

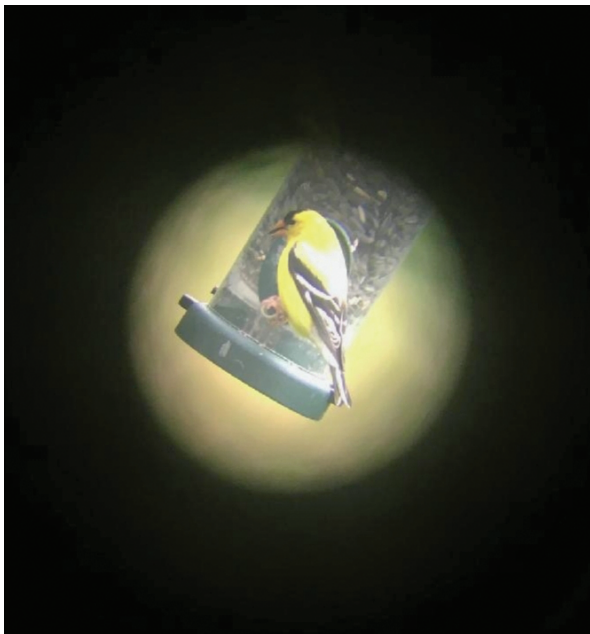


Rice Creek Associates Newsletter

Summer 2021

Visitor's "Discoveries"

Rice Creek Field Station has visitors daily that walk the trails, bird watch, etc. Visitors as far away as South Georgia or further. Two pictures, one of an American Goldfinch and the other a Brown Thrasher were taken on June 15th from Rice Creek's room 121 scope by William Griggs. William, from Americus Georgia, was in Oswego visiting family.



American Goldfinch
Carduelis pinus



Brown Thrasher
Toxostoma rufum

President's Comments

Think about how many times you have heard the phrases *change is good*, or *change is hard*, or *change is inevitable*, or *change is necessary*, or *be the change*, or the voice I hear, David Bowie singing ch-ch-ch-ch-changes! We cannot escape *changes*, and RCFS is no exception.

The bursts of spring growth, accompanied by the needed precipitation led to the beautiful, lush growth you have seen these past weeks, such a *change* from the memories of drab winter that are quickly growing dimmer. So many flowering

trees, shrubs and plants have provided us with a beautiful spectrum of colors and scents to enjoy.

Rice Pond is emptying into the creek once again, the water flow grows and *changes* with the rain. Last week the water was making its way north flowing not over the fish ladders, but trickling through their tubes, like electricity following the path of least resistance. This will *change* throughout the season.

Now that summer is here, we will continue to see *changes*, as seasonal plants will continue to show their beauty. The butterflies are beginning to appear, I saw my first monarch in my yard on June 20th. Baby animals of all varieties are making their appearances, and they grow and *change* so quickly! I have a robin's nest on my front porch, so I got to see the daily *changes* in the nest and the eventual appearance of the blue eggs. A family of foxes, mom and three kits are living in the yard next to mine. They *change* a bit with every appearance.

As a member of Rice Creek Associates you will experience some other *changes* soon! We are so excited to have been given the okay to begin holding our Reflections again starting in September. Vice Presidents Pat Jones and Sharon Morey are working on setting up the calendar for the year, rescheduling some speakers we had to postpone due to Covid-19. They also have some new ideas for interesting programs. The personal growth from information you receive at these sessions will certainly bring about some *changes* in your thinking. We know the students who attend the Exploring Nature sessions this summer will be *changed* in ways that will hopefully last a lifetime.

As you may know, we have made some *changes* this past year that are making a positive *change* in numbers of members, with online membership enrollment and other computer applications you may have seen posted in the display boxes at our two trail sign-in areas. We had a highly

successful membership donation campaign for our Small Grants Program, and the research it supports will have an impact and perhaps create some *change* as well.

I will end this litany of *changes* with a few quotes from which I find inspiration:

There is nothing permanent, except change.
– Heraclitus

We must all obey the great law of change. It is the most powerful law of nature.
- Edmund Burke

Change is the hallmark of nature, nothing remains the same.
- Alan Weisman

The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, and join the dance.
– Alan Watts

- Laurel Artz



Narrow-Leaf Evening Primrose
Oenothera fruticosa

Director's Report

Update on the Field Station and Gratitude to RCA

This past academic year has been another unusual one at the Field Station. We have seen the lowest activity in term of in person programs we offered including our beloved Reflection Presentations and Exploring Nature.

However, on the bright side, we were able to adapt. Kristen, with the assistance of the team she assembled, was able to organize or deliver 77 events. Twenty-two of these were offered virtually and attended or viewed by more than 4,000 people. Among these were Exploring Nature Live, Field Notes Live on Facebook, and the Arbor Day Webinar Conference on Zoom.

The other 55 events were primarily serving SUNY Oswego students. They included New Student Orientation programs, Wellness Day events, and programs offered in partnership with the Counseling Services Center. Remarkably, 50% of student attendees had never been to the Field Station before, thereby introducing new students to the Field Station.

The live programs offered a relief to a diverse group of people including students and gave them a chance to explore nature and enjoy outdoor activities. These events included programs such as health related Issues/wellness field visit, Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy, Exploring Nature Live, Wander with Wonder Nature Series, Lessons from Nature Series, Owl Prowl, and Guided Snowshoe Nature Walk.

The good news is that COVID-19 restrictions are ending, we hope. We sought and have been given permission to proceed with our in person public programs this summer given that we abide by the school and State guidelines. We apologize to our members for providing little services during the past two years.

The other topic I want to touch on is the positive and successful campaign for our Small Grants Program. The response from our members has been great reflecting the significance of the program. We received over 35 generous donations, which put us more than halfway of the original target we set. On behalf of Rice Creek Field Station and Rice Creek Associates, I would like to thank our members for their continuous support. The Small Grant Program is an important part of our mission of supporting research at the Field Station. The program has been instrumental in accumulating the knowledge on the biology and ecology of our local area.

Here I would like to highlight one unique project funded this year. Through our members' support, we are proud to be a sponsor of the Tyler Art Gallery's upcoming program "*Alberto Rey - Biological Regionalism: Oswego River and Lake Ontario*". The project starts this fall and ends with an Art Exhibit in spring 2022. We believe the combination of science, art, and interaction at the core of this project will create important conversations pertaining to our community's most vital asset.

Alberto Rey's work underscores the vitality and beauty of regional waterways. It highlights the vulnerability of our habitat by testing water samples for pollutants and by rendering wildlife in distress. Therefore, Rey's work aligns with our mission by uniting local audiences of all ages to build awareness and pride in our local bodies of freshwater and the complex ecosystem they support.

I would like to conclude by acknowledging the great effort of the dedicated RCA team who led this campaign and RCA board members for their tireless effort in supporting the Field Station mission and goals.

- Kamal Mohamed



Garden at building entrance

Assistant Director's Update

Finally, the light at the end of the tunnel: starting on July 5, our first in-person public program will begin!

Since 1983, this program, Exploring Nature, has given young people hands-on learning experiences in nature with the goal of inspiring them to care for their world. Participants learn about natural history and ecology through exploration, observation, games, and creative activities. Youth ages 5-16 can participate for one or two weeks.

As we ready ourselves to welcome close to 90 kids to Rice Creek, I want to extend my sincere thanks to our RCA members who generously donated to the Exploring Nature scholarship fund over the past two years. Thanks to your donations, we awarded 13 full and partial

scholarships for this year's program, totaling \$1,475.

These awards have meant so much to the children and families who received them. This past year especially was a year of health and financial hardship for many people. Our 2021 Exploring Nature scholarship families experienced unemployment/underemployment, serious health complications, and low wages over the past year. I feel incredibly grateful that thanks to our scholarship fund, we could secure a spot in our program for these 13 children without placing a financial burden on their families. Many parents expressed their deep thanks to me, which I am passing on to you, because it is you who made this happen.

If you would like to contribute to next year's Exploring Nature scholarship fund, directions for giving can be found on the Rice Creek Associates webpage (<https://www.oswego.edu/rice-creek/about-rice-creek/rice-creek-associates>) and at the end of this newsletter. Thank you in advance for your continued generosity! It does indeed make a world of difference.

- **Kristen Haynes**

A Walk Under the Stars

Last summer I had the pleasure of having a two-year-old visiting for a weekend. Even at this early age, she had a keen interest in nature. For instance, upon seeing a ladybug she would get so excited and ask all kinds of questions about it.

On this evening as we looked out the window beyond the lighted porch, all we could see was darkness. To my great surprise, my little friend asked if we could go outside for a walk in the dark. I said, "Of course!" and grabbed a flashlight. Then, even more surprisingly, she asked if we could leave the flashlight off. "Sure," I said, and we headed out the door. Now, this was

going to be an adventure! Here was a two-year-old who wanted to go into the darkness to see what it was all about. When was the last time you took a walk in the dark without the aid of a flashlight?

As we walked hand-in-hand through the grassy backyard boarded by trees, my friend told me to look up at the stars. It was a very clear night, and the heavens were wide open. We could see the long stream of stars called the Milky Way.

We stared at the stars in silence. Then with all the innocence of a child she exclaimed, “Oh, what a beautiful day!”

We continued our walk. Familiar objects no longer had their definitive shapes. She pointed to various things, seeing them in this new “light.” Upon seeing the trees silhouetted against the sky she said, “Look at the pretty trees!”

We walked deeper into the yard. Now, the only things visible were dozens of fireflies passing slowly over the lawn. She watched in silent amazement. This was her first time seeing fireflies. What I would have given to trade places with her at that moment.

As I waited for my companion to speak, I listened to the night sounds – the bellowing of frogs and the chirping of crickets. I thought about the fireflies and how they reminded me of pixies and woodland fairies. “They look like stars,” she finally said.

I caught a firefly in my hands and let it crawl up my arm. It was blinking. My friend giggled with excitement. I think I was just as excited as she was. Then she started with the questions. She wanted to know just what they were, how did they glow?

I knew that only the males flew and glowed to attract a mate and if you watched long enough you could see that there was a pattern to their

blinking. Each species has a specific pattern. The females wait in the grass and will flash back when they see an approaching male firefly. In one species, the female, having learned the blinking code of a different species, will upon enticing the male to come closer, attack the male and make a snack of him while she awaits a male of her own species to mate with.

I told my little friend that they were bugs, and they were saying hello to one another. She was pleased with that explanation.

Over the course of the next few evenings, she would ask to go back outside to see the fireflies again. Each night was as magical as the first – for the novice naturalist and the experienced one, too.

- Paul Knittel



An unusually large Jack-in-the-Pulpit

Book Review:

Hurry and the Monarch

By Antoine O Flatharta

Illustrated by Meilo So

If you are looking for a childrens' book dealing with nature to share with a young person three years and up, this would be a perfect choice. It describes the amazing migratory journey of the monarch butterfly through a story that includes a tortoise, who sleeps through the winter while the butterfly he met in November flies to Mexico. In the spring she returns, lays her eggs on a milkweed plant, and Hurry, the Texas tortoise, witnesses the transformation and meets the new butterfly who, of course, flies off toward Canada!

The watercolor illustrations are airy and beautiful, as well as accurate as is the book. Bonus--the afterword describes the life cycle and travels of the monarch butterfly, in case you need more details to answer questions that just might come up after reading Hurry and the Monarch!

-Sheri Morey

A Snippet Over Time

Over the years, I have noticed a decline in both numbers of species and individuals of butterflies in general, and at the field station in particular.

I decided to take a brief look back at these numbers, arbitrarily deciding to pick the middle of June for a comparison, beginning with year one (1996) of our transect studies. Most of these dates are within a few days of calendar day 167, equivalent to 15 June 1996. Below are the results for each day. I might also add that the majority of these days had starting temperatures near 68 F, with mostly sunny skies and light breezes.

Date	Species	Total Individuals
15June96	11	92
12June97	8	53
14June98	5	51
12June99	12	72
14June00	13	89
17June01	19	194
18June02	11	48
16June03	7	26
16June04	10	29
12June05	14	46
16June06	13	51
16June07	14	87
15June08	19	133
12June09	7	40
26June10	15	34
15June11	9	30
14June12	10	34
12June13	10	29
16June14	8	20
17June15	12	37
17June16	7	31
14June17	5	18
No 2018 data	---	---
17June19	7	27
16June20	4	11

Species: Generally speaking, through 2015 the number of species observed averaged 11.3 per observation day; from 2016 through 2020, 5.8 per day. My statistical naiveness aside, a downward trend is clearly evident. Why are species declining at the field station during this time period?

Individuals. Two years stand out among the 24. Both 17 June 2001 and 15 June 2008 not only have high numbers of individuals (194 and 133 respectively) but also tie for the greatest number of species (19). A closer look at those years reveals that populations of Red Admirals, Hobomok and Long Dash Skippers, Question Marks and Little Wood Satyrs were larger than

usual in 2001 on that day. For the 2008 date Hobomok Skippers, Tiger Swallowtails and Summer Azures were most frequently observed. Even without an increase of individuals for those species, the species total is significant.

