



Rice Creek Associates Newsletter Fall 2021

President's Comments

As the seasons really begin their change from summer to autumn, it reminds me of the many connections that exist between the arts and the sciences, and mathematics. In fact, the STEM movement became STEAM as the realization that the arts and sciences are so interconnected it became impossible to exclude them from the educational movement being developed.

When I was in college at SUNY Oswego, I took many dance classes including a few independent studies. Under the supervision of Dr. JoAn Huff, I created a series of dances that demonstrated different forms of dance, including one that was a theme and variations piece. These were recorded for future lessons in the TV studios of Lanigan Hall. The dance was repetitious as required, with one element of movement changed for each repetition. I created this piece during a fall semester and explained to Dr Huff that in my head I was envisioning a leaf being blown by the wind, and its path and movements being altered a bit with each repetition of the movements. I clearly remember her finding it humorous at the time.

As the seasons change each year I am brought back to this piece and I can still recall the chant I repeated in my mind as I danced the piece to remember the pattern and the various variations:

Same, same, quick, omit, down, reverse. As I watch the leaves releasing and falling, sometimes directly, other times meandering through the air, I can't help but follow the movements and notice how they vary. When they are seemingly pushed back up through the air, it inevitably brings to mind the poem *The Night Before Christmas*, with the lines:

*As dry leaves before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;*

One does not have to be a dancer to notice the choreography of the seasons, how the landscape changes from mostly lush green to choreographed blasts of color and finally to the more muted greyish brown tones left behind. Beyond all the scientific reasons for the changes, the biological responses to the meteorological activities, and the mathematics that can be used to explain the changes, I like to think Mother Nature is a bit of a dancer herself. Many prefer doing their yoga or Tai Chi exercises outdoors. I know when I am on the trails at RCFS I have been known to break out into dance. Give it a try sometime!

-Laurel Artz

Director's Report

Remembering Peter Rosenbaum



Professor Peter Rosenbaum. Photo taken by Karen Sime in 2009 at Selkirk Fen.

In remembering Peter, I want to reflect on his teaching and research as his character shines and comes through in both. As instructor, Peter was always transparent with his students. Students' rights were never compromised in his class. Peter would make it clear in his syllabi and verbally inform students about their rights. He would also inform them about what to do if they were not satisfied with the class or grades. He would give feedback and clearly explain grades. In one instance, I witnessed Peter emailing a final report with grade to students after the end of a semester. These type of reports were usually due at the end of semester and more likely graded when students are gone. In this instance, Peter cited transparency and students right to know. As for his research, many of us may know Peter was the champion of the *bog turtle*, a small endangered species in NY State. Through his research on the bog turtle, Peter brought in close to \$900,000 in grants. He trained many students in field biology giving them real hands on experiences beside a summer job. These kinds of experiences ignite students' passion for sciences. They prepare them for future career in biology. Many of these students went on to become successful field biologists.

Another bright area of Peter's life was his relationship with his colleagues. He was a friend, a colleague, a mentor, and a sympathetic shoulder to cry on. Many of his colleagues witnessed his kindness when they arrived fresh in Oswego. Peter would insist on privately meeting with them over

breakfast or lunch. He would listen to them, answer questions, and offer his experience and advice. We all felt his encouragement and passion for our success at Oswego. His heartfelt advice to junior faculty to establish their own research on local projects important to the region was valued by many.

I asked two of Peter's colleagues who worked with him on the *bog turtle* research. Their experiences with Peter confirmed what I outlined above. Karen Sime kindly wrote: As chair of the search committee that hired me, Peter was my first contact with Oswego, and was a steadfast and gracious colleague from the moment I nervously reached for that first call from the 315 area code. He was my mentor in the field and in the hallways. He introduced me to the bog buckmoth, an associate of his beloved bog turtles, supporting me and our students in a multitude of ways through more than a decade of research on this most beautiful and fascinating insect. He tutored me on the ins and outs of the profession over lunch and in the course of shared committee work. I will dearly miss his companionship in the peat bogs, and his thoughtful and often delightfully sharp commentary about the university and its ways, his thoughts on conservation, and so much more.

Rick Back graciously wrote: Earlier this summer I ran into Peter in Shineman as he was moving some things out of his office. A few days later, I found in my mailbox a drawing that my twenty-year-old son had done for Peter, probably about 15 years ago. You see, my boys loved going up to Peter's lab in Piez after their pick-up in from the Children's Center. He always had turtles in tanks and answers to their many questions. That piece of construction paper with the turtle drawing survived 15 years in Peter's office, even after the two moves. Moreover, it was somehow always visible as other materials accumulated around it. Peter was a family man, and we were all his family.

Another area of Peter's many contributions which readers of this newsletter may not know is that Peter served for many years, as recently as last fall, representing our department on the Faculty Assembly on campus. He served mainly on the Personnel Policies Council, helping to usher in many of the rights that faculty now have as teachers and researchers. He was steadfast in his commitment to faculty governance.

Of course, I will most value the time we spent in the field, and our many deliberations over department business, including personnel and curriculum. I was fortunate to know Peter as a recruiter (he chaired the search committee that hired me), as a colleague, as his Department Chair and Interim Dean. I got to know Peter very well, and know very well he will be sorely missed.

-Kamal Mohamed

It was in the summer of 1985 when I first met Peter. We had both been invited by then Field Station Director Donald Cox to a meeting to create a public support group for the field station. This steering committee resulted in what became Rice Creek Associates.

Peter served as a Board member from 1986 until this year. In that time, he served terms as President (1999 and 2000) and Vice-President (2001- 2018).

In 1995, Peter presented the Board with a proposal to establish what is now known as the Small Grants Program. Under this program, RCA would obtain monies from RCA, the college and other donations to fund original research by SUNY Oswego students and the public that would be conducted at the field station. That program officially started in 1996 and continues to this day. It has resulted in numerous students being prepared for careers in research, opportunities which may have never occurred without the program.

When the present field station building was in the planning stages, Peter insisted and lobbied hard for a shower room to be used by those conducting research on the grounds. I can attest personally to the convenience of this inclusion, as I regularly use it after a day out in the fields and woods conducting my insect transect studies. It makes my 40 minute ride home much more pleasurable!

In 2010 the college was considering selling a piece of land that serves as a buffer zone for the field station grounds. Peter was immediately out there strongly lobbying against the sale. I firmly believe that it was through his strong efforts that the idea to sell that parcel was cancelled.

In 2007 Peter was instrumental in organizing a celebration of Earth Day for that spring. On April

22 he gave a Rice Creek Reflection talk on the history of Earth Day, which was well received and appreciated.

At our monthly Board meetings Peter was passionate about many of our business matters and consistently exhibited a demeanor of reason and logic. He had the ability to see through the minutiae of our discussions and guide us through the diversions that could potentially cloud the path forward.

To me Peter was more than a Board member. He was a friend who always put RCA, the Field Station and the student researchers first and foremost. He will be greatly missed.

-Mike Holy

Assistant Director's Update

We were thrilled to welcome 55 children to week 1 and 52 children to week 2 of Exploring Nature, Rice Creek's summer youth program, during July. After a year and a half of no in-person public programming, the field station certainly felt alive again! It was my pleasure to tag along with our amazing instructors and their groups, experiencing the program for the first time and documenting it through photos. As the fall semester begins, we look forward to offering additional in-person programming, including nature walks, workshops, and school visits. Please visit our website (oswego.edu/rice-creek) or social media (@ozricecreek) for updates.



Instructor Nicole Cooper's K-1 class does a scavenger hunt along the blue trail.

In celebration of National Trails Day (June 5 this year), Oswego County Healthy Miles sponsored a month-long virtual walking challenge at area parks and natural areas, including Rice Creek Field Station. Participants used a QR code to log their trail walks and provide trail comments. At the end of the month, the raffle winner was someone who walked at Rice Creek! Thanks to everyone who participated.

- Kristen Haynes

Canal Forest Restoration Project Seed Training Session Held

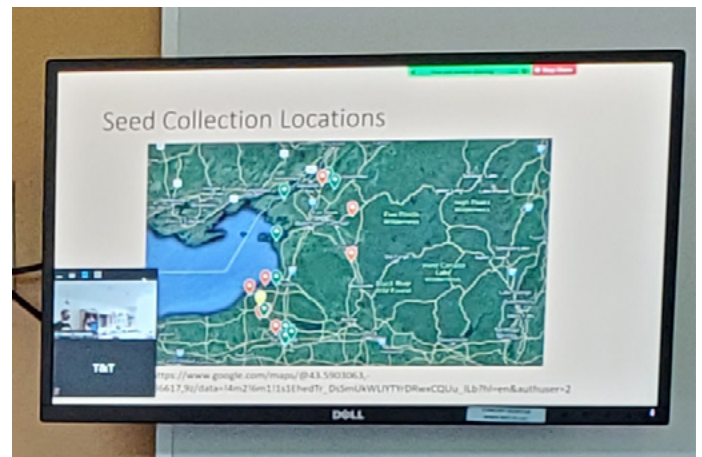
As part of the Canal Forest Restoration Project, an informative and interesting training session for volunteer seed collection was held in person and virtually on August 11th. Intern Robert Salerno led the session with assistance from Dr. Kristen Haynes. Attendees learned about the various trees used in the CFRP and how to identify these trees and their respective seeds. Collection and storage of seeds was explained, their appearances at maturity and ready for harvesting, as well as how to safely transport them to the field station. The training concluded with viewing some of the desired trees on the RCFS property.



Dr. Kristen Haynes and Intern Robert Salerno

Training focused on the trees needed for the program, including the White Pine, Tupelo, White Oak, and English Oak. As a rule, pinecones are best

collected from the tree itself, not the ground. If you have some to collect and donate, they can be allowed to dry out. Store in a paper bag no more than half full.



Map showing seed collection locations

Acorns, however, need to be kept cool, in the dark, in moist soil or peat moss, and you should get them to the station quickly, so they do not dry out. For any donation, please note the date of collection, the collection location, and a bring a branch with leaves/needles for identification confirmation. Consider looking for seeds this early fall and making a donation. These seeds ensure the continuance of the CFRP program.

- Laurel Artz

Students

**Show commitment of support for
public environmental education**

**Fund any educational or
environmental projects**

**Join a community of individuals who care
about nature and the environment**

**Reduced rates on merchandise
and field guides**

Join now for just \$5!

Call or email any questions rca@oswego.edu

315-312-6677

Annual RCA Event Invitation

The RCA Social will take place at the field station on **Saturday, Nov. 13th at 1:30 p.m.** for a 30 minute social gathering, offering light refreshments. Then following the tradition of recent years, awardees of 2021 Small Grants program will present their project findings to the audience beginning 2:00 p.m.

All RCA members are invited to join Rice Creek and SUNY community for this important event. Kindly, we ask planned attendees to email to rcfs@oswego.edu or call 315-312-6677 to make a reservation by **RSVP deadline Tuesday, November 9th**. This will help for adequate planning. Event details are:

Saturday, 11/13/21, 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
RCA Annual Event 'Experience Rice Creek'

2021 Small Grant Awardees are scheduled to present their project status –

Dr. Paul Agle, Atmospheric and Geological Sciences, SUNY Oswego

'The impact of beaver dams, spillway regulation and flow variability on sedimentation at Rice Creek'

(Mr. Austin Davis, Geology student presenting)

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Ms. Gabrielle Waters, Zoology student, Biological Sciences SUNY Oswego  
 (Sponsored by Dr. Karen Sime)

***'Rates of parasitization by Ophryocystis elektroscirrha within two sample populations of eastern Danaus plexippus in New York State'***

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Michael Flanagan, Tyler Gallery Director, Dept. of Art & Design, SUNY Oswego

Miranda Traudt, Director of Arts Programming for ARTSwego, SUNY Oswego

Alberto Rey, SUNY Distinguished Professor, SUNY Fredonia

'Biological Regionalism: Oswego River and Lake Ontario'

ITEMS FOR SALE

Revised List 2021-04

BOOKS

	NON-MEMBER PRICING	RCA MEMBER PRICING
FIELD GUIDE: Butterflies at RCFS	\$3.50	\$3.00
FIELD GUIDE: Invasive Plants at RCFS	\$7.00	\$5.50
FIELD GUIDE: Mammals at RCFS	\$8.00	\$6.00
FIELD GUIDE: Insects at RCFS	\$8.00	\$6.00
FIELD GUIDE: Birds at RCFS	COMING SOON	COMING SOON
COLORING BOOK: The Flora and Fauna of RC	\$2.00	\$1.00

Rite in the Rain notebook \$5.00 \$3.50

RCFS PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

Ceramic Mug..... \$5.00 \$3.50

	NON-MEMBER PRICING	RCA MEMBER PRICING
Coaster (one of three designs, or set of 3)	\$5.00 \$12.00	\$3.50 \$9.00

HONORARY ITEMS

	NON-MEMBER PRICING	RCA MEMBER PRICING
Ruth Sachidanandan Oswego Tea Note Card & Envelope (each)	\$1.00	\$0.50
John Weeks Note Cards & Envelopes	\$5.00	\$3.50
John Weeks Art Prints..... (each, not matted and not framed)	\$20.00	\$15.00

((Exact change is appreciated when paying by cash))
 --or-- checks payable to: Oswego College Foundation/RCA
 Thank you.

Walking Transects on a Summer Day

Since 1999, I have participated walking a set path of transects recording butterflies at Rice Creek. I thought it might be interesting to share with you what a day doing that is like.

On 7 August 2021, I began my search for butterflies at 10:50 a.m. The day was one of filtered sunshine, hot, hazy, and humid with a starting temperature of approximately 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Walking from my car in the parking lot to the herb garden, there is nothing to record. I continue my walk to the back lawn, walking along the far edge. I work my way to the creek, across from the field station's classrooms. Cardinal Flower, Joe Pye Weed, Pickerelweed, and Knapweed are in bloom. I spot two butterflies: a cabbage white on Knapweed and an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail in flight and record them on my data sheet. The lawns and area surrounding the field station building is designated as transect RCFS (Rice Creek Field Station).

From this location I usually move on to the Green Trail. Cognizant of the heat and humidity and my propensity for exhaustion if I spend too much time outdoors on days like today, I omit that trail and its intersecting A-1 transect altogether and move instead to the Blue Trail.

This B-1 transect of the trail as it leads from a grove of willow to the lower field is now inundated with Multiflora Rose, an invasive plant. Because of this I usually see minimal butterfly activity compared to earlier years in the study. Today would prove no different.

As I reach the lower field I immediately cross the creek onto transect M-1. The water itself is practically nonexistent as it has been for most of the summer. Low water levels due to a beaver dam further up the creek and removal of three boards to control the water level of Rice Pond are the major contributors to the almost dry stream; it is an easy walk across to the berm.



Cardinal Flower



Joe-Pye Weed



Pickerelweed



Cabbage White on Knapweed

The berm is a man-made barrier that separates Rice Pond (also man-made) from Rice Creek. A culvert connects the two water bodies. It is at this junction that water flow from the pond to the creek is maintained.

I walk the length of the berm. The trail leads further into a wooded section that will eventually connect to private property.

On the right of the end of the berm stands a large Bull Thistle plant. Its flowers are attractive to a number of insects, butterflies included. The photo here shows a female Black Swallowtail feeding on it during my walk on 3 August.

On the berm I record four species: Cabbage White (2), Monarchs (one male, one female), a Spicebush Swallowtail, and a male Eastern Tiger Swallowtail.



Black Swallowtail at Bull Thistle



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail “mud puddling”

The Tiger Swallowtail kept searching the grassy ground on the berm. My observance and previous experience lead me to conclude that it was attempting to “mud puddle.” This is a behavior in many male butterflies where they alight on moist or muddy ground to extract mineral salts. Searching an area of several meters in length it kept returning to the same spot, and ultimately rested there for an extended period. This allowed opportunity for a few photos.

Nearby I pass two Mullein plants. One is upright; the other has been pushed sideways, the result of mowing the berm a few days ago. The plant’s reaction to its altered stance is to grow in an upward position at its tip. This is a result of a phenomenon called phototropism, a response of uneven cell growth in relation to the position of the sun and plant hormones in an effort to re-establish the plant’s upright position toward the sun.

Returning to the lower field along the Blue Trail, I record two Cabbage Whites and a Silver Spotted Skipper. That is a low number of sightings for this field, but is fully understandable. For one thing, plants in bloom in that field are presently in short supply. Milkweed is done flowering for the season and goldenrods and asters have yet to color the landscape. Only Joe-Pye Weed and Knapweed are the predominant nectar sources.



Upright Mullein



Tipped Mullein experiencing phototropism



Mating Japanese Beetles

I come across mating Japanese Beetles. It is difficult to see its mate in the photo, but two outstretched pairs of legs on the topmost beetle are an indication of the procreative activity in progress.

Further up the trail closest to the stream on the left is a patch of wild mint. I position myself so that the mild breeze carries the scent where I can easily detect it. A small thing, admittedly, but I look forward to enjoying its fragrance each time I pass.

No additional butterflies are seen along Blue Trail transects until I enter the middle field. Among the observed are Cabbage Whites, Pearl Crescents, Orange and Clouded Sulphurs, a Common Wood Nymph female, Monarch, Least Skipper, and a Bronze Copper.



Bronze Copper

I do not observe Bronze Coppers very often at Rice Creek. Many years they are either absent or go undetected. Despite that, I did record a late season male last year on 16 September. Today's individual on field transect F-5 appeared to be freshly emerged, indicated by its bright and perfect wings and its sedentary behavior- both ideal factors for taking photographs!

Leaving the middle field this B-4 transect of the Blue Trail enters a woods trail that leads back to the Willow Grove, making a complete loop to the location where I originally entered.

As I leave the trail and walk past the Herb Garden, I spot a medium sized dark brown skipper darting around the False Blue Indigo plant at its corner; it is a Wild Indigo Dusky Wing. It all makes perfect sense. That is the butterfly's food plant. I spend some minutes taking pictures and break for lunch under the gazebo. It is now 12:51 in the afternoon.



Wild Indigo Dusky Wing

Sitting at the picnic table I hear a loud buzzing sound. On one of the upright posts to the gazebo I see a Bee Fly. Their large size can be very intimidating, as large as a horse fly, but they are perfectly harmless to humans. This one in particular is a parasite of beetle larvae.

I resume my work at 1:15. It is warmer and I definitely feel the humidity. I enter the Red Trail, transect R-1, and take the short walk on a woods trail before entering the middle field once more. Only a Monarch is spotted as I walk up the hilly path to the upper field. On this section of R-1, I record a Monarch and a Cabbage White.



Bee Fly

Moving into a woods trail, still on R-1, I record a Cabbage White taking nectar from Knapweed.

Rather than proceeding directly into the mature woods onto transect R-2, I take a shortcut on the Orange Trail to transect R-3. A short distance to my right is a stand of Joe-Pye and Swamp Milkweed. To my left is an area of predominantly flowering Boneset. On the Joe-Pye area I record two Monarchs- one in flight; the other obtaining nutrition from Swamp Milkweed.

Further up the trail I see a female Orange Sulphur albino on Knapweed. I take a few pictures and move along.



**Orange Sulphur albino female on Knapweed
(Look closely in middle of photo.)**

The upper field ends and I enter onto transect R-4. R-4 leads through another woods trail interspersed with a few open sun patch areas. Traveling overhead is an unidentified Anglewing. It is most likely a Comma or Question Mark butterfly. I record it as unidentified and move along.

Intersecting R-4 is a power line right of way, which I designate as upper (left) and lower (right) trails. The upper trail is predominated by a large area of Joe-Pye. It has not reached its peak in bloom and is shaded by the tall pines and deciduous trees along the wide border. Unfortunately there are no butterflies to record on either trail. In a few weeks it should host quite a few butterflies, bees and beetles.

I return to transect R-4 for a short distance where I enter the field station's parking lot. Along the side of the road is an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail. It is now exactly 2:00 as I end my study for the day.

During this time I recorded 13 species represented by 37 individuals. Not the best of days, but considering the recording of the Bronze Copper and Wild Indigo Dusky Wing, with pictures to prove documentation, not a bad day at all!

Though my primary interest was recording butterflies I experience much more on these walks. Over the years I have learned much about the vegetation, insects and the interactions among them. This is what makes each foray onto the trails so unique week after week and year after year despite taking the same path.

You, too, can have these unique experiences no matter what time of year you walk the trails at Rice Creek.

An added FYI: On this August day I recorded seven Monarchs. Two weeks later, on 24 August, I recorded 308 butterflies representing 16 species, 176 of which were Monarchs! It looks to me like we will have a great Monarch migration season this year.

-Mike

Important RCA Newsletter Delivery Change

As a consequence of trying to reduce operating costs, the RCA Board has decided that starting with the Summer 2021 edition, all future newsletters will be sent by email. Members without email addresses will still receive a mailed copy.

If you have shared an email address with us but still wish to receive a mailed copy, you must notify our newsletter editor, Mike Holy, at fordlep@yahoo.com.

We always appreciate your support and want to continue to serve you in the most convenient manner. Thank you!

Rice Creek Field Station

Rice Creek Field Station is a part of the State University of New York at Oswego. While its primary function is to provide facilities for field-oriented research and courses in the natural sciences taught at the college, facilities are also available for public education and recreation.

The field station houses superb collections, field equipment, and laboratories. It is surrounded by several hundred acres of forest, fields, trails and wetlands, including Rice Pond. School children visit the field station and many individuals and groups use the area for hiking and cross-country skiing.

Rice Creek welcomes dogs. However, to protect sensitive natural features and as a courtesy to other visitors, dogs should be on a six foot leash. Also, please be kind and clean up after your pet. Thank you.

Directions: To get to Rice Creek Field Station take Route 104, turn south on Thompson Rd., located 100 yards west of the College's main entrance. The field station is 1.4 miles on the right.

Hours:

Monday to Friday	9:00 am - 4:30 pm
Saturday	9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Trails are open dawn to dusk daily.

When visiting Rice Creek, please sign in and out at one of the brown registration boxes.

Rice Creek is on Facebook



Membership Renewal Reminder

Our yearly membership runs from March 1 to February 28 to prevent renewals from coinciding with the Christmas season. Renewal category rates have not changed, despite our ever-increasing costs. If you have any questions concerning your current RCA membership, contact **Mike** at fordlep@yahoo.com or 315-622-1774 (leave message).

We consider all member information confidential and will not share it with any other groups or businesses.

Please notify us of any changes to your address, email, phone or name. We strive to send our newsletter and event notifications to you in a timely manner. Contact Mike at fordlep@yahoo.com to update your contact information.

Our Board of Directors thanks you for your support and looks forward to bringing you the best that Rice Creek has to offer.

Membership renewal can now be done online!

To renew and/or donate online, go to alumni.oswego.edu/RCAmembership

To Members Who Donate through SUNY System Payroll: Thank you to our members who donate through SUNY system payroll deductions. In the past these donations have been directly applied to RCA general funds. If you wish your donation to be applied to your annual membership or any other RCA specific program please email us at rca@oswego.edu.

RCA Board Elections

Rice Creek Associates Board of Directors Ballot

Three positions are up for election. Indicate your choices and return by November 16.

Three-year terms (2022 through 2024)

____ Don Artz

____ Paul Knittel

____ Andrew McElwain

____ Write-in _____

____ Write-in _____

____ Write-in _____

Complete and send to

Rice Creek Associates, Bldg #23

SUNY Oswego

Oswego, N.Y. 13126

or forward to rcfs@oswego.edu

Current RCA Board Members

Laurel Artz, President

Pat Jones, Co-Vice President

Sheri Morey, Co-Vice President

Wendy Fragale, Treasurer

Michael Holy, Secretary, Newsletter Editor

Don Artz

Alexandra Corsini

Paul Knittel

Mary Magistro

Gail Opanhoske

Andrew McElwain

Rice Creek Field Station Staff

Kamal Mohamed, Director

Kristen Haynes, Assistant Director

Wendy Fragale, Secretary

Alan Harris, Groundskeeper

Join/Renew RCA Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Date _____

All memberships are Mar. 1 – Feb. 28

____ New Membership ____ Renewal

Level:

____ Student \$5.00

____ Individual \$10.00

____ Family/Couple \$15.00

____ Contributing \$25.00

____ Sustaining \$50.00

____ Life \$250.00

____ Corporate \$500.00

I/We would like to make a **tax-deductible contribution in addition to membership fees** to the

____ General Fund

____ Trail improvement

____ Exploring Nature Program
for Children

____ Small Grants Program

in the amount of \$ _____.

Total enclosed (membership + contribution)

\$ _____ Date _____

Please make checks payable to:

Oswego College Foundation/RCA

Return to: Rice Creek Field Station #23
SUNY Oswego
Oswego, New York 13126

Rice Creek Associates
RCFS #23
SUNY Oswego
Oswego, New York 13126

To: