



Rice Creek Associates Newsletter

Winter 2017/2018

President's message

Greetings past and present members and supporters of Rice Creek Associates:

Every year RCA awards research grants to applicants and this year was no different. We awarded over \$9,000 to five groups individuals who presented their research at our annual social on November 4th entitled "The Rice Creek Experience."

To be awarded a research grant one not need be a student. Applicants need not be affiliated with RCA or SUNY Oswego but the work must be done at the Rice Creek Field Station.

During the year RCA sponsored a number of Reflections and events that included:

"An Environmental History of Lake Ontario" (Susan Gately on January 14)

Nature Book sale (Bill and Emil Reilly, "rivers end bookstore," for young and old, on March 14)

"Earth Day" celebration (April 15. **Susan Gately** was back this time with her "Lake Ontario" video. Susan has been sailing on the Lake for over 30 years. We also enjoyed music from **Denise Knight** and **Dick Drake**.)

An early spring storm sent a tree crashing thru one of our boardwalks on the green trail. Thanks to the efforts of our Rice Creek Director, Prof. Kamal Mohamed, and our grounds keeper, Alan Harris, the boardwalk was ready to go for our festivities.

"Talk and Walk" about the many birds that can be seen at Rice Creek (May 13, **Dr. Michael Schummer**, RCA Board member and visiting professor at SUNY Oswego)

"Talk and Walk" on Dragonflies and Damselflies (June 24, Naturalist **Jim D'Angelo**. They're truly some of nature's more colorful and interesting insects.)

On Sept 23rd, **Emil and Meghan Reilly** recounted their adventures walking 2,191 miles **hiking the full Appalachian Trail**. This journey took them through 14 states up and down mountains and through the most scenic country America has to offer. They also set up the tent they used along with equipment and clothing. From this experience they have made lifetime friendships.

In addition to awarding research grants and reflections for the public interest, RCA works closely with the Rice Creek Director, **Dr. Kamal Mohamed**. Early next year you will see new

message centers, one at the top by the Thompson Road Parking lot and the other down near the field station entrance.

RCA provided a needed computer for the Field Station Weather Station and assisted with the Herbal Garden.

The grant awards, the reflections, and providing needed items to the Field Station cost money. Some of that money comes from memberships and donations. We probably have the lowest membership fee of any organization. An individual membership is just \$10 and a family only \$15. Other levels of support are also offered for consideration. Our editor, **Michael Holy**, will see that you receive our newsletter quarterly. And our Administrative Assistant, **Wendy Fragale**, will see that you get a printed notice for each of our 2018 reflections.

Rice Creek is a wonderful treasure of over 300 acres of pristine preserved field and forest for the community to enjoy forever. Nonmembers who would like to be a part of our organization can apply using the form included in another part of this newsletter, providing information on how to join and/or make a contribution.

Have a wonderful winter here in Oswego County and come walk our well-marked trails. Snow shoeing is welcome.

- **Robert Foster**

RCA Social is well attended

A standing room only crowd listened intently during our annual RCA Small Grants presentations at the field station on Saturday, Nov. 4. Our program, titled “The Rice Creek Experience,” showcased the five 2017 awardees discussing their findings on the following topics:

- Measuring Toxic Effects of Atrazine in Freshwater Mussels (**Manna Job** and **Jerome Job**)

- Sex and Immunity in Green Frogs: Is Ranavirus a Sexually Transmitted Pathogen or are Females More Susceptible to Disease? (**Nathan McKean** and **Jason Lowery**)



- Effects of Seasonality on the Foraging Patterns of the North American Beaver at Rice Creek Field Station (**Imran Razik**)

- Development of a Field Guide for the Common Birds of Rice Creek Field Station (**Joanna Follett**)

- Development of a Field Guide for the Insects of Rice Creek Field Station (**Rocco Saya**)

All presenters answered questions after their talks from the audience. Refreshments and a celebratory cake were served before and after the presentations.



Standing from left to right: **Joanna Follett**, **Imran Razik**, **Rocco Saya**, **Manna Job**, **Jerome Job**, **Nathan Lowery** and **Jason McKean**

Rice Creek ambitions for 2018

At Rice Creek we strive to advance the Field Station mission by introducing new technologies and innovations to improve teaching, research, and public education. For 2018 we have a number of ideas we hope to implement. One of the earliest projects we considered is to bring nature (both sound and picture) inside the Field Station. Our objective is to install webcams overseeing Rice pond and microphones at the south side of the building to bring birds' songs inside the building. The cameras and microphones will then be connected to the data room where sound and picture can be instantaneously sent to individual rooms and the hallway. This technology can be used in the classroom especially at times when it is difficult to access the fields.

Native plant gardens will be constructed to promote local flora and to emphasize their beauty and use in area gardens. In addition, we are hoping it will attract and serve native wildlife, especially butterflies and birds. We are collecting native plant seeds in preparation for this, and thank those who already have donated seed. Our idea is to place these gardens off the blue trail meadows in plots that will include them in our four-year mowing cycle.

An amphitheater/outdoor class would be of great value to all academic programs on campus. Students and faculty have been using the Field Station for photography, arts, and shooting movies. An amphitheater will be a great resource for them and it will bring more departments to the Field Station. The details for this structure are yet to be determined, but it will more likely be installed at the beginning of the blue trail under the conifer plantation with minimal disturbance to nature.

We have already witnessed a tremendous improvement of our trails in the past few years. Starting next year, we plan to work on permanent/long term solutions to trail concerns.

We will start with the orange trail since it's the one that needs the most attention, especially under wet conditions. Improvements could include adjusting the trail path to avoid wet areas, placing boards, soils/stones/mulch, etc.

Finally, we hope to complete existing projects including the wildlife garden at the southeast side of the building, improving the lawn, and continuing with the effort of controlling invasive weeds on the Field Station grounds. We would like to welcome and applaud the project started by Prof. Justin Stroup, a geologist of the Atmospheric and Geological Sciences Department. This project involves drilling a series of wells on a west-to-east transect from Rice Pond parallel to the main entrance. The project was approved by the Field Station on conditions of minimal disturbance to the grounds. Two wells, side by side, already have been drilled. Two additional wells will be drilled per year for the next two to three years. This project is aimed to study ground water in relation to surface water and will provide important information to complement other studies done at the Field Station.

We welcome any new ideas and feedback from our RCA members regarding these projects.

-Kamal Mohamed, Field Station Director

Rice Creek Environmental Education Programs

Rice Creek Field Station offers and hosts opportunities for children, adults and families to interact with and learn about nature. From Nature Education Programs for all ages to educating youngsters through the Exploring Nature summer programs, Rice Creek brings plenty of life to our campus and community. Upcoming events are

listed at www.oswego.edu/rice-creek or call 315-312-6677.

Join us most Saturdays for naturalist led walks during **Rice Creek Rambles**. During **Story Hour**, we share tales of nature, animals' wild ways, and how we relate to our world around us. Rambles and Story Hours begin at 11 o'clock. An adult must accompany children under 17 to these family friendly free programs.

Drop by Saturdays between January 6 and March 31 and spend a few minutes with our feathered friends. Be a citizen scientist as you count the birds at the Rice Creek feeders from our indoor viewing area. Our **Winter Bird Study** is a great project for beginners to learn about birds.

Information about this year's **Exploring Nature** summer program for children can be found at www.oswego.edu/exploringnature.

The building hours are **Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm and Saturday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**. Trails are open during daylight hours. *Come see what's changing with the season.*

RCA Board actions

At its November meeting, the RCA Board has approved the following changes:

Membership renewal date

Previously, all memberships excluding the Lifetime and Honorary categories were renewable at the beginning of the calendar year. Yearly memberships will now begin on March 1 and run until the end of February of the following year. This means that all current members will have an additional three months added on to their current 2017 membership before renewal is due by March 2018.

By making this change, it is hoped that removing the renewal time away from the holiday season will make it more convenient for members to make payments and contributions. (For any membership concerns, contact **Mike Holy** at fordlep@yahoo.com or 315-622-1774.

Newsletter

Upon the recommendation of newsletter editor **Mike Holy**, the RCA Board of Directors has approved some changes in the way our newsletter is produced and disseminated to our members.

Foremost, the newsletter now will be mailed to all members, including those who have been receiving it by email. Email addresses will still be used to relay important messages and notices of upcoming events and Reflection talks. We hope that by supplying hard copies every season that it will be more convenient for all to read anywhere at their leisure.

Also, these printed copies will appear in color. Previously, only the summer edition hard copy was printed in color; emailed copies were in color year round. Those who previously received emailed copies will still enjoy colored issues; those who received hard copies will now enjoy colored issues year round.

Admittedly, this will add to our operating costs, but we believe the benefits and enjoyment that this will bring to our readers will supersede that negative.

A Continued thank you

Your Board is continually thankful for everyone's past, current and future support. We work diligently to allocate our funds for the best possible use. Many of the programs and projects at Rice Creek would not be possible without your support. If you haven't had the opportunity to visit, we suggest you place it on your "to do" list for 2018, in any season.

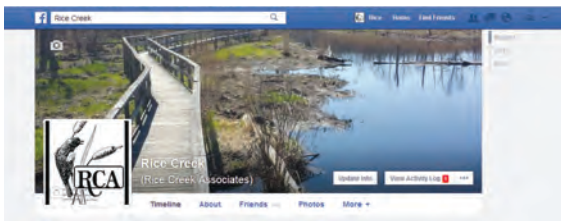
Rice Creek Reflections

Save the date!

A winter shelters presentation will be held on Saturday, January 27 at 1 p.m. The speaker will be **Jeff Devine**, a certified wilderness instructor. Weather permitting, it will be both an indoor and outdoor presentation. Refreshments will be available.

Rice Creek Associates (RCA) is on Facebook

To connect with RCA on Facebook, sign up for Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/ or sign in using your existing account. When linking to RCA as an added friend, search for Rice Creek like you would search for a new friend. You will know you have the right link to add RCA when you see this RCA logo as a profile picture along with the Green Trail's boardwalk as its cover page, like so:



Rice Creek Associates

(RCA) is a support group that was formed in 1986 for the purpose of furthering the goals of Rice Creek Field Station (RCFS). It is the intent of RCA to expand the scientific, educational, and recreational opportunities at the station through community involvement. Over the years, RCA has continued to increase its membership making it possible to fund improvement projects that benefit the station and the community at large.

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

Join/renew RCA membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

All memberships are now Mar. 1 – Feb. 28

____ New Membership

____ 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 to the

- ____ General Fund
- ____ Trail improvement
- ____ Exploring Nature Program for Children

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

Current RCA Board Members

Robert Foster, President
Peter Rosenbaum, Vice President
Don Artz, Secretary/Treasurer
Michael Schummer, Small Grants Chair
Cayla Taylor, SUNY Oswego student rep
Alan Harris
Michael Holy
Pat Jones
Andrew McElwain
Sheri Morey

Rice Creek Field Station Staff

Kamal Mohamed, Director
Diann Jackson, Assistant Director
Wendy Fragale, Secretary
Alan Harris, Groundskeeper

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.

Memorable moments at Rice Creek

Please share with us a special experience you've had at Rice Creek. It will appear in a future newsletter. Send it to **Mike** at fordlep@yahoo.com.

Rice Creek through the seasons



15May2014 M. Holy



30Oct2011 M. Holy



6July2015 M. Holy



2014 Andy Nelson

Rice Creek Associates
RCFS #23
SUNY Oswego
Oswego, NY 13126

TO: