



Rice Creek Associates Newsletter

Winter 2018-2019

RCA Small Grant Recipient Wins Sigma Xi Award



Manna Job, right, accepting Sigma Xi Award

Manna Job, a SUNY Oswego undergraduate student, won the Sigma Xi award in the Division of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

Working under the supervision of SUNY Assistant Prof. Dr. Poongodi Geetha-Loganathan, Manna investigated the effects of atrazine on freshwater mussels. Atrazine is a commonly used herbicide in the United States to control grass and

broad-leaf weeds. It finds its way into groundwater, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and eventually rain and drinking water. It has the potential to accumulate in fatty tissues of exposed aquatic organisms. The study involved investigating any effects caused by this accumulation in fresh water mussels.

Manna submitted a poster of the study, including photos of the mussel's structures as well as microscopic tissue sample photos illustrating the histopathological alterations observed in the organism's ovaries and testes compared to specimens serving as control organisms.

This research was funded in part by Rice Creek Associates through their Small Grant Program. These grants are awarded every year to facilitate original research conducted principally on Rice Creek Field Station grounds. This program has been in existence for twenty-three years.

The program has been funded through operating funds of RCA and grant sources from SUNY Oswego. The program is administered by Rice Creek Associates.

We are always looking for additional funding for this program. If you are interested in helping with a donation, please contact the Field Station at 315-312-6677. All size donations will be gladly accepted.

From the Director

Kamal I. Mohamed

A Word of Appreciation.

I would like to use the Holiday season to celebrate and express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the support the Field Station gets from Rice Creek Associates' Board of Directors (RCA) and all RCA members. The role of the Board in planning and executing programs at the Field Station is crucial to the success of public outreach and connecting the college with the local community.

Over the years I have witnessed the dedication of past and present members of the Board in serving the mission of the Field Station. The Board members are always looking for new ideas and programs to keep up with the expectations of the Field Station users. I would like to acknowledge the support of RCA members and the general public who graciously supported the Field Station programs with their generous monetary donations. I also extend my thanks and recognition of the support of our staff at the Field Station and the SUNY Oswego administration, including the President, Provost, and Dean. We are lucky to be supported by an administration that understands our needs and the role the Field Station is playing in improving the quality of our students learning experience and public outreach activities.

Dogs at Rice Creek.

"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." Because of its importance, this statement is included in all RCA Newsletters.

For convenience, the Field Station provides two dog waste stations to collect pet wastes. This has worked great in keeping the trails clean.

I urge dog owners to please keep their pets under control at all times. This is especially true for dogs that do not come on command; they always should be kept on leash.

I appeal to owners to be considerate of others who may not be as comfortable around pets. The vast majority of owners are indeed respectful of others and follow guidelines of the use of the Field Station and trails. We all noticed that owners kept close to their pets when they saw us driving in or out of the Field Station, and most drivers also slowdown when there are dogs on the driveway.

However, in a few instances, owners let their dogs to run freely. This could be a problem when other people are in the area. In one case student workers were stunned and scared by dogs inside the building behind the main desk in the lobby, one of these students was quite terrified; the second student was uncomfortable but he said out of fear he did not let the dog out of his sight while he was there. Another incident was on the driveway where a faculty member and students were met by three unleashed dogs running all over the place. The dogs jumped on their car while the car was traveling at a safe speed.

Those who reported these encounters were clearly distressed. To summarize, please let us be respectful of each other and enable all to take full advantage of this beautiful facility and its grounds.

Annual Rice Creek Social held

A standing room only crowd attended our annual RCA Social on Saturday, November 3.



Showcased were four presentations of Small Grants research projects immediately following some introductory remarks by RCA President **Robert Foster**, Field Station Director **Dr. Kamal Mohamed**, and SUNY Oswego Provost and Academic Vice President **Dr. Scott Furlong**. **Dr. Maria Sagot**, Small Grants Chair, moderated the event.

Awardee recipients and topics of research presented were:

Joseph McCarthy: Effects of *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (OE) on the Painted Lady Butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*) (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae)

Kervans Lerouge: Effects of Temperature and Day Length on Daily Movements and Home Range of the Flying Squirrel

Dr. Justin Stroup: Establishing the Rice Creek Hydrological Monitoring Array

Rocco Saya: Development of a Field Guide for the Insects of the Rice Creek Field Station

The RCA Small Grants program has existed for 23 years. A call for proposals for 2019 will soon be underway. RCA membership support is a major factor for the success of this program.



Standing left to right are Kervans Lerouge, Rocco Saya, Dr. Andrew McElwain, Dr. Maria Sagot, and Dr. Justin Stroup. Absent from photo: Joseph McCarthy.

President's Report

I was raised in Brooklyn on Grove Street where 6-family 3-story tall buildings with railroad rooms were common. Railroad apartments consisted of 4 rooms all in a straight row. To heat these cold-water flats we used kerosene to fuel the heater that was part of our kitchen stove. The tiny front yards of these buildings were all cement paved. There wasn't a single tree for many city blocks. These buildings did have back yards some of which had trees but not too many and were not visible from the street. Even the local elementary school yard on Knickerbocker and Grove was cement paved. The local junior high, Willoughby, and the local high school, Bushwick, didn't have any lawns or trees either. No one ever had to cut grass in Bushwick.

Not the conditions for monarch butterflies to be sure. The first Monarch I saw after moving to Oswego in 2014 was when our RCA Lepidopterist, Michael Holy, pointed one out to me. Since then I have become more and more interested in these spectacular and colorful creatures. Mike explained to me that the numbers of Monarchs have been in decline for years. [He did tell me that in Rice Creek he has seen some increase this year though not in numbers like they were years ago].

We know a few of the reasons such as expanded human activity and milkweed being destroyed as unwanted plants. I recently read an article by David Wolfe, explaining “how climate change affects the Monarch butterfly”. He said because our weather stays warmer in the fall [except for 2018!] the Monarchs, temperature sensitive, depart for Mexico up to 6-weeks later. Then as winter quickly advances, the Monarchs die on the way.



**Male Monarch feeding on a milkweed plant.
Milkweed leaves are their larva's only source
of food.**

In the Star, a local once a week newspaper in Onondaga county, for two consecutive weeks they featured Dr. Rob Niederhoff and the Liverpool public library raising Monarchs inside the children's room. The story recounted how Dr. Niederhoff was able to collect 120 eggs that he found on milkweed plants.



Common milkweed plants

I asked Prof. Kamal Mohamed, director of Rice Creek, if we could help Monarch populations by raising more of them here at Rice Creek. He is planning on a wild flower garden at the blue trail fork in the Meadow area and he plans to grow milkweed from seeds in the early spring.

Mary Magistro, a Rice Creek Reflection attendee, sent me a web site dedicated to tagging Monarchs.

<https://monarchwatch.org/tagging/>

“The Monarch Watch Tagging Program is a large-scale citizen science project that was initiated in 1992 to help understand the dynamics of the monarch's spectacular fall migration through mark and recapture.”



So far both Wendy and I have each contributed \$50 towards our Monarch project. I do hope you will consider help us. The more money we receive the more Monarch rearing kits and supplies we can purchase.

On a personal note I plan to start growing milkweed at our Clay house on the Oneida River. I'll buy milkweed plugs for a faster start. Once the plants are underway and doing well, then I'll purchase a rearing kit.

On the same site was a link to purchase Monarch Rearing kits, tags, nets, way-station signs, even flats of milkweed.

<https://shop.monarchwatch.org/>

In "How to Raise Monarch Butterflies" by Carol Pasternak, she says simple plastic "Kritter Keepers" readily available from Amazon work fine.



I prefer to leave any Monarchs already on the plants and instead add to the population by purchasing rearing kits. I would like to raise some monarchs inside the field station lobby as Dr. Niederhoff and the Liverpool library did. I want to increase public awareness and interest in these majestic creatures. In the summer we have the Exploring N program ature kids and lots of visitors that walk our 4 wonderful trails. I think it would be nice to get some of these people involved.



I also hope that Dr. Neiderhoff can visit with us in the spring and do a reflection for the community at the field station. Wouldn't it be nice if other interested homeowners joined in in raising Monarch butterflies too.

Michael Holy's "A guide to the Butterflies of the Trails and Fields at Rice Creek Field Station" in full color can be purchased at the field station for just 5.00 each.

- **Robert Foster**

Message Boards Constructed



After a long period of planning, pricing, and construction, two message boards have been installed at Rice Creek. One is located at the front parking lot at the entrance on Thompson Rd. the other near the entrance to the Blue trail just past the herb garden. Information about the field station and upcoming events will be among the items posted within, making visits along the trails more informative for walking and hiking visitors.



Around the Grounds



New culvert on the Orange/Blue Trail heading east towards Thompson Rd.

This summer and fall semester have been much busier than normal as our focus was aimed on improving drainage along the Orange Trail. This led to the installation of 5 new culverts, 1 new

bridge, over 200' of new drainage ditches and roughly 48 ton of crushed and #3 (3/4"-2") stone added to areas normally under water during winter and spring. Most of these projects will continue to be improved over the winter and throughout next year, with more planned for the future.



Bollards along the parking lot south

We also installed 13 new bollards along the parking lot near the building and have already noticed a significant decrease in damage done to the lawn. We are thankful for the assistance from two of our Student Temp Service workers to complete this job.

All of this work could not have been accomplished without the help from all of our Student Temp Service (STS), Federal Work Study (FWS), Community Service and Volunteer workers. Our volunteers came from various groups and Organizations and together, with our STS and FWS students, they made up the 104 workers that contributed 1,034.5 hours of labor.

I would like to thank the following Volunteer groups that helped out this summer and fall semester:

Sigma Alpha Epsilon - 33 workers and 99 hours
Johnson Hall (Dorm) - 12 workers and 48 hours
Center for Experiential Learning (GST 303) - 12 workers and 319 hours

Oswego County Conservation Corp. (Oc3) – 9 workers and 67.5 hours

Oswego County Water Cats – They came and assisted with the removal of over 1 ton of invasive water chestnuts from the pond.

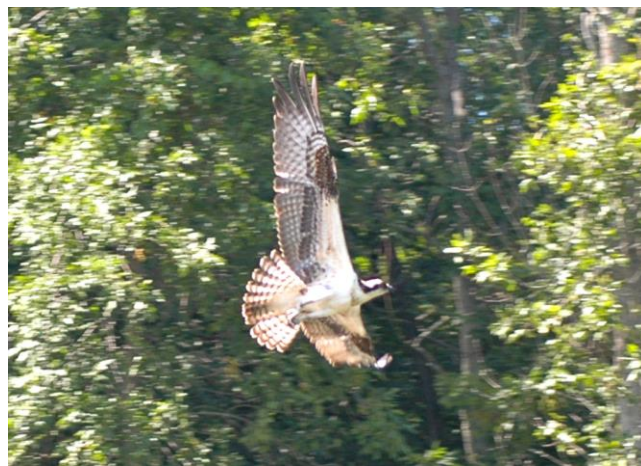
-Alan Harris/Grounds Keeper

Memorable moments at Rice Creek



On May 14, 2012, I noticed this solidified sap from a tree whose branch had been cut. There are instances where a picture cannot display the true beauty of experiencing it first hand in its full setting, but this particular one in my opinion comes close.

When freshly oozing from a tree, sap attracts a wide variety of insects. They are often so busy feeding on the sap they are oblivious to the goings on around them. Such an event provides an excellent opportunity to take close-up pictures.



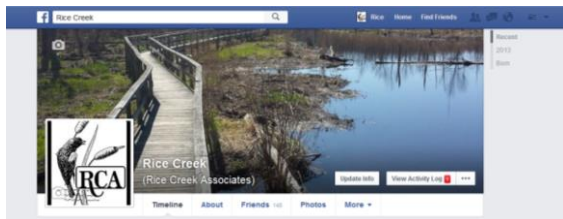
On August 21, 2015, I was walking across the second boardwalk on the green trail at Rice Creek when I startled an Osprey roosting in a tree. I quickly aimed by macro lens (!) mounted on my camera toward the sky and quickly took a few photos. Experience has taught me that a macro lens is not the lens of choice when taking pictures of birds at a distance, but I was there for close ups of insects. I took my chances anyway and came up with this snapshot.

Please share with us a special experience you've had at Rice Creek. A picture is not required. It will appear in a future newsletter. Send it to **me** at fordlep@yahoo.com.

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 a field station photo 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. RCA makes it possible to fund improvement projects that benefit the station and the community at large.

We strive to serve our membership as best as possible. Please address all newsletter and RCA membership concerns directly by contacting Mike Holy at 315-622-1774 or email 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.

Membership Renewal Reminder

Our yearly membership runs from March 1 to February 28. Last year the RCA Board approved a measure to move renewal from Jan. 1 to prevent renewals from coinciding with the Christmas season. Our renewal category rates have not changed, despite our ever-increasing costs. If you have any questions concerning your current RCA membership, contact Mike at the phone/email address listed under **Rice Creek Associates** on the previous page.

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

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 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

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: