



Rice Creek Associates Newsletter

Summer 2014

An Authentic Duck Tale



This adult male Harlequin Duck (Photo by Ed Hogan) was sighted in Oswego River on February 28, 2014 near the hydroelectric dam in Oswego. During the next 10 days, many went looking and several saw the duck as it drifted along with the current and at times flew back to the rocky outcrops along the river's banks.

Mary and her son Mark were among those fortunate enough to observe the bird several times, including on March 9th when the duck died in the Oswego River. With some help, they retrieved the body from the river's edge. They brought it to Rice Creek Field Station because Mark wanted it to stay in Oswego. We are pleased to share this adult male Harlequin Duck with our visitors.

Come inside the building to see this Harlequin Duck and other displays. Featured among the displays are art panels and limited edition prints by local naturalist John A. Weeks.

Located in the library area at Rice Creek are photograph binders about bird banding at Rice Creek and local butterflies.

This summer there is a Rice Creek display on the main floor of SUNY Oswego's Penfield Library. Early this fall, look for the Rice Creek exhibit at the SUNY Oswego Art Gallery's temporary home located in the southeast corner of the second floor of Penfield Library on the main campus.



- Diann Jackson



Science at Rice Creek

Spring of 2014 saw the launch of **Rice Creek's interactive interpretive map**. The direct link is www.oswego.edu/ricecreekmap as well as in several places on the Rice Creek web page www.oswego.edu/ricecreek.



You can customize this new interactive map to showcase one trail at a time, different habitats and landmarks, such as the location of benches or foot bridges. Find a bench on one of the trails and click on the bench icon. A photograph and link to more information will pop up. In keeping with SUNY Oswego's Go Green initiatives, this map can be used on a mobile device instead of a paper trail map. As this map continues to be developed; check back for new features. More pop-ups will be added with photos and information about the trails. Please send your Rice Creek photos to share to rcfs@oswego.edu.

- Diann Jackson

Rice Creek Reflections

Our spring Rice Creek Reflections were well attended and enjoyed. Here is a brief synopsis of each:



On March 30, Richard Furnas from Cornell University reflected on his experiences on environmentalism. Speaking from a background that included adventures in Alaska, the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon, he made a few comments that definitely made an impression with me. I will

share a few of them and will leave the interpretation to you:

- The intent of the Hoover Dam was not to manage water but to produce electricity.
- Richard intimated that the naturalist John Muir once said that if you are old, go see Alaska; if you are not, wait, because what you see will affect you for the rest of your life.
- Everything you do on or to this planet has more than one effect.
- Richard personally does not fear for the earth- the human effect on the planet is nothing compared to the extinction of the dinosaurs.
- As we become more mechanized in our way of life we get farther away from what it is doing to the earth.

At one point in his talk, Richard asked us what we thought was the most destructive thing humans have done to the earth. His answer: the invention and use of the bulldozer.

On April 27, Andy Nelson gave a talk on the flora of the city of Oswego. He began by showing the city's boundaries to stress that Oswego was more than just the downtown area.

Urban areas characteristically have elevated temperatures and carbon dioxide levels, dry soils, a concentration of contaminants, frequent and unpredictable disturbances, and long distance plant dispersal by commercial traffic.

The city of Oswego plant habitat consists of pavement, piers, and cliffs, mowed lawns,

parks, cemeteries, untended vacant lots, garden and bare ground habitats, and railroad



rows, with surrounding suburban development.

In the urban area 273 species of plants have been identified so far; 38.5% of these are native to New York State, with "native" defined as being present before Europeans. Andy then presented a pictorial view of select Oswego denizens, ranging from wild 4 o'clocks and chickweed to goldmoss stonecrop, meadow goat's beard and bulbous buttercup.

Lastly, on May 11, Lytton Musselman of Old Dominion University did a presentation on edible plants of New York. He stressed early on that edible wild plants are not necessarily edible- much depends on the soil and environment in which the plants are growing.

When out in the wilderness good emergency foods, if needed are red spruce and cattails. After mentioning a short list of toxic plants such as ergot, poison ivy, poison oak, poison sumac, poison hemlock and wild ginger, Lytton began an illustrated discussion of wild edibles. He mentioned sassafras' use as a condiment, and that a little field garlic can go a long way. Nettles can be steamed when young though the seeds are also edible. Its stem fibers can even be made into clothing.

