting attempts. A nesting attempt is when a female builds a nest and lays at least one egg. These have occurred in the traditional locations on the Refuge.

There have been some setbacks that are a bit discouraging. One nest of five eggs was depredated by house sparrows. All the eggs were punctured and left in the nest. Another nest of five chicks was also depredated by house sparrows and two chicks were killed in the nest. This supports the belief that an active house sparrow control program is necessary if bluebirds are to reproduce successfully. A third nest has had four of the five chicks die in the nest. This may have been due to the cold rainy weather in mid to late May. On the positive side there is a second nest completed by a pair of bluebirds that successfully fledged their first clutch of five chicks. Thus far there are eight young bluebirds fledged. We will need some good luck and a reversal of our recent occurrences if we hope to beat last years total of 34 bluebirds fledged. Of course the Tree Swallows are doing well. There are several nests with eggs but none have hatched at this time.

Carl Zenger is Vice President of the NYS Bluebird Society and has been a volunteer at the Refuge for more than eight years. Carl is a board member of the Friends of Iroquois NWR.



Bluebirds construct a cup nest inside a box or cavity. This photo shows 4-day old nestlings. Later on they do not gape during nest checks – they pretend to be dead or appear to be asleep.

Hello... Friends!

Thanks to everyone (that I've met so far) for the warm welcome I received my first week at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. I look forward to meeting the volunteer and friends group members as the opportunity presents itself. So as not to start on a completely blank slate, I would like to give a little information about myself.

I received my Bachelor of Science from Colorado State University in Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism, concentration in Parks and Protected Area Management, and a minor in Fishery Biology. I started with the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia Beach, VA as a college student. After graduation I transferred to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Chincoteague, VA. At Chincoteague I worked as an Outdoor Recreation Planner and then a Refuge Operations Specialist. I am very fortunate to have been offered the position here at Iroquois NWR as the Supervisory Wildlife Refuge Specialist, and look forward to all of the prospects the job and surrounding area has to offer.

The recreational prospects within this area are extremely enticing as winter sports have been void in my life for the past four years. Having the ability to snow shoe, ski, hike, and fly-fish is wonderfully appealing. As time allows, I actively pursue traveling and am delighted to be in such close vicinity to numerous airports. If you have a place to recommend visiting or great fly-fishing spot, feel free to stop by and let me know. To find me, ask for the boiler room...I'm just across the hall!

Kelly Chase, Supervisory Wildlife Refuge Specialist



The Refuge it is a Changing....

Thomas P. Roster, Refuge Manager



Those folks that have visited or talked with Refuge staff in the last several months have probably seen or heard the changes that have been taking place around the Refuge. Hopefully most folks will think that they are good changes!

The Flyway Store has been greatly enhanced with new display racks and sales items that offer something for everyone. Thanks Krys and Nancy! Also Friends Members now have a "space to call their own" for inventory, records, and doing that Friends stuff that Friends need to do. Hopefully they don't mind being in the basement!

The Iroquois Job Corps Center has been very active on the Refuge this past year. After assisting in the completion of the Swallow Hollow Nature Trail last year, we figured rehabbing the Kanyoo Nature Trail Boardwalk would be a piece of cake for them. And it was! The boardwalk is open again and was constructed in similar fashion as the Swallow Hollow boardwalk. We are already lining up other projects for the Job Corps Center to assist us with. Stay tuned for more next time!

Iroquois NWR has recently been complexed with Erie NWR. What does this mean? Well, it means that I now spend a little more time on the road overseeing the management of a second Refuge. Erie NWR is located in Guys Mills, Pennsylvania about 3 hours from Iroquois. There are currently 5 permanent employees. Erie NWR is comprised of 8,800 acres of woodland, riparian, marshes, grasslands and croplands. A lot of the management and issues are similar to Iroquois Refuge. We were complexed together to help get through a time of declining budgets. Complexing is happening within Region 5 and other Service Regions.

Complexing with Erie NWR paved the way for an assistant here at Iroquois NWR. Kelly Chase, Supervisory Wildlife Refuge Specialist, joined us on May 14th from Chincoteague NWR. Kelly will help run the day-to-day activities of the Iroquois Refuge and Deputy Refuge Manager Patty Nagel will assist at Erie NWR.

2006 Spring into Nature Celebration!

Almost 1,400 people attended the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge's Spring into Nature Celebration on April 29, 2006 and enjoyed family fun activities, live birds, conservation related exhibits, performances by Native American Dancers, and much, much, more!

A variety of kid's activities were offered with many participants including: Pond Life – 197; face painting – 179; bird mobiles – 127; animal track rubbing – 118; WINGO (wildlife version of bingo) – 266 and spatter paintings - 150. In addition the Buffalo Audubon Society had spotting scopes set on an eagle nest at Cayuga Overlook, which recorded 124 people. Students from the Iroquois Job Corps Center staffed a booth where 85 kids made and took home a blue bird nest box, nesting platform, or bat house.

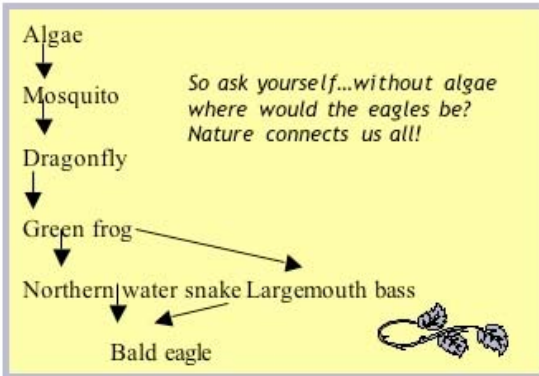


Exhibitors included: Doug Domedion – wildlife photography; Ron Pastor – fly tying; the Niagara Co. Chapter of the NYS Trappers Association; NYS Parks; Stanley Vanderlaan – native American artifacts; The Tonawanda Reservation Historical Society; NYS Bluebird Society; Ducks Unlimited; Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners – landscaping for wildlife; Bob Dieterle – Wildwood art works (chainsaw art); a frontiersman encampment and the Friend of Lower Great Lakes Fisheries Resources Office.

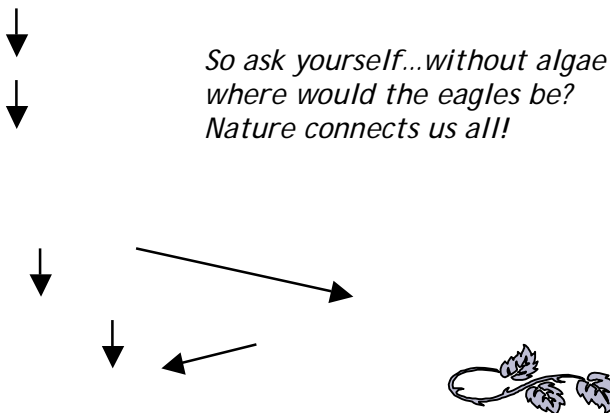
The Lower Great Lakes Fisheries Resources Office displayed their electro-shocking boat, Paul Schnell brought Liberty the bald eagle; and the Lake Plains Waterfowl Association held retriever demonstrations. Many enjoyed the traditional Native American dances performed by the Buffalo Creek Dancers.

Hamburgers/hot dogs and pastry goods were available through the Shelby Volunteer Fire Company and United Methodist Church of Alabama. The Friends INWR sponsored the event. Partners included the Refuge, Buffalo Audubon Society and the Iroquois Job Corps Center.

Answer to Wildlife Food

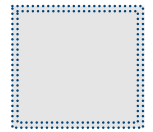


Answer to Wildlife Food



Thanks again to the Medina Garden Gals for their hard work in the spring-cleaning of the INWR Butterfly Garden. Two new shrubs were planted, lilac and a Rose of Sharon.





FRIEND'S NAME
STREET ADDRESS
CITY, STATE 00000

A Species Lost?

The last recorded observation of the Showy Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) on Iroquois NWR was in 1988. Almost two decades have gone by since anyone has reported seeing this beautiful flower. When I moved here several years ago and discovered it on the Refuge plant list I wanted to find it. Wild orchids are a passion of mine in spite of the difficulty that often surrounds them. Native orchids are rare, often growing solitary or in small clumps and located in part of the forest or swamp most would rather not venture. To make it more difficult many of them bloom during peak black fly and mosquito season. A wild orchid hunt typically begins with excitement and anticipation,



Sheila Hess is a biologist for Ducks Unlimited and a board member of the Friends of Iroquois NWR.

and all too often ends with sweaty disappointment and multiple bug bites. I haven't found this flower, but I haven't given up! While I've had several years to look for it a combination of circumstances (two small children) has resulted in only a single attempt. This year I try again! The last known location for this flower is now choked with invasive species including honeysuckle – a well-known nemesis of our native wildflowers. Orchids are especially vulnerable to habitat loss, degradation and the introduction of exotic/invasive species. Has this happened to the Showy Orchis at Iroquois or will I find it this year? Stay tuned!

Friends of Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge Membership

Please renew/establish a one-year membership for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Membership Levels:

Individual	\$15
Family	\$25
Raccoon	\$50
Red Fox	\$75
Bluebird	\$100
Heron	\$200
Bald Eagle	\$500

Contributions are tax deductible

Be a Friend!

Send check, payable to Friends of Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, to: 1101 Casey Road, Basom, NY 14013