

# THE NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING

*Edwin B. Forsythe NWR Volunteer Newsletter*



Explore the Wonders of Nature ... Volunteer



“A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions ...” The Wilderness Act of 1964

More than 6,000 acres of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge are designated as a National Wilderness Area. This includes Holgate and Little Beach Island, two of the few remaining undeveloped barrier beaches in New Jersey.

The Holgate Unit of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge is located at the southern tip of Long Beach Island. It consists of more than 400 acres of barrier beaches, dunes and tidal salt marsh. One of New Jersey's last remaining undeveloped barrier islands, it is an important and productive area for beach-nesting birds.

Little Beach Island has formed in re-

sponse to natural influences of storm events, littoral current direction, inlet dynamics, and sea level rise.

Both Holgate and Little Beach provide essential nesting and feeding habitat for the rare piping plover, black skimmer and least tern. These birds, along with other beach-nesting species, have suffered drastic population declines as human beach developments and recreational uses have eliminated the habitat they need. Forsythe Refuge is one of their last strongholds. The dunes, prime nesting habitat, constantly shift and change as the forces of wind and wave action mold them. Beach grasses, which trap blowing sand and

stabilize the dunes, provide important cover for wildlife, especially developing young birds. Use by humans and their pets can result in severe erosion, loss of habitat, and harm to beach-nesting birds. The refuge manages its fragile beach areas for the rare birds which depend on them. In order to minimize disturbance to the birds and their habitat, this management includes limiting or prohibiting public access. Holgate and Little Beach Island are closed to all public use during nesting season. Access to Little Beach during the non-nesting season is by special use permit only.

## CHIEF'S CORNER



Cynthia Martinez, Chief  
National Wildlife Refuge  
System

### Is ROI Measured Only in Dollars and Cents?

People are always looking for a bargain. That's just what they get from national wildlife refuges.

Certainly the 2013 Banking on Nature report gives hard numbers: \$4.87 returned for every \$1 appropriated in fiscal year 2011, and \$2.4 billion pumped into the economy that year.

What can't be measured as easily in dollars and cents are the personal and health reasons that make wildlife refuges so valuable. We haven't been able to quantify the value of wildlife refuges' contributions to the nation's clean air and clean water. We haven't come up with a calibration on how wildlife refuges benefit kids in their personal well-being and even in their schoolwork.

How can we measure the importance of giving families a chance to find free and easy-to-reach recreation? How do we quantify the pleasure of a walk in the woods not only to see wildlife but also to talk to kids in a way you can do only when you're surrounded by nature? What is the dollar-and-cents equation of a chance to see the beauty of wilderness or the opportunity to be alone with your thoughts? What metrics can calculate the adrenaline rush when people living in big cities get to see an eagle soar or an elk and its calf?

What's the return on investment for giving happiness?

We might not be able to measure every return on investment in national wildlife refuges, but visitors know a bargain when they see one. That's why we've had an 8 percent increase in visitation since fiscal year 2010, even as our budgets have gone in the opposite direction. Some of the increases in participation have been astounding: 52 percent uptick in photography, 45 percent growth in attendance at interpretive programs and talks, and a 14 percent increase in people driving auto tour routes.

It may seem contradictory that I, a wildlife biologist, find no greater excitement than seeing youngsters light up when they hold a lizard for the first time or learn the name of a bird they never noticed before. I love wildlife biology – I love restoring habitat, conducting a wildlife survey or helping an

endangered species get one step closer to recovery. But when I can pass my amazement about wildlife to a new generation of would-be biologists, I know that I am ensuring that whooping cranes, Moapa dace and thousands of other wildlife species will be around in a hundred years to inspire children.

What's the return on investment for ensuring that the natural wealth of our nation will enrich generation after generation? Maybe some economists can measure that. In the meantime, we can be assured that national wildlife refuges are enriching our nation in ways that people can appreciate, even if they can't fully appraise them.

### 4 Wildlife Cams You're Guaranteed to Love

Like us, you'd probably rather be in America's great outdoors right now, spotting animals in their natural habitats. But don't let being at home or stuck behind a desk stop you. Adventure awaits just about anywhere, thanks to wildlife cams. They give us a glimpse of what's happening in animals' private lives. You never know what you'll see -- it could be something amazing or nothing at all -- which is part of the fun. Some of the best wildlife cams are on America's public lands, places that Interior employees work every day to protect for future generations. Check out four amazing wildlife cams -- they're sure to keep you riveted!

<https://www.doi.gov/blog/4-wildlife-cams-you're-guaranteed-love>

### National Integrated Heat Health Information System

The National Integrated Heat Health Information System web portal offers information and services surrounding the problems from extreme heat. Visitors can view forecasts by week, month, and more. The website also offers adaptation strategies for at risk populations.

<http://toolkit.climate.gov/nihhis>.

### Nature Soundmap

The Nature Soundmap provides snippets of sounds and video from the natural world. The website hosts an interactive map of the world, complete with markers which include information about the animal or setting profiled, along with a link to more information. There are over 400 recordings from 81 countries and 93 contributors. <http://www.naturesoundmap.com>.

### Wildlife Drive:

The first phase of the Wildlife Drive improvement work is complete. Following a closure of several weeks, 1500ft of shoreline at Turtle Cove on the south dike and 600ft at Dogleg on the north dike were stabilized through grading, placement of geotextile fabric, soil choking, and hydro-seeding. Additional plantings will occur sometime in late August. A second phase of Wildlife Drive work will also begin in August. The Long Dike in the middle of the West Pool will be repaired and a living shoreline will be established along the banks. In addition, water control structure # 3, in the northeast corner of the east pool will be reconstructed and the entire Wildlife Drive will be resurfaced. All work is scheduled to be completed in September.



Dogleg on the north drive after repairs were completed.

oystercatcher pairs that made 57 nest attempts and fledged 19 young. During the most recent least tern colony counts, 437 adult least terns were observed in addition to 155 chicks. Researchers from the State University of New York, College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry, have been banding the birds, which makes it easier to calculate which birds are successful at breeding, which birds are re-nesting and which birds are switching nesting areas.

### Cedar Bonnet Island Restoration:

If you drive on Route 72 towards Long Beach Island and look south, you may have noticed some construction work being done on a tract of refuge land known as Cedar Bonnet Island. The refuge is working closely with New Jersey Department of Transportation and Environmental Protection to restore an abandoned dredge spoil containment area there to a functioning saltmarsh wetland. A nature trail and 2 scenic observation pavilions will be provided for the public to access and enjoy a part of the refuge that has been previously closed to the public. Currently, wetland plants are being planted into the newly created wetland areas and the footprint for the nature trail is already in place. Upland species will be planted in the early autumn of 2016. The target date for the opening of Cedar Bonnet Island is January 2019.



Cedar Bonnet Island newly planted wetland area – July 2016

### Beachnesters Having a Good Year:

The federally listed threatened piping plover has enjoyed another good breeding year on the refuge's wilderness beach areas of Holgate and Little Beach this summer, as have American oystercatchers and least terns. Although Hurricane Sandy was destructive to human property, it was not a bad thing for plovers. In several areas, waves over-washed the island, flattening dunes, creating excellent nesting habitat.

This year the refuge partnered with the non-profit Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey to conduct the annual monitoring of beach-nesting birds. So far this year, 37 pairs of piping plovers made 54 nest attempts and have fledged over 32 chicks. In addition, there were a total of 32 American



Piping plover on nest

## A Message from our Refuge Manager, Virginia Rettig

Welcome to our summer newsletter! We've just held our annual Volunteer Appreciation Celebration, and as I always say, it is my favorite event of the year. It gives refuge staff an opportunity to thank all of you for your contributions to Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. We love the place as much as you do and we are grateful for your service.



Congratulations to the Bicknell Family: Steve, Wendy, Sarah and David, for receiving the Connecting People with Nature Award. They have kept the Children's Discovery Area ship-shape for years and make a huge contribution towards our very successful Family Archery Program. Together, they have contributed over 1,600 hours of their time.



Our Volunteer of the Year is Jan Beauvais – who you most likely see every Monday at the Visitor Information Center. Jan is always friendly and also helps with environmental education, special events, tram tours, bird walks and citizen science.

We're so lucky to have such great people at this refuge. All of the volunteer time we receive is equivalent to 9 additional full-time positions at the refuge – it's clear, we couldn't do it without YOU. Thank you!!!



## Good times + Good Friends = Amazing Memories

This year, close to 90 volunteers, staff and guests attended our annual volunteer dinner and appreciation celebration on July 16th. It was wonderful to see such a great turnout.

We are so proud of Jan and Steve, Wendy, David and Sarah and their accomplishments.

Other special awards included Congressional Citation from Congressman Frank LoBiondo for Save Barnegat Bay in appreciation of their continuing dedication to conservation and support of the deCamp Wildlife Trail.

Mary Jane Mannherz, also received a Congressional Citation and heart-filled thanks from Amanda Senger for Mary Jane's help at Holgate this summer and her willingness to go the extra mile for both she and Josh, our visitor service interns. "She sees the best in people and is quick to acknowledge other's strengths and let them know that their contributions are valuable to her," wrote Amanda. Mary Jane, Michele Budd, Stu Duenkel, and Jerry and Gail South – all volunteers that live on Long Beach Island - are invaluable to the success of this program.

Les Murray received a Congressional Citation and accolades for the myriad of programs he continues to provide with such dedication and excellence.

To our Volunteers,

You generously give your time, life experiences, skills, compassion, intellect and humor. You provide support, skills, and talents. In return, we see friendships that have grown with other volunteers you otherwise might never have met. As we looked around the restaurant room, it warmed our hearts that the unexpected rewards of lasting friendships, social activities and fun make your volunteering experience special. Please know that we genuinely appreciate and value your commitment of time to volunteering at Forsythe, and we thank you -- and thank you for giving us the opportunity to celebrate all of you and the work that you so unselfishly do.

from all of us on Staff: *Virginia, Rich, Marty, Sandy, Amanda, Shane, Paul, Vinny, Mason, Amy, Chris, Tom and Roger.*

## Its All About the Natives



On March 7, 2000, a group of people met for the first time to learn about a new volunteer program starting at Edwin B. Forsythe NWR. This group would plan and start a native plant garden by the refuge's headquarters building. The goal was to show our visitors that native plants can not only be drought tolerant, but that they are also beautiful and can be incorporated into the home landscape.



Sixteen years later, many of those original volunteers are still part of this group and taking leadership roles as new gardeners join in. These volunteers are an important



part of the refuge's mission of "working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people." Volunteering in our native plant garden is educational, fun, and rewarding and many are Master Gardeners. Depending upon your interests, you will have the opportunity to learn about native plants and make new friends. Their regular work day is Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon during the spring and fall. Rain/bad weather cancels garden workdays. If you would like to learn more, contact Sandy at 609-652-1665 or stop by some Thursday morning.

### Mourning the Loss of a Good Friend

Recently we all suffered the loss of a great friend and volunteer, Howard Buck. Howard and his wife Pat have been part of our native plant garden volunteer group since 2007, and together have donated over 700 hours of their time.

Memories from the group: Evonne Kaminski noted that she and Pat and Howard were the first ones to go to Clemensons for native plants for the garden, riding there all bunched up in Howard's truck. He was instrumental in persuading Clemensons to have retail sales every year instead of only wholesale.

Carol Bitzberger recalled that Howard, Pat and she often fished together. She said several years ago they were out on his boat, in over 60 feet of water and she dropped her pole and reel in the water. It had sentimental value to her and somehow Howard managed to hook into her line and retrieve it, which she thought nearly impossible. He was very knowledgeable about the ocean and shore area. He was an avid fisherman and hunter.

One thing everyone agrees on is that "we all loved him; he always had a smile and was cheerful about everything, and we already miss him so much."



## See Your Pollinator Garden Grow

One of the best ways you can help monarch butterflies and other pollinators is to plant a pollinator garden – in your yard, behind your school or church, on your business property or even in a pot for your front steps. A simple, native flower garden helps pollinators stay healthy – and it's pretty.

In addition to nectar from flowers, monarch butterflies need milkweed to survive. So if your milkweed leaves have been chomped, don't worry. The monarchs have been around!

### Get Started

Research what varieties of milkweed and wildflowers are native to your area. Here's a great website to launch your research: <http://www.wildflower.org/>

### What you'll need

- A yard, raised bed or some flower pots
- Garden tools to break the soil or build a raised bed
- Extra dirt and mulch
- Native milkweed and nectar plants



*Milkweed is not a weed. These beautiful wildflowers are the only source of food for monarch caterpillars. Plant milkweed that is native to your area to attract all pollinators. Photo by Joanna Gilkeson/USFWS*

### Seven easy steps

1. Choose your location: Gardens should be planted in sunny spots and protected from the wind.
2. Look at your soil: Break ground to see the consistency of the soil in your yard. Soil may influence the kinds of plants you can grow or may require special considerations. If your soil type doesn't match the plants you'd like to plant, consider building a raised bed or using flower pots.
3. Prep your soil: If you're planting in your yard, remove the lawn and current plant cover and rake the soil. Additional dirt can help and is necessary for raised beds and flower pots.

4. Choose your plants: Buy native and local plants and milkweed. Native plants are ideal because they require less maintenance and tend to be heartier.

- Choose plants that have not been treated with pesticides, insecticides or neonicotinoids.
- Plant perennials to ensure your plants come back each year and don't require a lot of maintenance.
- Choose a diversity of plants that bloom throughout the seasons to ensure pollinators benefit in the spring, summer and fall. This will also ensure that your garden is bright and colorful for months!

5. Choosing seeds or small plants: Small plants that have already started growing in a nursery are simple to plant and handle in a small space. If you'd like to use seeds, plan to plant in spring or fall, giving the seeds time to germinate. Seeds can also be best if you are planting a very large garden because they are less costly. Water your seeds even before you see plants.

6. Plant your flowers and milkweed: For small plants, dig holes just big enough for the root system. Cover the roots with dirt and reinforce with dirt or straw mulch to reduce weed growth. For seeding, spread seeds across the freshly prepared garden and cover them with dirt. Consider adding some flat rocks so butterflies can bask in the sun,

7. Wait, watch, water and weed: It may take some time, but you will eventually see butterflies and other pollinators enjoying your garden. Weed and water your garden to keep it healthy.

Help track monarch movements, milkweed growth and monarch life stages by reporting your sightings at <http://journeynorth.org/monarch/>. For more information, go online to the Monarch Joint Venture: <http://www.monarchjointventure.org/get-involved/create-habitat-for-monarchs/>.



Photo by Pat Brink, USFWS Volunteer

## Meet this Summer's Interns

### Visitor Service Interns:

Josh Horne is from Farmington, Maine and is a Junior at University of Maine, majoring in Ecology and Environmental Science. *"Forsythe is so much more than just the birds, the wilderness, and the marsh. For me, Forsythe has been a second home where I've been able to learn valuable skills and grow as both an environmental science student and a person. While here, I have taught the public about our refuge and done field work in the marshes assisting our biology staff on various research projects. Because of this, I feel I will leave Forsythe as a well-rounded student who is equipped to take on the challenges of the professional world. I'm grateful for the opportunities that have been given to me while here and will surely apply what I've learned for the rest of my life."*

Amanda Sengar has travelled the furthest, coming from Marshall, Wisconsin (near Madison). She will be a senior this year, attending University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. Her major is Biology with an emphasis in Ecology and Environmental Science. Amanda was awarded the position of Outreach Fellow for the Entomology Department of her University for the past year. *"This is an exciting chance for me to experience the ebb and flow of life on the coast! I've been learning so much about the ecosystems and the exotic wildlife out here (...egrets I was expecting, but the horseshoe crabs caught me by surprise! They look like equal parts alien and army helmet.) I'm thankful for the opportunity to meet people here and gain insight into the wildlife refuge world. The work that goes on here is important and it's exciting to be the one to spread the word to the community members and get them involved."*

### Biology Interns:

Mary Molloy's home town is Agawam, Massachusetts. A senior at Clark University, Mary is majoring in Geography with concentration in Ecology. She is a Member of Gamma Theta Upsilon – the International Geographical Honor's Society, recipient of a LEEP scholarship for forest ecology research, and has been on the Dean's List every semester at her university. Mary's thoughts on her internship with us? *"It's been an incredible opportunity interning here at Forsythe. Every day brings new learn-*

*ing experiences and surprises. I've learned so many new skills to help me further my abilities as a prospective wildlife biologist. It's really helpful to be able to work under people with expertise in my desired field – they answer all my questions and provide tips on how to pursue my path. The team leader has done an exceptional job of taking the interns under his wing. There is the perfect balance of providing guidance and letting us try things on our own. The rest of the biology staff is also incredibly generous with providing us as many learning opportunities as possible. I was able to attend a PhD defense at the University of Delaware on tick ecology and was one of three people who traveled to Cape May to be trained in capturing fish and crustaceans for data collection. I couldn't have asked for a better way to spend my summer!"*

Jenny Swonger hails from Toledo, Ohio, and graduated this past May from Clemson University (South Carolina) majoring in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology. *"I'm having a wonderful summer interning here at Forsythe. There's always something new and exciting to do, and I'm always kept on my toes. Even on my first day I was immediately taken out into the field and boated to different areas of the refuge to identify waterfowl breeding pairs. Most recently I have been helping the field crew look at the changes in surface elevations at different points in the refuge as well as water quality monitoring. I've had some really unique experiences during my internship, like helping a PhD student band Swamp Sparrows at 5 am, or riding in an airboat to survey Osprey nests. I don't ever have a "typical" week, or even day, here at the refuge. New opportunities arise every day, like banding Canada Geese and various trainings. The work can be hot and exhausting, but I could not be happier with my internship at Forsythe."*



Pictured left to right: Amanda Sengar, Josh Horne, Mary Molloy, Jenny Swonger

## Youth Conservation Corps (YCC)

- Amanda Calabrese



Each year high school students ages 15-18 serve in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and enhance landscape on our public lands. SCA staff typically recruits students in local communities through newspaper announcements, high school job fairs, science classes and clubs, state labor offices, or during special visits to the schools.

For eight weeks this summer, Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge has a YCC crew from Absegami High School (Galloway, NJ). The crew is working on various trail projects on the refuge such as maintaining and improving trails, installing benches, helping with Environmental Education, and various other projects. The crew is being exposed to the outdoors, how wildlife refuges manage habitat for wildlife, and an enthusiastic team of people working together toward common conservation goals – just as they are deciding which path they'll take into their future. Amanda Calabrese, who has worked for the refuge in different capacities over the past two years, is the YCC Crew Leader. Amanda said, "I'm excited to give my crew the opportunity to develop their work ethics and self-discipline, see a fraction of what it takes to maintain a refuge for wildlife and people, for all of us to contribute to wildlife and habitat conservation, and to give my crew members guidance for their futures."



Fridays are environmental education days. Pictured at Atlantic County Utility Authority's Waste Water Treatment Plants.

Left to right, Amanda Calabrese, Mitul Surti, Chase Iaconelli, Akshay Sheth, and Parth Malhotra





Earth Day cleanup - April 16, 2016



A very BIG thank you to our volunteers.



**The Friends of Forsythe NWR** is a non-profit group established in 1998 to provide support and services to the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in Oceanville, New Jersey. Our goals are:



- Promoting a better understanding of the natural history and environment of Southern New Jersey, the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR and the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Helping to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitat at this refuge, and to assist the refuge, the Refuge System and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a variety of educational and supportive efforts.

Please consider joining the Friends of Forsythe and help us accomplish these goals. Call 609-652-1665 ext. 21 or visit [www.friendsofforsythe.org](http://www.friendsofforsythe.org)

From its start in 1903, the National Wildlife Refuge System has owed its very existence to concerned citizens eager to protect America's natural resources. There are now more than 200 Friends groups, with about 10 new organizations created each year. Some support a single refuge while others are connected to a refuge complex or an entire state. Friends organizations are crucial to the collective mission of the Refuge System to conserve and protect the wildlife of this great nation. Friends organizations are essential to helping millions of Americans understand that their actions today determine the legacy we leave for tomorrow.

The Friends of Forsythe board members will be participating in the Friends Mentor Program with a workshop on August 11th and 12th at the refuge. The Friends Mentor Program was developed by US Fish and Wildlife Service as a way to help strengthen Friends groups with face-to-face coaching. The mentors include one refuge manager and one Friends mentor that have gone through a mentor training course at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, WV. They will be giving us guidance on topics we identify to help our group become stronger, accomplish our goals and develop long term plans.

The Mentor Session is open to all Friends Members, Refuge Volunteers and Refuge Staff. We value your hard work and dedication; we would love for you to participate in this event.

**Come bring your ideas to help our Friends group grow!**

Thursday, August 11th HQ Auditorium  
1pm - 4:30pm: Mentors visit with Friends members

BBQ after at the Bio-house  
on Lily Lake Road  
Staff, mentors and Friends. Food provided by  
the Friends of Forsythe.  
RSVP REQUIRED

August 12th – 8:00 a.m. until finished  
Sit down with mentors, refuge staff and Friends  
members to strategize about the future.

Please RSVP by August 7th to  
Ann Marie Morrison [annmorrison75@gmail.com](mailto:annmorrison75@gmail.com)  
com 609-509- 5073

The Friends  
of Forsythe  
are looking  
for a few  
good eggs!



Love talking to people? We have weekend positions available in our Nature Store. One Saturday or Sunday shift a month; greet visitors, answer questions and use a cash register. Training and uniform shirt is provided.

Enjoy working with kids? Join our Environmental Education team that does outreach to local schools. Must be comfortable working with kids ages 5-17.

The Friend's Board has several positions available; President, Vice President, Public Relations, Grants and Fundraising. For more information, contact Ann Marie Morrison 609-652-1665 ext 21 or [annmorrison75@gmail.com](mailto:annmorrison75@gmail.com)

Sundays, August 7, 14, 21 and 29 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

### EXPLORE BOWHUNTING CLASS

Pre-registration required - call 609-652-1665

All Summer Long - 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Naturalist led NATURE WALKS AT HOLGATE (Long Beach Island)

SHOREBIRD TOUR - Wednesdays and Saturdays

WILDERNESS WALK - Thursdays

EVER-SHIFTING SANDS- Fridays

BEACHCOMBING - Sundays

Meet at the Holgate Bulkhead - no registration necessary.

Walks last about 1 hour, distance covered about ½ mile.

Don't forget your shoes, bug spray, sunscreen, and water!

These events are free and open to the public.

## WHO'S ON STAFF?

Refuge Manager  
Virginia Rettig

Deputy Refuge Manager  
Rich Albers

Visitor Services Staff  
Vacant - Visitor Services Manager  
Sandy Perchetti  
Shane Daly

Biological Staff  
Paul Castelli, Vinny Turner  
Amy Drohan, Mason Sieges

Refuge Law Enforcement Officer  
Chris Pancila

Administrative Officer  
Martha Reed

Maintenance Professionals  
Tom Holdsworth, Roger Dutch



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