

The Overlook

www.FriendsOfIroquoisNWR.org

Winter 2011-2012

ANNUAL MEETING



The meeting took place at the refuge headquarters on Nov. 19th and 47 people were in attendance. **President Peter Warn** welcomed everyone and summarized the major challenge for the new year... keeping all programs going while the construction of the new building takes place.

Sandra Mendel announced the **winners of our 1st Annual Amateur Photo Contest**. They were **Melissa Zakrzewski** winning prizes in four categories (1st in young photographers, 2nd in habitat, honorable mention in both wildlife and people), **Jay Ovsiovitich** winning two prizes (3rd in Wildlife, and honorable mention in Habitat) **Theresa Morgan** winning a 1st in People, **Jennifer Durham** winning a 2nd in Wildlife, **Rick Droman** winning

2 prizes (1st in Wildlife and 1st in Habitat) and **Laura Berry** winning 3rd in Habitat. We had 20 photos and 8 photographers this year. Visit our website to see their photos. **The new contest runs from September 1, 2011 till August 31, 2012.**

Loren Smith of the Audubon Society, who will lead the **Iroquois Observations** group, thanked all the volunteers and asked for ideas for new things they could do. He suggested possible snowshoe events.

Kafi Flynn-Aikins PhD talked about the new building that will include **Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Services** now located in Amherst. He has formed the only Friends Group to support fisheries. **Beth Smithers** the Director of his Friends Group expressed her pleasure in the prospect of calling the refuge home. They help fund the clearing of water chestnuts from Tonawanda Creek as a joint project with others.

Mike Noonan reported on the very successful **Canisus Ambassadors for Conservation** program. Over the past 12 years they have shown 5,150 students around the refuge. They have raised over \$1 million dollars in this time frame from patrons of the CAC programs. **Tiffany Fuzack** is the administrative assistant and helps them bring 100 to 150 students per week in groups of 10 during a 5-week period out to the refuge. This year they had 2,190 kids, and 150 teachers, from 32 different schools.

Tom Roster reported on the refuge happenings. 22 kids participated in the 37th annual youth water fowling training program. There were two volunteer meetings this year. Two eagles nested this year successfully even with wind damage. **Spring into Nature** had over 1000 kids and 535 volunteer hours. **Tree planting** took place during Spring into Nature. 122 kids attended the **Fishing Derby**. Wendi Weber is now the Regional Director. **Owl Prowls** have become so popular you now need reservations. *The 4,532.5 hours contributed by the volunteers is equal to \$81,7663 or two staff people to the refuge. The building is under construction starting March 1st, and plans call for completion by August 2012.*

In concluding the meeting, Peter Warn asked for volunteers for various programs including reaching out programs for the blind and handicapped.

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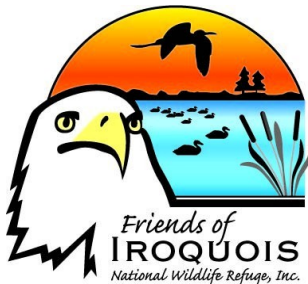
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Refuge Contact

www.fws.gov/northeast/iroquois
E-mail: Iroquois@fws.gov
Phone: (585) 948-5445

Overlook Newsletter

is printed seasonally, 4 times per year. Article submissions for each newsletter are due: early January (Winter); late April (Spring); early August (Summer); late October (Fall).



FINWR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2012 will be an interesting, and challenging year for the *Friends of the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge*. Please keep an eye on the Friends website: www.FriendsOfIroquoisNWR.org. We will try to keep you apprised of construction progress and scheduled activities via it.

The Annual Friends Full membership Meeting of November 13th elected **Chuck Bartlett, Celeste Morien, Sheila Hess, Chris Hollister** and **Wendi Pencille** to the Board of Directors of the Friends Corporation. This charitable tax-exempt activity supporting our favorite Wildlife Refuge is pleased to have this breadth of talent, experience and intelligence added to our guiding leadership body. And we bid a **heartfelt thanks to Skip Draper, Nancy Chenoweth and Krys Elam** who had run up against the two consecutive terms limitation in the By-Laws. We appreciate their numerous contributions and participation.

The biggie this year for the Friends activity will be the lease of a 12' x 60' OFFICE TRAILER to serve as the public visitor reception center. It is anticipated that **Dorothy Gerhart** and **Katie Little** will occupy an office in it as the receptionists to the Refuge visitors. The office on the other end of the trailer will provide space for the **Friends** and the **Iroquois Observations** of the Buffalo Audubon Society. The trailer Leasing is a major contribution of the Friends to enable some continuity during the construction.

Our challenge with the Trailer will be to hook up the TVs to serve the nest box cameras. We have the maneuverable pond camera, plus cameras in kestrel, bluebird and Martin houses. We have 4 cameras but only two TVs. So getting a selective switching system to enable selecting which to view is our challenge.

We also plan to have a **small Flyway Store in the trailer**. It is a fundamental fundraiser for the Friends support of the Refuge's programs and improvements. We can't just box up our inventory for the duration, and forgo this source of income.

Along with the **Spring Into Nature** event, the **Kids Fishing Derby**, the many events conducted by the I.O. folks, we also hope to progress a few enhancement projects. ***In summary, the Friends will need as much, if not more, support of the membership in volunteer hours and funding to allow us to help the Refuge get thru the construction period.***

Thanx,
Pete

Support the Friends of Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. for 2012

Membership Levels:

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|---|
| Individual | \$15 ⁰⁰ | Please send contribution to: |
| Family | \$25 ⁰⁰ | Friends of Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. |
| Raccoon | \$50 ⁰⁰ | 1101 Casey Road |
| Otter/Red Fox | \$75 ⁰⁰ | Basom, NY 14013 |
| Bluebird | \$100 ⁰⁰ | |
| Heron | \$200 ⁰⁰ | <i>We can use your volunteer time also!!</i> |
| Bald Eagle | \$500 ⁰⁰ | Contributions are tax deductible |
| Double Eagle | \$1,000 ⁰⁰ | |

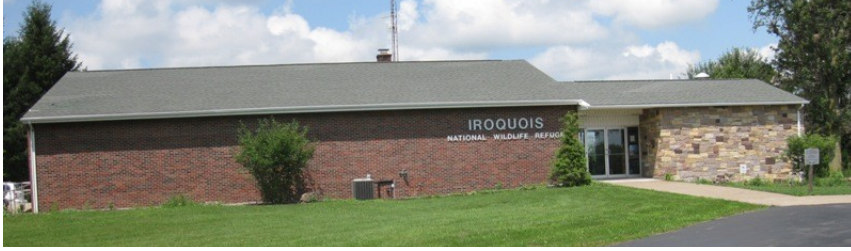
| UPCOMING EVENTS ON THE REFUGE | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 02/09/12 | Our first volunteer meeting for 2012 Hope to see you there. |
| 02/20/12 | President's Day Holiday – Refuge Office Closed |
| 02/29/12 | Small Game Hunting Season ends |
| 03/01/12 | Renovations begin on the Refuge Office; Nesting Season begins |
| 04/28/12 | Spring Into Nature A full day of fun for kids and families. Runs from 9 am - 4 pm. Many exhibits and hands-on activities for kids. Live birds of prey and bald eagle watch. |

It's Moving Time!!

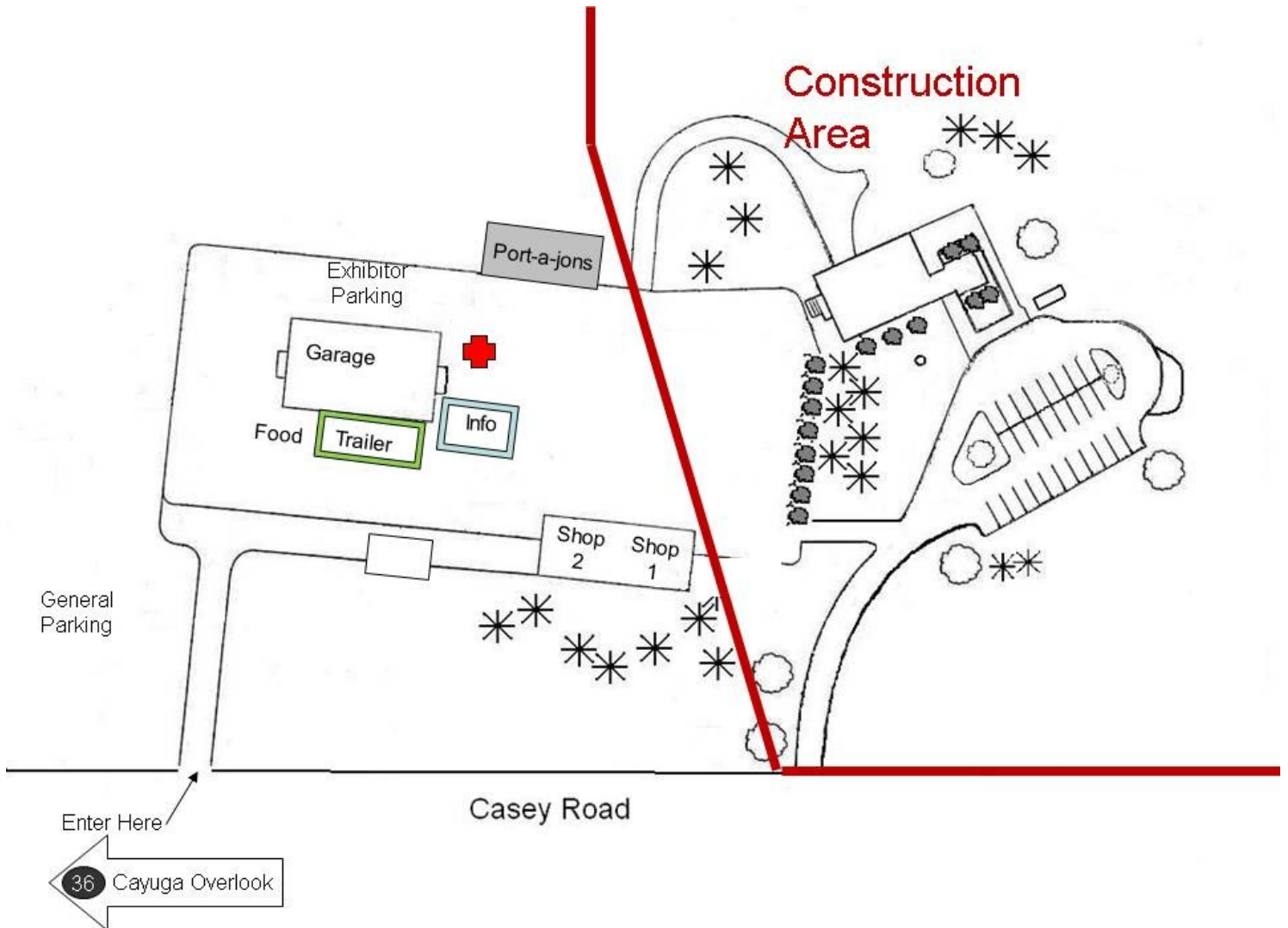
by Tom Roster

After several years of planning, the time has finally come that you will actually see work being done on our new visitor contact station and administrative building. BLM Construction Company out of Kendall has been awarded the contract and they will be starting on March 1, 2012.

This means that we are busily moving out of our current building and making arrangements for offices and visitor contact area during construction time. The Friends of Iroquois NWR, Inc. are renting an office trailer that will be situated in the maintenance compound to act as the store for them as well as a welcome center for the refuge. We hope to be able to provide viewing opportunities to kestrel cam in the trailer as well, so we do not miss a nesting season.



We plan on having a reception desk in the trailer to provide all those visitors relatively easy access to refuge staff for all their questions, pickup brochures, view the nesting cams, etc. The refuge staff will be making the refuge quarters, just west of the maintenance buildings, their offices during construction time. This should make us relatively easy to find during all that will be going on. When completed, you will see a lot more folks in brown uniforms walking around the building. I think most of you know that this project came about to co-locate two Fish and Wildlife Service division and that staff from the Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office will be moving over from Amherst when completed. **Stop by, say hi and see how the building is progressing this spring and summer!**





Meet Larry Balsmo

Larry was born and raised near Great Swamp NWR in New Jersey. He started his career in conservation in the YCC in 1985. The following year he was made YCC Youth leader. Prior to his government career Larry served in the U.S. Army Reserve, worked in construction and attended community colleges in NJ and GA.

In 1990-1995 Larry again served as YCC Crew Leader and overlapped with work as a temporary WG Laborer 1991-1993, except summers. Larry was hired on permanent with USFWS in 1996 and has worked as a Maintenance Worker, Engineering Equipment Operator, and Maintenance Mechanic at Great Swamp, Desert and Erie NWR's before coming to Iroquois. Larry was also a commissioned Law Enforcement officer 1999-2006. Larry says his favorite type of work is habitat restoration and in his spare time Larry enjoys hunting and fishing.



So Long Dawn

Many of you may already have heard the news, but I wanted to take a moment to let you know that I am leaving my position here at Iroquois to become the Supervisory Wildlife Biologist at Canaan Valley NWR in Davis, West Virginia. I have enjoyed everything about working here at Iroquois; the staff, Friends and volunteers have made my decision to leave a hard one. I appreciate having had the opportunity to work with all of you. Thank you for the support, guidance, and encouragement you have provided me during my time at Iroquois. This Refuge and the area have really become like home to me and my family. Everyone and the Refuge will truly be missed.

Please keep in touch; I can be reached at the same email address (Dawn_Washington@fws.gov) or via my work number 1-304-866-3858.



Volunteer Opportunities at the Refuge.



Outdoor/Biological

Wood Duck Box Maintenance – Visit each wood duck box to clean it out, replace nesting material and gather data regarding usage. Arduous work in cold weather. May require walking through water or on ice. Will work with veteran volunteer.

When: Dec - Feb

Event/Program: Biology

Maintenance

Building Maintenance - change light bulbs as needed, shovel snow, plumbing and electrical work (if qualified)

When: Ongoing

Event/Program: Visitor Services, Maintenance

Janitorial Duties - sweep and mop floors, vacuum, clean rest rooms, dust, wash windows

When: Ongoing

Event/Program: Visitor Services, Maintenance

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



The 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>

Refuge Waterfowl Hunting Season



The 2011 Refuge waterfowl season wrapped up on November 17 after 12 very successful days of hunting. In fact, the birds/hunter/day average of 2.44 was the highest in the history of the Refuge hunt. Habitat conditions this year were generally excellent and the increase in harvest is likely due to the vegetation response to a drawdown in Oneida Pool and the continued opening up of the cattail in Mohawk South and North. The close proximity of the abundant food resources in Oneida and the hemi-marsh cover in Mohawk South and North provided the perfect habitat for ducks this fall. A strong harvest on opening day got the season off to a good start, but unlike other years that often see harvest figures reaching low levels during the last half of the season, the daily harvest continued to be good through the end of the season. A total of 565 hunter visits were recorded over the entire season. New this year was a wooden blind added to the wheelchair accessible dock that was installed in 2010. This blind was constructed as an Eagle Scout project and was completed just prior to opening day. Several hunters used the blind this season and commented on how

much they enjoyed the experience.

38th Annual Young Waterfowler's Program

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge hosted its **38th Annual Young Waterfowler's Training Program** on Saturday, October 1. Members of the Lake Plains Waterfowl Association put together a full day of waterfowl hunting information and orientation, designed to improve the skills of young waterfowlers before the youth-only hunt day. The program is open to junior hunters between 12-17 years of age but is limited to 25 participants with first time participants having preference. This year 25 young hunters pre-registered for the program. Some were new to the sport of waterfowl hunting; others had participated in the program over the past 2-5 years.

The orientation day started with a **Waterfowl Identification Certification** class where six first time young waterfowl hunters learned the basics of identifying waterfowl, and laws pertaining to hunting. After a lunch, provided by the Lake Plains Waterfowl Association (LPWA) and the Finger Lakes and Western New York Waterfowl Association, 11 more kids joined the afternoon session to learn about basic skills and knowledge that would be helpful on the hunt. Subjects included decoys and calls, ballistics, clothing and equipment, hunter ethics and safety, and an overview of the refuge waterfowl program. Moving outside kids watched a retriever demonstration and ended the day with a trap shoot. The LPWA provided all of the instructors and teaching material, dogs for the retriever demonstration, equipment for the trap shoot and even guides for the hunt day if a participant needed one. All of the young participants received a "Let's Go Outside" back pack with a commemorative camo hunting cap.

On Sunday, October 23rd twenty-one of junior hunters who had pre-registered met at the permit station for the big hunt day. After a morning of hunting a total of thirty-eight birds were harvested. Only a few kids went home empty handed but said they had a great time anyway and looked forward to next year.

Purple Martin Support

Are you interested in joining a group of people who are organizing a **New York State Purple Martin Working Group**? Purple Martin populations have drastically declined in New York State and our objective is to reverse this trend! Our first goal is to find people who would be interested in participating in a state-wide Purple Martin Working Group. We aim to determine the location of all Purple Martin housing in New York State. We need contact information for those responsible for maintaining sites, in order to provide support and increase colony success rates.

Add your much needed information to our growing database of Purple Martin landlords and interested supporters!

If interested in participating and/or submitting data, please email or phone either: Carl Zenger at: cpzenger@gmail.com (716-434-7568) or Celeste Morien at tcmorien@gmail.com (585-721-8202)



THE OVERLOOK NEWSLETTER
Friends of Iroquois
National Wildlife Refuge
1101 Casey Road
Basom, NY 14013



FRIEND'S NAME
STREET ADDRESS
CITY, STATE 00000

Visit <http://www.friendsofiroquoisnwr.org> for details

2012 amateur PHOTO Contest

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