Continuing, he mentioned that plants such as arrow leaf (one of the best wild edibles), potato bean, chestnut oak and spring beauty are all sources of starch. Flowers that are good



sources of food include black locust, the buds of day lilies, dandelions, red bud, pigweed, amaranth and goosefoot. An excellent fruit for consumption is pawpaw, which is our largest native fruit. Mushrooms that are good food sources are the oyster mushroom, puffball (must be white throughout) and chicken of the woods.



The program ended with the audience sampling a number of wild edible dishes that Lytton had prepared prior to his presentation, some of which were collected that morning. The taste of these dishes? Oh, so good!

(Photos and article by Mike Holy)



2014 Nature Education Programs

SUNY Oswego's Rice Creek Field Station

Rice Creek Rambles

JULY 12, 19, 26
AUGUST 2, 9

What creatures can we find? What do they eat? Where do they live? What happened here? These and more questions will be the focus of these free naturalist-led summer walks at Rice Creek. We will start at main building at 11 o'clock on these Saturdays. Come dressed for the weather. Those planning to attend are asked to call 312-6677 on the morning of the hike to check trail conditions. Since program size is limited, we are not able to accommodate groups during these free Saturday programs. An adult needs to accompany children.

Conservation Field Studies summer program for teens has a registration

deadline in early July. For more information and registration materials visit www.oswego.edu/conservationstudies

Tour the New Rice Creek visit Rice Creek and learn about the sustainability features of our new 7640 square-foot energy-efficient main building and facility.

- ◆ The building hours are:
Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm
Saturday 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.

For more information visit www.oswego.edu/ricecreek or call 315-312-6677.

Programs administered by Dr. Diann C. Jackson

Memorable moments at Rice Creek

We encourage all members to submit a favorite memory of Rice Creek Field Station. Send it to Mike Holy at fordlep@yahoo.com or mail it directly to the field station. It will appear in a future newsletter.

Help us improve our newsletter!

At its June meeting, the Board decided to run this summer newsletter in color in part to show you the advantages to receiving a color issue, despite the added cost. We are now running a newsletter four times a year, an increase from two yearly. If you have an email

address and have not shared it with us, please reconsider. Viewing the newsletter online really helps with our Go Green efforts, reduces printing costs, and guarantees a color copy each time.

Also, 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.

Current RCA board members

Michael Holy, President
Peter Rosenbaum, Vice President
Holly Eden, Secretary
Paulia Bates
Claire Putala
Don Artz

Rice Creek Field Station Staff

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

Field Guides Available

Guides to the butterflies and invasive plants on the field station grounds are available for sale. They would make excellent gifts for anyone who enjoys walking the trails. Contact the field station office at 315-312-6677 for details.

RICE CREEK IS OPEN on SATURDAY

9:00 a.m. TO 3:00 p.m.

- ENJOY a program
- HIKE or bike the trails
- SEE exhibits inside the building
WATCH wildlife from the indoor viewing gallery
- ASK our naturalist questions

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, 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, 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 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.

Board members urgently needed!

Our Rice Creek Associates Board of Directors is presently requesting additional Board members. In order to function at top efficiency we need at least an additional three members. Please, if you have time to spare for a one-hour monthly meeting with a few more hours in the month to assist with our organization (many of which can be done at your convenience in your home), contact me at fordlep@yahoo.com or 315-622-1774 for further information. I will be glad to guide you through our organization and answer any questions or concerns you may have.

I have heard from many of our members with compliments on our newsletters and Rice Creek Reflections lecture series. Seriously consider helping us continue to provide those services to our membership.

Mike Holy, Board President

Join Rice Creek Associates

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

___ New Calendar-year 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)

\$ _____.

Please make checks payable to:

State University College Foundation/RCA

Return to:

Rice Creek Field Station #23

SUNY Oswego

Oswego, New York 13126

Summer Photos at Rice Creek



Tiger Swallowtail on Knapweed (M.Holy)



Serene view of Rice Creek (M.Holy)



Purple Flowering Raspberry (M. Holy)

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

TO: