



Dyken Pond-erings

Newsletter of the Friends of the Dyken Pond Center

Issue 115

Promoting environmental awareness in people of all ages

Autumn 2012

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The summer of 2012 was a hot one! I know many people hate the heat, but for me, I thoroughly enjoyed this summer. Any summer when I don't have to bring out the fleece on cool days and nights is a good one. At an elevation of 1700 feet, it's always a bit cooler up here at the Center, so it's easier for us to beat the heat. The 2012 season was hot, but also our busiest season ever! Here's a few of the highlights:

Summer Camp: 74 kids attended summer camp this year. Aside from a few bee stings, camp went smoothly. Pierce Hoyt holds the summer record with 11 yellow jacket stings at once.

Scholarships: The Friends of Dyken Pond awarded 10 scholarships to youth to attend the Summer Outdoor Learning Adventure, a nature day camp. 7 of these attended. One partial scholarship was awarded to a student to attend NYS's DEC Camp Colby in Saranac Lake.

Vocational Training, also known as the "Rough Riders":, 8 youth and 1 supervisor worked 2 days per week for 5 weeks this summer. They worked on trails, landscaping and

facility upkeep.

Outreach: 19 programs were presented to libraries and youth organizations throughout the County. Programs on "Owls", "Bats" and "Traveling Pond" were popular.

Junior Naturalist Programs: 9 programs were presented to kids of all ages every Tuesday afternoon. Each event consisted of nature activities, hikes and crafts. We finished the season with an ice cream party the last day. This program had a great turnout and we plan on offering it again next year.

Trails: We are re-marking the entire trail system! Look for new diamond shaped trail markers on your next hike. We hope to have all trails finished by the end of October.

Also in this issue:

- ▲ Nature Deficit Disorder Part 2
- ▲ Fall Programs
- ▲ Bird Seed Sale

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Nature-Deficit Disorder and What it Means to You

By Josh Pulito, Seasonal Educator

Nature-Deficit Disorder is a term which was coined by Richard Louv in his 2005 book “Last Child in the Woods – Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder”. While it is not a recognized medical diagnosis it is surely a real problem affecting the population at large. Simply put Nature-Deficit Disorder (NDD hereafter) refers to our declining contact with nature as a society and its detrimental costs to our well being, health and environment.

The Bulk of Studies on NDD have found that increasing a child’s contact with the natural environment increases confidence and self esteem while decreasing behavioral issues. Several scientists have also found that exposure to a natural setting is an effective therapy for Attention-Deficit Disorders. Opponents of this theory state that the physical and psychological benefits derived from time spent in nature are intangible and impossible to measure accurately. They feel that our time would be better spent conducting research in other areas. That is their opinion... It is the opinion of this writer that these people are most likely unknowingly suffering from NDD and would do well to leave their offices, get outside and see why it is never a bad idea to encourage people to spend time in nature. While it is difficult to standardize and

measure the benefits of time spent outdoors these people clearly miss the overall point of the NDD theory which is that people are currently spending less time outdoors that at any other time in history and it seems to be contributing to societal and environmental problems. More people are considered obese than at any other time. Early onset diabetes is on the rise as are Vitamin D deficiencies while antidepressants are being prescribed at unprecedented rates. All the while wilderness areas and wetlands are disappearing and pollution levels continue to grow.

The theory of NDD is quite simply making the point that people are more active outdoors than inside. This is a fact and does not need to be backed up scientifically (though several studies have reached this same conclusion). Therefore people who spend more time outdoors exercise more and have a reduced risk of obesity. Regular exercise and lower body mass index greatly reduce the risk of developing diabetes. People with normal Vitamin D levels (which the body synthesizes when in contact with sunlight) take far fewer antidepressants and state in surveys that they are happier than people with below normal Vitamin D levels. Finally it is from spending time outdoors and developing an appreciation of nature that young people learn to preserve and protect the environment. We can not expect people to utilize conservation techniques to protect environments that are foreign and meaningless to them. There is an old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words and unfortunately much of our youth knows only about nature what they have seen in pictures primarily obtained through digital media sources. If a picture is worth a thousand words than surely an experience is worth millions. No scientist, scholar or intellectual in the world would argue that it is better to learn from watching something on television or the internet than from actual experience. So what is the argument about? Why not get outside right now and if you have a child take them with you. It is good for everyone and everything involved and furthermore fun!





Can you identify this bird?

It was spotted a few times on the lake and in Dustin Swamp this summer. This one is immature. A mature bird of the same species was also spotted on the lake throughout August. . See back cover for answer.

Friends of Dyken Pond Annual Meeting

And Volunteer Appreciation Day

Saturday, October 27

3-4pm: Guided hike; games on lawn

4pm: Dinner catered by Old Daley Inn Free for all 2012 Volunteers. Pre-registration needed for dinner by 10/22

5pm: Annual Meeting

5:30—7pm: Almost Full Moon Twilight Hike

7pm: Campfire and S'mores

Autumn Programs 2013

September 29: Full Moon Hike with Josh Pulito: Hike about 2miles and then enjoy the moonrise over the lake with a campfire. 6:30pm Free

September 30: Wild Edibles with Lee Wilson Adult workshop. Seasonal roots and fruits. Foraging walk followed by a shared meal. Pre-registration required. \$20; \$15 members. 10am—4pm

October 14: Magic of Fire with Dan Yacobellis Adult workshop. Make a bow drill set, learn primitive techniques. . Pre-registration required. \$20; \$15 members. 10 am—3:30 pm

October 21: Forestry Day : Tree Identification, Tree Measurements. For youth 10 and up. Pre-registration required. \$4 per person.

October 27: Annual Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation Day see side bar

October 27: Full Moon Hike Twilight hike followed by campfire. Free.

November 3: Volunteer Day Help the Center bring in its supply of firewood for the winter. Volunteers can help cut, gather, haul and stack firewood. Dinner provided for all helpers. Dinner reservations required by 11/1.

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Nature Notes

Fun Facts About American Eels

- ▲ American eels are found in Dyken Pond
- ▲ All American Eels begin their lives in the Sargasso sea before traveling to fresh water to mature.
- ▲ -Eels absorb oxygen through their mucus covered skin which allows them to leave the water and travel short distances over land.
- ▲ -Eels can travel through underground water allowing them access to bodies of water without visible inlets or outlets.
- ▲ -Eels move equally well forward and backward and typically obtain manageable pieces of food by twisting it off with their weak jaws by spinning up to 14 times a second (Olympic ice skaters can spin 5 times a second.)
- ▲ -Eels are blocked from much of their historical habitat due to man made obstacles such as dams and hydropower plants.



American Eel