

Missisquoi

Refuge Activities, Winter/Spring 2014

1. Join refuge volunteer and Friends Board member, Ken Copenhaver for an evening walk to watch and listen for some of our resident birds who operate during the night shift. An **Owl Prowl** will be offered to interested refuge visitors this winter. The first owl prowl is on **Friday evening, February 21 from 6 PM until 9 PM** and will start at the Stephen Young Marsh Trail area. Meet at the parking lot for the trail located on Tabor rd about one mile past the refuge HQ. Look for roadside signage "Refuge Trails Parking". Dress appropriately and bring a low intensity flashlight with you. Call 802-868-4781 to register for this activity.
2. Join volunteer Greg Simard and Friends member Joe Belanger for a walk into the **Maquam Bog on Saturday, March 1 from 8 AM – 11 AM**. Participants should meet at the parking lot on Tabor Rd. signed as "Refuge Trails Parking" located about one mile off of RT. 78 on Tabor Rd. The Maquam Bog is a unique woodland bog habitat that is not found anywhere else in Vermont and in few other places in New England. The winter offers an opportunity to walk over the difficult terrain with relative ease as compared to most other times of the year. The bog has historically served as a deer wintering area. Snowshoe hare, short eared owls and Northern Harriers are known to inhabit the bog. **Please bring your cameras as this walk will "focus" on photography in the bog.** The walk is dependent on weather conditions. Please call the refuge as the walk date approaches (802-868-4781) to register and receive updates on the status of the walk.
3. Join Friends Board Members Ken Copenhaver and Julie Filiberti for a **birding walk on the Railroad Trail on Saturday March 15 from 8 AM until 10 AM**. Some early migrants may be present including red wing blackbirds, great blue herons, bald eagles and a few hawks. The walks are available for all skill levels. Binoculars and a bird field guide are helpful. Dress for weather conditions. Meet at the Tabor Rd. Parking lot located 1 mile off of RT. 78 on Tabor rd. Look for the roadside sign "Refuge Trail Parking" at this parking lot.
4. Join Park Ranger, David Frisque for a look at the life and activity in a vernal pool early in the spring. Vernal pools are important breeding areas for some of the more reclusive and seldom seen amphibians such as wood frogs, and salamanders. Because these temporary wetlands often dry up completely by late summer or early fall, egg laying and early development of juvenile salamanders and frogs must begin early in the spring. The **Vernal Pool walk will be at the Stephen Young Trail area on Friday, April, 4, 2014 from 6 PM until 8 PM**. Meet at the Parking Lot at the trailhead for the Stephen Young Marsh Trail on Tabor Rd. Bring a small flashlight and waterproof footwear. Call 802-868-4781 to register for this activity.

5. Join Refuge volunteer Joe Belanger for a **Trail Walk on Saturday, April 5, 2014 at the Black/Maquam Creek Trail** from 9 AM until 11 AM. Meet at the parking lot at the trailhead on Rt 78, 2 ½ miles west of Swanton. Some early migrants should be pushing into Vermont by the date of this walk with waterfowl, great blue herons, and red wing blackbirds present on the refuge at numerous locations. Please bring binoculars and your camera and dress for weather conditions. Trail conditions can be wet at this time of year so warm waterproof footwear is recommended.

6. Join refuge volunteer, Greg Simard on a **woodcock walk on Friday, April 18, 2014 from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM**. The woodcock walk will be at the Stephen Young Marsh area and participants will meet at the parking area on Tabor Rd. one mile past (south) of the refuge HQ building. Woodcock have a unique courtship display that incorporates an aerial display and ground level calling display which occurs near sunset and into the early evening hours. Join Greg for an enjoyable early evening walk to witness this unique spring time activity. *Please call 802-868-4781 to register for this activity*

7. Join refuge Friends Board Members, Ken Copenhaver and Julie Filiberti for a birding walk on the **Black/Maquam Creek Trail on Saturday, April 19 from 8 AM until 10 AM**. These walks assist the refuge with an on-going documentation and permanent record of species presence and migratory bird movement through the refuge. Numerous species of migratory birds will be on the move and active on the refuge. The walks are available for all skill levels and interests. Binoculars and reference guides are a must. Please dress for the weather and be advised that trail conditions in the spring are often wet.

8. Refuge volunteer, Joe Belanger will also be offering a **walk on the Rail Road Passage trail on May 3, 2014 from 9 AM until 11 AM**. The Railroad Passage Trail starts at the same parking lot as the Stephen Young Marsh Trail on Tabor Rd about 1 mile past (south) of the HQ building. Spring migration will be in full swing by this date so many forest and grassland song birds should be present. Time permitting the walk should allow participants to see a small portion of the Maquam bog from the trail.

9. Join Park Ranger, David Frisque for another **woodcock walk on Friday, May 9, 2014. The walk will begin at 7:30 PM and end at about 9:00 PM**. Once again we will use the Stephen Young Marsh area for this evening walk. Participants will meet at the parking area on Tabor Rd. one mile past (south) of the refuge HQ building. Look for roadside signage "Refuge Trails Parking". *Please call 802-868-4781 to register for this activity.*

10. The Missisquoi NWR will conduct **Refuge Green Up Day on May 3, 2014** with the rest of Vermont. Green Up day will begin at 9 AM and conclude at about noon. All participants should meet at the Louie's Landing Parking Lot on RT 78. The refuge will concentrate its efforts on river cleanup activities using refuge boats. The refuge will monitor river water levels and flows. Should floodplain water levels be excessively high or if flow rates in the river channel are too strong due to snow melt and spring rains this event may be postponed or cancelled. *Please call 802-868-4781 to register for this activity.*

11. The Refuge will celebrate the 22nd anniversary of **International Migratory Bird Day on Saturday, May 17 2014**. Activities will begin at 7:30 AM with an orientation at the refuge headquarters. All birding participants will return to the refuge HQ by 11:30 AM to tally results and have lunch. The refuge will continue its efforts to document species on the refuge via the refuge trails and waterways using boats and if there is a demand using canoes and kayaks as well. We will record all species and as many individuals within those species as we can and then tally the results over a light lunch. A speaker will follow the lunch at approximately 1:00 PM with a natural resource presentation on a topic commensurate with the International Migratory Bird Day celebration. The theme for the 2014 IMBD Program is "Why Birds Matter" (The Benefits of Birds to Humans and Nature) . *Please call 802-868-4781 to register for this activity.*

12. The annual **Kids Fishing Clinic is scheduled for Saturday, June 7 2014 from 8 AM until approx. 1 PM**. This annual event will take place along the Macs Bend Rd from Louie's Landing Parking lot down to the Macs Bend boat launch site, a distance of about 1 mile. Fishing will occur along the banks of the Missisquoi river. Numerous educational and informational venues will be operating near the Macs Bend Building while the fishing is on-going. These include fly casting, fly tying, spincasting, watershed models and demonstrations, Fish ID aquarium, lure making, and aquatic invasive species display. Children are encouraged to participate in these activities at some time while they are fishing. A light lunch will be served and a limited number of random drawing prizes will be given away at the end of the event. *People are asked to register for this popular annual event at 802-868-4781*

13. **Please remember that Friends Board Members Julie Filiberti and Ken Copenhaver lead Birding Walks at 4 different trails on the refuge every third Saturday of each month during the entire year.** The information recorded is tabulated and reported to the Cornell Ornithology Lab. The walks are an attempt to record bird use at the refuge and changes in bird use and activity over time. Locations for these walks are provided at the Friends website www.friendsof missisquoi.org

Please call 802-868-4781 to sign up for any of the activities identified. The refuge needs a head count to determine the number of staff, volunteers and equipment needed to support these activities. Also should a change in location, time, or date be required we would need to be able to contact those signed up for an activity or event.