It is disturbing to me that most of the species on those two dates have not been recorded in the recent past. I have pondered the reason(s) over and over again. Factors such as general yearly climate conditions, climate change (not the same as the former), invasive species, nearby habitat changes resulting in a lack of corridor travel connection opportunities which sustain healthy populations, and use of pesticides may all play a part. Of these, pesticide use and diminishing corridor connections concern me the most. To me they are the most immediate and consequential for butterfly species loss (as well as other insect species) at Rice Creek.

Granted, this is personal opinion and admittedly based on a tiny amount of data. Generally speaking though, what I present here is more or less typical of each season through these years. Much more research is needed to definitively make these “cause and effect connections.”

Is there at all a silver lining in this data? Yes! Great opportunities exist for research by college students and nature lovers to connect the dots on the declines of butterflies, bees, beetles and other insects. And despite my disheartening vision of doom and gloom, I hope this encourages many of our members and readers to do what they can to plant native vegetation in their gardens. This will create additional corridors for all critters to travel from locale to locale to establish healthy gene pools within populations.

There is still a wonderful world to experience along the trails at Rice Creek. Find time to explore first hand nature in all its glory. Visit other sites as well. Let's all do our part to become one with our natural environment.

- Mike



Green Spotted Tiger Beetle

Editor's Mea Culpa

Accidentally, a draft copy of the spring newsletter was sent to the printer. Some names of donors were either misspelled or placed in the wrong category. Below is the final version that should have been printed. Please note: this list does not contain the names of donors who have contributed since that spring publication. We certainly are appreciative of all donations to our programs!

-Mike

Small Grants

Barbara Bartholomew
Laurel and Don Artz
Philip and Elizabeth Clift
Rosalie Costello
Vincent D'Ambrosio
Patrick and Rebecca Devendorf
Lisa Drake
John and Patricia Familo
Robert Foster
Mike and Wendy Fragale
Michael Holy
Eleanor Filburn
William Finck and Mary McGowan
Robert and Anne Morgan
Richard Kaulfuss
Paul and Rhea Knittel
Kenneth and Anne Krapf

Thomas and Mary Loe
Patricia and Ernest Mears
John Mincher
Kamal Mohamed
Mark and Sharon Morey
Andrew Nelson and Mary Anne Hogan
Michael and Edie Nupuf
Ronald and Gail Opanhoske
Shirley Peron
Evonne Petrella
Jeffrey and Wendy Purdy
Hal Sussman and Elizabeth McTiernan
Chandra Vincent

Exploring Nature

Susan Ansara
Barbara Bartholomew
Joseph Brown
Jodi Cary
Vincent D'Ambrosio
William Finck and Mary McGowan
Paulia Bates and Frank Meeks
Robert and Anne Morgan
Stephen and Christine Skubis

Trail Improvements

Edward Currier
Vincent D'Ambrosio
Megan and Scott Harrison
Ken and Anne Krapf
George and Heike Koenig
Richard Kaulfuss
Sheri and Mark Morey
Ronald and Gail Opanhoske
Megan Scheg

General Fund

Rick and Inga Back
Nancy Slowick Brandon
Mary Dineen
Marian Chermack
Edward Currier
Eric Hellquist
Amy Hueber
Andy Nelson and Mary Anne Hogan
James and Lynn Keefer

Andrew McElwain
Edie and Michael Nupuf
Albert and Joy Oliver
James and Marilyn Seago
Marlene Schneider

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**

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



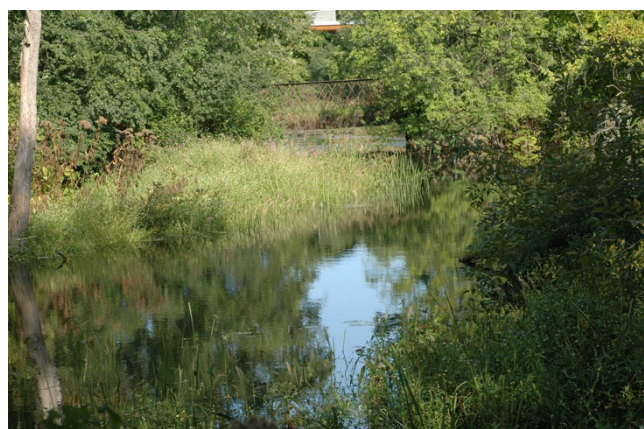
Find us on
Facebook



<https://www.facebook.com/rice.creek.92> This is the RCA page.

<https://www.facebook.com/ozricecreek> This is the RCFS page

Scenes at Rice Creek



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 <https://alumni.oswego.edu/RCAmembers>
[hip](#)

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

Join/renew RCA membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Date _____

All memberships are 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 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: