

Gloucester County Nature Club

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

December 2001

REGULAR MEETING – Thurs., December 13, 2001 – 7:00 pm – EIRC, 606 Delsea Dr. Sewell

Bob Cassel, Program Coordinator, 478-2496

Timber Rattlesnakes in New Jersey

For some folks it may be a surprise that we have rattlesnakes in our Garden State, especially in several counties of South Jersey. In the news recently we have read of the problem that is created when developers build in sensitive habitats involving endangered species. Example: the Evesham invasion of the ancient home of the timber rattlesnakes. So that we can get a clear picture of all aspects of the plight of rattlesnakes in New Jersey we will have our guest speaker, David M. Golden, biologist with the Endangered and Nongame Species Program, a Division of the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife, present a slide and discussion program. It was only a few weeks ago that the Speakers Bureau of the Endangered and Nongame Species Program first presented the program we'll enjoy this evening. Don't panic, David Golden will not be bringing live specimens. The facts surrounding the rattlesnake are most interesting. This is a program for all ages!



FIELD TRIP – Sat., December 16, 2001

Bird Count Coordinator, Bob Cassel, 478-2496

2001 Christmas Bird Count – Saturday, December 16th

If we have a mild winter, perhaps we'll have warblers, thrushes or unexpected birds lingering around Gloucester County. Or, if we have cold, cold winter, maybe we'll have rare gull, snowy owl, or an influx of grosbeaks. Whatever the weather, we look for a good bird harvest for identification. And, we look for a fine harvest of people to help with the count. You don't need to know birds to join the Christmas Bird Count. We'll add you to one of 13 teams, where other people who know birds will help you. Call Bob Cassel at 478-2496 to be added to a team or come to the program meeting on Dec. 13 to see the area map and pick a team to join. All teams will start their count at or before dawn and run til dusk, in their part of the county. This is a great opportunity to learn the calls, habits and id of winter resident birds. If you can't commit to a whole day, some teams allow people to join for part of the day. The count is under the auspices of the Gloucester County Nature Club and the National Audubon Society and is in its 102nd year! To register, the N.A.S. requires a fee of \$5.00 for each participant, used for administrative costs. When you finish the Count at the end of the day, you are welcome to compare your notes with other teams at a gabfest and warm refreshments at the home of Bob and Carol Cassel, 407 Heritage Road near Barnsboro, taking advantage of a cheery and warm fireplace, which will be burning from 4:30 P.M. and on.



Environmental Info/Nature Notes - December, 2001

Gloria Caccia, Environmental Coordinator, 582-0980

Computer Recycling Offered by Gloucester County



Gloucester County is now accepting computers for recycling at their Solid Waste Complex, according to an item in the Gloucester County Times on October 30, 2001. One reason to recycle rather than discard computers is that the computer monitor contains lead, more than in a standard television set. For more information, contact Ken Atkinson at 856-478-6045, Ext. 14.

Recreational fishermen are being urged by National Wildlife Federation to switch from lead sinkers or weighted fishing hooks to non-toxic ones made of such materials as steel, iron, bismuth, rock or ceramic. The lead fishing tackle, if discarded or lost in the water, is fatal to waterfowl that might ingest it. (Lead poisoning is the cause.) Particularly hard hit are the loons in New England, but birds of more than thirty species nationwide have died as a result of ingesting lead fishing tackle.



THE STATE WE'RE IN

Column by Michele S. Byers, Executive Director, New Jersey Conservation Foundation
November 14, 2001 - Volume XXXI, No. 46

This time each year, I get to write about one of my favorite topics, because all across the state, New Jersey voters overwhelmingly supported local open space initiatives!

This year 54 separate ballot measures in 49 towns and 2 counties were up for approval by voters. Despite recent U.S. Census data confirming New Jersey's place as having one of the highest property tax rates in the nation, New Jerseyans consistently vote to raise their own taxes to preserve farmland, open space, parks and historic sites.

Unofficial results from this past election show that 81-percent of the open space ballot measures were approved by New Jersey voters, by an average of 64-percent.

Voters countywide in Morris and Middlesex Counties agreed to increase their existing commitments to open space preservation. Morris County created its Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund in 1993. Since then, more than \$70 million has been collected for municipal open space projects, farmland preservation and county park projects. If the Morris County Freeholders act on the voters' consent and increase the tax, it could generate \$30 million annually!

Today, many New Jersey municipalities and almost all counties are using a small tax to make a big impact on the race against sprawl. Most of these open space taxes cost homeowners pennies on each \$100 of the assessed value of

their homes. The result can be millions of dollars for local conservation projects that are in turn leveraged with county or state dollars for more millions!

Some of the areas facing the most intense pressure from sprawl established or increased local open space reservation funds:



- Morris County voters agreed to increase their existing open space tax by 2-cents;
- Where sprawl is pushing at the edges of the Pine Barrens in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Ocean Counties, voters in 13 towns approved open space initiatives, most by overwhelming margins, including 81-percent in Eastampton Township, 70-percent in Hainesport Township, 78-percent in Mount Laurel Township, 79-percent in Gibbsboro Borough and 75-percent in Manchester Township.
- In and around the New Jersey Highlands, many communities voted for more tools to combat sprawl. In addition to the countywide increase adopted in Morris County, 11 towns in Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic and Warren Counties approved ballot measures by wide margins. Ringwood and Wanaque Boroughs - quintessential Highlands towns, under some of the most intense development pressure - each approved local open space measures by more than 70-percent!
- And in Mercer County, Hamilton and Lawrence Townships - two towns on the edge of the burgeoning Trenton and Princeton areas, facing some of New Jersey's most explosive growth in recent years - passed open space funding measures for the first time.

On its own, this funding allows towns and counties to preserve farms and open spaces important to local residents. But many local open space trusts funds have learned how to effectively double their money by leveraging atching resources from statewide programs, such as New Jersey's Green Acres Program. In our efforts to preserve land statewide, these local open space funds are playing an ever-increasing role.

New Jersey voters understand the value of local initiative. So congratulations to the voters, elected officials and volunteers who worked to pass these all-important local open space tax referendums!

For more information on how to conserve New Jersey land and natural resources, please visit NJCF's website at <http://www.njconservation.org>, or contact me at 1-888-LAND-SAVE or by e-mail to info@njconservation.org.



TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

A reminder that it is now time to renew your membership in Gloucester County Nature Club. Individual membership is \$13, Family membership is \$15. In order to continue receiving the newsletter and notice of upcoming activities and events, please renew now!! Memberships should be sent to the treasurer, Karen Kravchuck, 25 Barlow Ave., Sewell NJ 08080

Community Events

The Nature Club is partnering with local environmental commissions to do joint exhibits/displays at community events. Please contact our Community Events Coordinator, Maria Keefe at kityblu@juno.com or 856-627-7010 if you are able to help or if you know of another event where the Club should exhibit.

Executive Committee Meeting: The next Board of Trustees/Executive Committee Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 9 at 7:00 pm at the home of Erik & Kris Mollenhauer, 309 Roosevelt Ave, Pitman. Members are invited to attend the Executive Meetings.

Club News: The Nature Club is always looking for ideas for future programs and field trips. Please contact the program and/or field trip coordinators with your ideas. For information about the Gloucester County Nature Club, call:

Brian Hayes, President 468-9272

Mimi Glass, Membership Chair, 589-6435

Information for next month's newsletter should be sent, by the 15th of each month, to:

Erik Mollenhauer, 606 Delsea Dr. Sewell NJ 08080, 582-7000 X128

HAPPY HOLIDAYS !!

Gloucester County Nature Club
c/o EIRC
606 Delsea Dr.
Sewell NJ 08080