



Rice Creek Associates Newsletter

Spring 2016

Rice Creek Associates celebrates 30 years

Rice Creek Associates celebrated its 30th anniversary on Saturday, March 13, 2016, from 1- 4 p.m. There were exhibits on our history, milestones and on public display, John Weeks' diorama of the original field station. SUNY Oswego President Deborah Stanley was on hand to give some opening comments.



Science at Rice Creek:

2016 Small Grants Program enters its twenty-first year

The RCA Small Grants program, which sponsors students in performing original research on the field station grounds, is well underway. At the time of this issue's printing, the Small Grants committee is reviewing a large number of proposals that it has received. An announcement will be made in our summer newsletter of those that have been accepted and funded for 2016.



RCA Board President Mike Holy gave a Reflections talk on his experiences walking and studying the grounds, sharing a number of photographs to illustrate the biodiversity that exists at Rice Creek Field Station. A variety of refreshments were on hand, including a cake to help commemorate the event. Look for a special edition 30th anniversary newsletter coming your way in the near future.

Sights, Sounds, and Smells through the days and seasons at Rice Creek

In a certain *Seinfeld* episode, George and Kramer hold a discussion on how days of the week have a certain feel. Mondays have a feel that is different from a Wednesday, for instance, whereas Friday has a feel distinct from all the others. Tuesday, one of them concludes, has no special feel.

For those of you who frequent the trails throughout the year at Rice Creek and walk them at different times of the day, you may detect differences, although at times subtle, of what is happening around you. Differences in daylight, temperature, activity, and even aroma can and do occur at any given location on the trails. Beside these daily contrasts, seasonal ones also occur, though obviously at a slower pace from a 24-hour cycle.

The contrast between spring and summer is a strong one. In early spring the temperatures are still cool with at least some patches of snow on the ground. The ground itself is becoming soft, thawing from the cold winter days recently passed. Light shines through the woods, and where snow has melted and thawing has begun, leaves cling closely to the ground, the result of the snow pack upon them during the winter months. The early spring wildflowers begin to appear, the sunlight now strong enough to warm and activate the enzymes within the plants to begin the growth process. Spring peepers begin their annual symphony. A distinctive freshness in the air arrives, proclaiming a renewal of life.

As spring progresses and temperatures continue to warm, additional evidence of life's renewal appears. The woods and fields lose their quietness to the sounds of birds establishing their territories and calling for prospective mates. Plant growth becomes more widespread; flowers become more common in the woods and fields. Fungi are a

common sight along wooded trails. Shadows, longer in early spring, become progressively shorter as the days lengthen. Insects become more evident, as sources for nectar increase. Trails become muddier as the combination of snowmelt and April showers provide water that trees and other plants, though absorbing much of it for their growth, have not yet reached the point where the trails can be sucked dry of their excess topsoil moisture.

As summer arrives, changes become more evident. Trees are now fully leafed out, bringing shade to the woods. The flowers that took advantage of the sunshine there are no longer in bloom; in some instances the plants have already produced seeds and have died back, remaining dormant until the next spring. Others more shade tolerant than these begin to dominate the forest floor. Some will blossom soon; others will have their time later in the summer and fall.

The ground is more solid now, and the sounds of birds become less frequent. Mating is done for most species, and molting of their bright wing feathers begins; it is not wise to advertise their positions at this vulnerable time. Butterflies are more common now, as are dragonflies, bees, grasshoppers and other insects. Squirrels and chipmunks can be seen scampering about. The trails in the early morning are cool and the plants are covered in dew. This changes as summer progresses- little to no dew and increasingly warmer. The fields are hot; strong sunrays come straight down with minimal shadows until late afternoon. Milkweeds, daisies, Brown-eyed Susans and vetch dominate the landscape. Joe-Pye Weed and Boneset eventually replace these, along with invasive species like Purple Loosestrife and Knapweed; goldenrods begin their debut.

As summer advances into fall, the goldenrods become more prevalent. The days exhibit shadows that now appear earlier in the day. Dew returns, in some places lasting most of the day in

areas where sunshine is minimal. Temperatures begin to drop. More asters and late blooming goldenrods appear (replacing earlier varieties), as do Monarchs, preparing for the long flight south by taking frequent nectar feeding breaks. Leaves change color and start to fall, helping to produce an aroma not to be enjoyed by the other seasons. Frost covers areas more susceptible to cooler air, light at first, then progressively heavier. Trees become bare, and shadows quite long, even at midday. Moisture returns to the ground; milkweed seeds release from their pods, carried away by tufts of silky hair. The fields, so full of activity and color during late spring and summer, become brown.

Specialists observe these seasonal changes through the flora and fauna they study. Birds tell the study through spring arrival, territory, mating, rearing and migration; plants, through the array of wildflower colors in the fields and trees through changes in the density of canopy in the woods; butterflies, through the progression of adult flight periods and species abundance; fungi, in the sprouting of their fruiting bodies in response to ideal temperatures.

You need not be a specialist to observe any of these changes- weekly visits on the trails will bring them to light for the casual observer. I certainly have not enumerated all the activity and changes that can be observed by walking the trails at Rice Creek. Perhaps that is just as well. The opportunity is open for anyone to make those discoveries. I challenge you to do so, without plugged in music, cell phones, or other electronic devices, except possibly a camera. We certainly would welcome your observations for future newsletters.

- Mike Holy

2016



Nature Education Programs at SUNY Oswego's Rice Creek Field Station

Rice Creek Rambles

Saturdays 11:00 am

April 16 & 23 May 14 & 21

June 11, 18 & 25

Spring is in the air. Join us for these family friendly free naturalist-led walks at Rice Creek. Come dressed for the weather. Those planning to attend are asked to call 315-312-6677 on the morning of the hike to check trail conditions. Since program size is limited, we are not able to accommodate groups. An adult needs to accompany children.

Story Hour Saturdays 11:00 am

April 9

May 7

As the seasons change it is time to gather 'round the warmth of a good story. Join us as we share tales of nature, animals' wild ways, and how we relate to our world around us. Since program size is limited, we are not able to accommodate groups. These programs are designed for

elementary aged children though all are welcome. An adult must accompany children. SUNY Oswego's Rice Creek Field Station offers Story Hour in support of SUNY's partnership with the *Read Aloud 15 Minutes* national initiative.

Celebrate Alumni Reunion Weekend 2016

Rice Creek welcomes Alumni, family and friends to Reunion Weekend 2016. Check the Reunion Weekend schedule for when tours of Rice Creek will be leaving campus or stop by between 9:00 and 4:30 on June 10 and 9:00 and 3:00 on June 11.

Registrations are now being accepted for *Exploring Nature* summer program for children. For information and forms visit www.oswego.edu/exploringnature. Registration deadline is June 5.

- ◆ The building hours are:
Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm and most Saturdays 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
- ◆ FREE programs most Saturdays
- ◆ Trails are open during daylight hours.
- ◆ Parking is available by the main building and near the gate.

Programs administered by Dr. Diann C Jackson



www.oswego.edu/rice-creek

315-312-6677



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.

Current RCA board members

Michael Holy, President
Peter Rosenbaum, Vice President
Don Artz, Secretary/Treasurer
Paulia Bates
Robert Foster
Alan Harris
Pat Jones
Dick Kaulfuss
Sheri Morey
Michael Schummer

Rice Creek Field Station Staff

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

Reminder- Membership renewal

A number of membership renewals are now overdue for the 2016 calendar year. Please use the form provided in this newsletter. Questions? Contact Mike Holy at 315-622-1774 or (preferably) fordlep@yahoo.com. As always, we are grateful and thank you for your support. Without you, we simply could not function at our present level, if at all.

Join Rice Creek Associates

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

New Membership (Calendar year)

Membership renewal

Level:

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Couple	15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 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

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 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.

Help us improve our newsletter!

There are many things that you as members can do to assist us in improving the quality of our newsletter.

- **Share** your experiences of Rice Creek with us.
- **Write** a short review on a nature book that you enjoyed.
- **Send** a digital picture you took at Rice Creek that you think we may enjoy.
- **Suggest** ideas that we may include, or programs that you would like to see offered to our members and public.

Send these and any other ideas to Mike Holy at fordlep@yahoo.com, or call him at 315-622-1774. We look forward to providing information that would inform and entertain our members.

Spring at Rice Creek



Bloodroot in bloom



Beaver on a mission



Greening in the woods



A new generation of geese

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

TO: