



The Overlook

Summer 2009

FINWR Board of Directors

Officers

- * Peter Warn (Board Chair)
- * Peter Gold (President)
- * Ann Fournier (Vice Pres)
- * Chuck Fournier (Treasurer)
- * Helen Freitag (Membership secretary)

Board Members

- * Bill Bixler
- * Nancy Chenoweth
- * Skip Draper
- * Krys Elam
- * Bob Hazen
- * JoAnne Jackson
- * Sandra Madjeski
- * Gerry Rising
- * Gail Seamans
- * Peter Warn
- * Bonnie Woodward
- * Matt Worth
- * Carl Zenger

FINWR Staff

- * Thomas Roster
Refuge Manager
- * Richard Pawlikowski
Admin Support Assistant
- * Dawn Washington
Refuge Biologist
- * Dorothy Gerhart
Visitor Services Manager
- * Ira McCoy
Automotive Mechanic

Iroquois Observations 2009

The Buffalo Audubon Society concluded its 2009 spring season of “Iroquois Observations”, a series of free nature programs, on Saturday, June 20. During the season scheduled programs included: bald eagle watches, owl prowls, woodcock walks, nature walks and canoe treks. Themed birding field trips focused on waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, and secretive birds of the marsh. Guest speakers covered subjects including Nature Sketching, Breeding Birds Surveys, Bald Eagles, Skulls and Bones, and Hummingbirds. At the bald eagle watch, knowledgeable volunteers were on hand with spotting scopes at Cayuga Overlook to help visitors view one of the two active bald eagle nests on the refuge as well as other birds on the marsh. Programs ran each weekend through May 9. After a break, the season finale was a special evening program on June 20. Unfortunately due to rain, outdoor activities including *Bugs by Nightlight* and stargazing had to be canceled; however, twenty-six people enjoyed a talk entitled *Owls of the Night*.

This marks the 6th year for “Iroquois Observations” and a successful and growing partnership with the Buffalo Audubon Society whose volunteers contributed almost 900 hours to plan and present these quality programs which the refuge would not otherwise be able to offer.

IO will return on August 28 for a special “End of Summer Birds” field trip before the fall programs on September 26, October 4 and October 24.

IO is a valuable partner for presenting quality nature programs at the refuge to give our visitors ways to enjoy the outdoors and develop a stewardship for nature. If you are interested in helping out by coordinating or presenting a program please contact refuge staff at 585-948-5445 or Garner Light at 716-772-5110.

Online Information for Hunters

A new National Wildlife Refuge System interactive Web site, Your Guide to Hunting on National Wildlife Refuges (<http://www.fws.gov/refuges/hunting/>), lets hunters search by game species (for example, deer, waterfowl, big game), zip code and special needs or interests (youth, universally accessible) – or any combination of those requirements – to find a refuge that has what they’re after. You can also search by refuge name or state name.

Hunting, within specified limits, is permitted on more than 300 national wildlife refuges. Of these, 43 – including Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in Maryland and Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona – offer accessible turkey hunting; 97 refuges offer youth hunts.

(continued on page 3)

Dear Friends of Iroquois,

Iroquois NWR depends upon volunteers to provide programs and assume tasks that the refuge cannot undertake. Friends and other groups are active supporters of Iroquois and refuges around the USA. This message focuses on the contributions that helped to bring more than 40,000 visitors to Iroquois last year.

The **Canisius Ambassadors of Conservation (CAC)** are students from Canisius College offering environmental/conservation education at Iroquois for middle-school students. Professor Michael Noonan and the CAC deserve our thanks for introducing Iroquois to students, teachers, and families that would otherwise not have visited the refuge. This year, 8 Canisius College students offered more than 30 busloads of students a day of wetlands education and bird watching on Swallow Hollow, and environmental games at Headquarters. **More than 2,300 students and their teachers were served during May and June.** Students who have never been on a nature trail are inspired to learn more and return with their parents. Canisius College helps to support the program and Friends of Iroquois helps financially with the busing and, of course, helped to fund their 'outdoor classroom' - the Swallow Hollow Trail.

Iroquois Observations - a branch of the Buffalo Audubon Society - makes the refuge a welcoming place to learn about natural history. Dozens of volunteers offer the very popular scope watch, owl prowl, canoe trips, eagle watches, and other natural history programs in spring and fall. IO deserves our thanks for attracting more than 2,000 participants to the refuge with its popular programs and its generous volunteers.

The Job Corps (located on the refuge) assists with **Spring Into Nature** and other refuge projects including major assistance with the rebuilding of Swallow Hollow.

The **Lake Plains Waterfowl Association** (with contributions from the **Finger Lakes and Western New York Waterfowl Association**) conducted the youth waterfowl hunt and assisted with trail maintenance. The **Wild Turkey Federation** also provided hunting instruction.

Others have helped as well. All deserve our thanks.

And, we owe special thanks to the virtually full-time volunteers, **Carl Zenger** and **Bob Schmidt** who have each contributed **more than 10,000 hours to the refuge!**

Peter Gold

Upcoming Events

August 20	10 am - 2 pm	Semi-Annual Volunteer Meeting and Picnic
August 29	9 am - 11 am	End of Summer Birds Field Trip. Meet at Kanyoo Trail
September 26	1 pm - 3 pm	Tree ID Walk. Meet at Kanyoo Trail
September 26	TBA	Bears
October 1-31	9 am - 5 pm	Refuge Office open on weekends
October 1		Small Game Hunting Begins
October 4	9 am - 1 pm	Canoe Trek. Meet at Knowlesville Road Bridge (bring your own canoe)
October 11-17		National Wildlife Refuge Week—Let's Go Outside
October 17	9 am - 3 pm	Youth Waterfowl Hunt Orientation (tent)
October 24	7 pm - 9 pm	Owl Prowl. Pre-registration required. Meet at Refuge Office
October 24		Opening Day of Waterfowl Hunting Season (tent)



Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Opportunities List

Summer/Fall

(updated 07/16/09)

■ Outdoor /Biological

Waterfowl Hunt Stands – clear and mark trails to hunt stands in preparation for waterfowl hunt

When: September-October

Event/Program: Waterfowl Hunt

Contact: Dawn Washington, 585-948-5445 ext 208, Dawn_Washington@fws.gov

Butterfly Garden - dead head plants, weed, get garden ready for winter

When: September-October

Event/Program: Maintenance

Contact: Dorothy Gerhart, 585-948-5445 ext 200

Off-site Programs

Conservation Field Days – staff a learning station and present 15 minute talks to groups of 5th graders in Monroe County

When: September 22, 23

Event/Program: Visitor Services

Contact: Dorothy Gerhart, 585-948-5445 ext. 200

■ Maintenance

Maintain Trails / Overlooks – pick up downed branches and litter, mow around parking bumpers, report any major problems to refuge staff

When: Ongoing

Event/Program: Visitor Services, Maintenance

Contact: Dorothy Gerhart, 585-948-5445 ext. 200

Office Volunteers

Clerical Assistance – typing, filing, photocopying, and/or compiling volunteer hours from monthly reports. Knowledge of MS Word helpful.

When: Ongoing

Event/Program: Administration, Volunteer Program

Contact: Dorothy Gerhart or Tom Roster, 585-948-5445 ext. 200

Graphic Artist – create artwork utilizing graphics software to be used for refuge publications

When: Ongoing

Event/Program: Biological, Visitor Use

Contact: Dawn Washington, 585-948-5445 ext. 208, Dawn_Washington@fws.gov

Online Info for Hunters... continued from page 1

Refuge hunts are carefully managed to give hunters a quality experience according to four guiding principles: 1) to manage wildlife populations consistent with approved management plans, 2) to promote visitor understanding and appreciation for America's natural wildlife resources, 3) to provide quality recreational and educational experiences and 4) to minimize conflicts with visitors participating in other wildlife-dependent recreational activities.

The Web site also offers tips to hunters planning to visit a national wildlife refuge, information on archery hunting, and special stories about hunting in Alaska and becoming a more effective waterfowl hunter, among other elements. The Web site also provides information about state hunting licenses.

Even a Marsh Has Its Ups and Downs

Student Conservation Association interns, **Raven Hardy** and **Phillip Tau**, have taken on the task of measuring the depth and contour lines of Oneida Pool, a 770 acre impoundment. The fancy name for this endeavor is “**Bathymetry**”. Commonly this type of study is used for ocean terrain using echosounder or sonar to map the hills and valleys under water. On the refuge we neither have nor need such sophisticated equipment. A meter stick (to stick in the mud), a GPS unit (to record the location of each measurement), pencil and paper (to write down the information) and good pair of boots (to keep the feet dry) will do. In addition to the water levels, Raven and Phillip also recorded the type of plants growing at each point. Step two is getting the information into the computer. The GPS information can be downloaded directly to a computer but the “veg data” must be entered manually, point by point. We are talking hundreds of not thousands of points. Ultimately, this information will be converted into a computer generated contour map.

Why, you may ask would someone spend their summer trudging through water, rain or shine, to do this? Because it’s there? Because nobody else has done it before? Well, yes, but more than that, the information will help biologists, today and in the future, to manage the marshes to better benefit wildlife. Up to now, management has been based on limited information. If you have been out on the refuge you have probably seen those giant measuring sticks protruding out of the water. These tell us what the water level is at that particular point. The question is, what about the rest of the impoundment? The purpose of the bathymetry study is to show where high points and drop offs are throughout the pool resulting in some parts being shallower and others deeper than the level indicated by the marker. It may not seem like much but this slight variation can be critical in the survival of some plants and animals and can affect the overall condition of the marsh for wildlife.

They have been at it most of the summer but the work should be finished by mid August. Great Job! That’s one down and 14 more impoundments to go.

Raven Hardy



Garner Light Received Audubon’s Distinguished Service Award



Garner Light was presented with the 2009 Sheldon E. Merritt Distinguished Service Award at the Buffalo Audubon Society’s annual dinner on May 6 in recognition of his dedicated service to Audubon programs, in particular *Iroquois Observations!*

This public program highlights the ecological significance of the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and adjoining state lands through field trips and other activities on Saturdays during spring and fall migration.

Garner has been the life blood of *IO!*, raising funds and tenaciously leading a small group of devoted volunteers to plan and present a diversity of activities. Garner’s steady hand and dedication have been a key ingredient in *IO!*’s success. As a result of his efforts, thousands of people have shared in and enjoyed the nature learning experience at the refuge.

Tom Roster, INWR Manager, noted that Garner has been instrumental in keeping every aspect of *IO!* going forward by developing programs, scheduling volunteers, recruiting new volunteers, working with the refuge and annually making the program a successful endeavor. Garner’s positive attitude, ability to work with a diversity of partners and volunteers, and generosity has significantly helped the refuge truly connect people with nature.

Congratulations Garner!

“I Love What I Do”

By Greg Siekaniec
Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System

Some weeks ago, I received a letter - handwritten, in pencil - from a youngster in Florida. “To Whom It May Concern” it was addressed, and then went on to say, “I would like to request the free booklet about endangered species and wildlife refuges. I’m extremely interested in wildlife.”

And the letter concluded, “I have also added 25 cents to pay for shipping and handling.” A quarter fell out of the envelope.

I hope that Cassandra’s sentiment is that of America’s youth. I know we’re working hard to interest youngsters in wildlife so they not only engage in wildlife conservation, but they one day also join us in our effort to conserve the wild places we are so passionate about.

Cassandra’s letter arrived just after I returned from an international mission to Russia. There, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to provide technical assistance. Through its rapidly growing friends movement, Russia is working to motivate its own citizens to become much more engaged in wildlife reserves and environmental issues.

And if those images aren’t enough, let me tell you about Bill Gates - wildlife biologist at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama. He’s working on gray bat recovery in what is almost the epicenter of such work, wearing a hat and hooded rain jacket and being pelted by guano while he gathers samples from Fern, Sauta, Key and Cave Springs Refuges — all Priority 1 caves for gray bat recovery. His friends think he’s crazy for working with bats, but Bill explains, “Recovering a rare species is always rewarding.”

What do all of these images have in common? Dedication, passion, selflessness, an enduring sense of wonder about our natural resources. Sure, all those apply. But there’s one quality - even more - that marks the people who work for, and work with, the National Wildlife Refuge System. That’s an understanding of what’s really important in life.

Some weeks ago, Edwin Drummond - called Drum by all who knew him - retired after 60 years of working at Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma. He was 81 when he retired, having lived all of his life on the refuge where his father was on the maintenance staff - a position that Drum took up.

When someone asked him some years ago why he was still working, Drum - never a talkative fellow - put it simply: “I like what I do. And what I do is important.”

Cassandra from Florida knows that. So does Bill Gates at Wheeler Refuge. So does the delegation we met in Russia. Now it’s our job - our mission - to engage our constituents in such a way that they know and feel that what we do is important. I am glad you are joining me in that mission.



The Friends of Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Inc has created a special (and very private) place on the world wide web for **FINWR Members ONLY**. An e-mail went out at the end of May inviting members who have shared their e-mail address with us. If you did not receive the e-mail, and would like to join this online discussion group, just point your web browser to <http://groups.google.com/group/finwr> and apply for group membership. If you are a current member of FINWR, you will be approved quickly.

Members can use this new service to discuss any issue important to them in regards to the wildlife refuge. If you have any concerns about this service, or just need a little tech support for using it, contact Bob Hazen at robertjhazen@verizon.net

Attention FINWR Members: If you would prefer to get your newsletter online from our website, it would help us save on printing/ mailing costs. Just e-mail Ann Fournier at afournier@yahoo.com to let her know.

THE OVERLOOK NEWSLETTER

**Friends of Iroquois
National Wildlife Refuge
1101 Casey Road
Basom, NY 14013**



FRIEND'S NAME
STREET ADDRESS
CITY, STATE 00000



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
Double Eagle	\$1,000

Be a Friend!

Contributions are tax deductible

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