



The Overlook

www.friendsofiroquoisnwr.org

Winter 2010-11

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Beat The Winter Blues!

It appears that winter is determined to keep Iroquois covered by a blanket of white snow indefinitely! It seems like months since the last flocks of ducks and geese departed before their watery roosts became ice-covered and it will likely be months before they return to find open water once again. In the mean time, we are left staring at a very white, but very beautiful, winter landscape.

Fortunately for Refuge visitors, winter can be a great time to get out and enjoy nature. For those looking for scenic beauty and a little exercise, cross-country skiing is enjoyable along the Refuge's 7.5 mile Mohawk Ski Trail. Those interested in snow-shoeing can get out on Kanyoo, Onondaga or Swallow Hollow Trails. If you prefer to get your exercise in hiking boots, these trails are still great places to visit. Be sure to watch your step; they can be slippery as the snow gets packed down.

If you are a birder, winter provides an excellent opportunity to get a closer look at some of the species you may have overlooked when all those spring migrant warblers were stealing the limelight. Birds like chickadees, cardinals and blue jays have learned to find food in harsh winter conditions long after their migrating cousins are enjoying the winter months in the tropics. Many birds will switch from eating insects to fruits and berries to get through the winter. Others will rely on food caches of nuts and seeds they have hidden away in the bark of trees or tree cavities. Many will visit bird feeders at local residences to add to their daily diet. No matter how they find their food, winter birds are always a treat to watch and many species, like tree sparrows and redpolls, are only here in winter, so you will need to put on your hat and gloves if you want to encounter them.

Our furry mammal friends remain active throughout the winter as well. Deer are often seen at dusk and dawn looking for a meal in harvested grain fields adjacent to the Refuge or perhaps digging through the snow beneath one of the many apple trees scattered around the Refuge. Muskrats can occasionally be seen sitting on the ice adjacent to open water areas, munching on a piece of last year's cattail. Other species like foxes and otters are less likely to be seen, but the tracks they leave behind are usually

viewable until they are covered by the next snowfall. It is almost as exciting to see where a fox or otter has been as it is to actually see one! Look for mammals or their tracks wherever you happen to be on the Refuge. Many species like deer and fox enjoy using the same nature trails that you do.

The human inhabitants of the Refuge (at least from 7:30am to 4:00pm) are busy writing reports from last year's activities, planning for the upcoming field season and maintaining all the equipment that will be needed to do the job of protecting and managing fish and wildlife. These cold winter months offer a much needed incentive to stay indoors and plan activities including the **Spring into Nature Annual Event**, the **Fishing Derby**, **Canisius Ambassadors for Conservation** programs, habitat management, wildlife surveys, etc. Volunteers remain active despite the icy conditions. Winter volunteer activities include maintaining nesting structures and preparing materials for kid's projects at this year's Spring into Nature event.

Winter is full of recreation opportunities at Iroquois. Resident wildlife offer the chance for an interesting encounter and the Refuge nature trails provide scenic locations for wildlife viewing and exercise alike. If you prefer to get your exercise through a little hard work, consider becoming a Refuge volunteer. There are always a variety of projects happening where volunteers are welcome. No matter what your reason for visiting, stop by the Refuge office and gather some information to make your visit more enjoyable and then get out and enjoy your National Wildlife Refuge.

More information can be found on the Refuge's web site <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/iroquois/>

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.

SPRING INTO NATURE 2011

In a few short months it will be spring again and that means Spring Into Nature 2011. **The event will be on Saturday, April 30 from 9 am - 4 pm** -- a week later than years past due to the Easter holiday falling on the 24th. If you were involved last year you know how much time and effort goes into this event to make it a success. Our 2011 planning committee met for the first time in January to discuss which activities to offer and develop a list of exhibitors to invite. Many of the exhibitors from last year have already been sent invitation letters. We discussed some new activities for 2011 and will be bringing back some from last year as well. During the planning meeting for IO programs it was suggested that **bald eagles be this year's Spring into Nature theme** so we have adopted that theme.

We rely heavily on volunteers for this event so expect to get a call from a committee member asking how you can contribute. If you are not on our volunteer list and would like to help out please let us know! There are many ways you can help including staffing an activity table, helping with set up, staffing the Flyway Nature Store, parking control, and staffing the visitor contact station to greet people. These are just a few of many possibilities. Watch the mail or email for updates.

Once again, our official sponsors will be the **Friends of Iroquois NWR** in partnership with the **Buffalo Audubon Society**, the **Iroquois Job Corps Center** and the **New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation**. Hope to see you there!



Members and Friends,

The Iroquois Wildlife Refuge is beautiful in its mantle of white. It really is a photographers delight. It's a bright new year in which to celebrate the awesome attractions of the widely variable seasons in the setting of the Refuge that mother nature has made for us. And it is not exactly all passive.

Which leads me to say that the Photo Contest sponsored by the "*Friends*" group and the '*Iroquois Observations*' group are welcoming entries. Guidance for photographic submissions can be found in our website -- www.friendsofiroquoisnwr.org -- that's 'friends of iroquois nwr.org.'

The Refuge Staff has spent considerable time and effort in developing the new Comprehensive Conservation Plan - the CCP. The Staff is in the final stages of editing the sizeable document, as it is to become the guiding light for management of the Refuge in the coming 15 to 20 years. It can be found on the Refuge's website - www.fws.gov/rnortheast/iroquois.org. We encourage everyone interested in the Refuge in becoming familiar with it.

Planning is well under way for the big 'Spring Into Nature' celebration of the beginning of the cavalcade of seasons at the Refuge. The many diverse activities and displays are aimed at middle and elementary school age children and their families, with prizes, gifts and exposures to wildlife and nature to be gained for FREE. The event is scheduled for April 30th. And, of course, volunteers are needed to make it happen. Please let Dorothy at Dorothy_Gerhart@fws.gov or 585 - 948 - 5445 if you can help out.

We're looking forward to an interesting and productive year at the Iroquois Refuge, so please come on in and take a part.

Thanx,
Pete

Peter Warn
President

Volunteer Meeting - The first semi-annual volunteer meeting of 2011 is in the planning stages. We are looking at the first week in March, Possibly on a Saturday. We will cover many important topics including updates on what is going on in the service and the refuge, volunteer opportunities, upcoming programs/events, training and more. Watch your mail/email for updates.



Nazareth College at the Refuge

Graduate students in the Department of Inclusive Childhood Education at Nazareth College of Rochester have been learning about the GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) program by conducting environmental measurements each Spring and Fall at the Kanyoo Trail. These future teachers conduct landcover biology and hydrology protocols in the hopes that they will become teachers trained in the GLOBE program and in turn, teach their future students to conduct the same protocols. The measurements that are collected are tallied on the GLOBE website (www.globe.gov) so that scientists and other students worldwide can use the information to study the changes in our environment.

The Refuge was first used as a study site by students in the Royalton-Hartland Central School District. These students, ranging in age from 8 to 15, made observations at the Kanyoo site for over 11 years. When their teacher retired and moved on to teaching at college, she took GLOBE with her and now brings college students to the Refuge. The next generation of GLOBE teachers and students at the Refuge is being born!



Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Opportunities

(updated 01/04/2011)

Outdoor /Biological

Tree Girdling - Girdle trees to prep the area for a native tree planting that will take place in the spring.

When: April - May

Contact: Dawn Washington, 585-948-5445 ext. 203

Tree Planting - Plant native tree species in an old non-native tree plantation.

When: April - May

Contact: Dawn Washington, 585-948-5445 ext. 203

Maintain Wood Duck Boxes - work with a veteran volunteer to clean out wood duck boxes and get them ready for nesting season. Requires walking through water, snow and on ice.

When: Ongoing

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

IO Nature Programs - lead or assist with nature programs, including eagle watch, nature/bird walks, canoe treks, owl prowls. Volunteer orientation meeting is at 10 AM on March 26

When: March - May, mainly on Saturdays

Contact: Garner Light, 716-491-4408

Maintenance

Maintain Trails - pick up downed branches and litter, report any major problems to refuge staff

When: Ongoing

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

Field trips available for middle school groups

The Canisius College Ambassadors for Conservation (CAC) Program will once again be providing educational programs for middle school classes during **five weeks in May and June of 2011**. The day-long programs consist of interpretive guided explorations of our wetlands on the Swallow Hollow boardwalk followed by nature-focused games that reinforce conservation-related lessons. To learn more about the program or to sign up to participate, please contact **Tiffany Fuzak** at fuzakt@canisius.edu.

Off-site Programs

Eco-fest - staff booth at a youth festival celebrating Earth Day. Staff information table and lead kids in activity.

When: Eco Fest - April 9, 10 am - 12 pm

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

Office Volunteers

Visitor Contact Station Volunteers - greet visitors, answer telephone, possibly operate cash register in Flyway Nature Store

When: Ongoing (March - May most critical) Weekday and weekends available

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

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

When: Ongoing

Contact: Dawn Washington, 585-948-5445 ext. 203

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

When: Ongoing

Contact: Dawn Washington, 585-948-5445 ext. 203

Friends:

The Friends of Iroquois NWR exists to support the mission and goals of the refuge. Our support becomes more important because the new **Comprehensive Conservation Plan** identifies our organization as a key part of the plan. We can be very helpful in increasing visitors, participants, building our organization, and bringing more volunteers to the refuge.

What can we do to build memberships? What can we do to bring more visitors to the refuge? What can we do to bring more volunteers to the refuge? Your ideas and suggestions are needed. Right now, we can apply for funding to implement good ideas BUT we need your suggestions. For example, some members have suggested better maps, better printed materials, a more useful web presence, improved school communication. **Send us your suggestions and observations on how to do a better job.** There may be help available to make it happen!

Please send your suggestions to Peter Gold pgold@buffalo.edu or to the Friends of Iroquois at the refuge. Thanks for your help.

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge is on Facebook!

Come, bookmark us, and be our Friend at

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Iroquois-National-Wildlife-Refuge/168915473153818>

2011 Amateur PHOTO Contest

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
and the
Friends of Iroquois
National Wildlife Refuge
are sponsoring their First Annual
Amateur Photo Contest



For a copy of the rules and an entry form,
please visit our webpage (<http://www.friendsofiroquoisnwr.org>)

The Guidelines

Photos must be taken on the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Basom, New York,
between September 1, 2010 and August 31, 2011.

Photographers may enter only one (1) photo per category.



Categories:

Wildlife - mammals, birds, fish, insects, reptiles, etc.

Habitat - depicts refuge habitat including plants, water, shelter, etc. or a refuge landscape scene. Wildlife can be included.

People - shows a person or persons engaged in a refuge activity or included in a scene on the refuge.

Young Nature Photographer - a special category just for young photographers aged 16 years old and younger.

Reproduction Rights and Liabilities

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge reserves the right to use all entries for the purpose of promoting and supporting the national wildlife refuge without compensation to the photographer; however, the copyright will remain with the photographer. Credit and notification will be given to the photographer when possible. A signature on the registration form constitutes acceptance of these terms. All entries become the property of the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. Photographs taken at the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge may not be commercially used without the refuge's written consent. While extreme care will be taken in handling all entries, the refuge cannot be responsible for any damage to photographs.

Winners will receive gift certificates to the FINWR Store
1st place: \$50 2nd place: \$30 3rd place: \$20 Honorable mention: USFWS Pin

The photos and prizes will be awarded at the FINWR Annual Meeting in November 2011
(date to be announced).

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