

Dyken Pond-erings

Newsletter of the Friends of the Dyken Pond Center

Issue 12

Promoting environmental awareness in people of all ages

Summer 2009

Dyken Pond Environmental
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Otter Cove Parcel Protected

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WE DID IT! After a long year of waiting the Friends of Dyken Pond has acquired the beautiful 23 acre parcel of land on the west side of Otter Cove. The closing took place on June 9, 2009. This land is surrounded on three sides by the existing land of the Dyken Pond Center and on the fourth side by 1100 feet of shoreline on Dyken Pond. This land is directly adjacent to the canoe launch near Cabin One and is directly behind the amphitheatre.

Thank you to all of our supporters. To date, we have raised \$44,000, with \$20,000 coming from foundations and an amazing \$24,000 coming from the donations of individual supporters, including small businesses. And in the category of more recent good news, at the end of May we were awarded a matching grant of up to \$50,000 from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. (The actual amount that we will receive will be half of the full appraised value of the parcel.) All together, that's up to \$94,000 received or awarded.

Our total project cost including the cost of the land, closing costs, fundraising expenses, and attorney and appraisal fees is about \$108,000. In order to purchase the property now before raising the total amount needed, we were granted a very generous one-year, interest-free loan from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation. Several of our board members loaned the Friends their own money as security against the loan. The Friends must pay Norcross back by June 30, 2010.

So we are not out of the woods just yet

(some of us would prefer to stay in the woods). We still have to raise at least \$14,000 more to be able to pay off our loan and meet our expenses.

Please join us to celebrate the purchase of the Otter Cove parcel on Saturday, September 12th. We will have an open house from 2pm-5pm. There will be walks on the new parcel as well as boat tours and children activities. The canoes and kayaks will be available free of charge. We wish to share cake and ice cream to celebrate this accomplishment! See you there.

WE THANK:

The Norcross Wildlife Foundation for an interest free loan in the amount of \$92,000.

The William Gundry Broughton Charitable Private Foundation, Inc. for a grant of \$10,000.

A donor that wishes to remain anonymous for donations totaling \$10,000.

We thank in advance the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

We thank Lisa Hoyt, the director of the Dyken Pond Center, and our board members who have worked tirelessly on fundraising, grant writing, negotiating contracts, and attending meetings to make this happen.

We also thank our supporters who have made all the difference. Each and every contribution is greatly appreciated!

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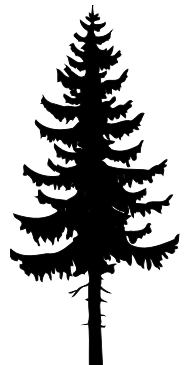
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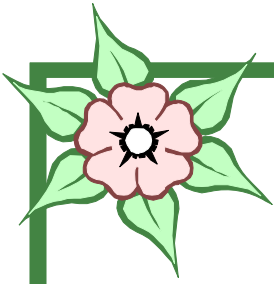
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One tree does not make a forest. But together they can! All donors added to our collective effort to purchase the Otter Cove parcel. Every donation was appreciated and needed to achieve our goal.

THANKS!





Come Celebrate the Otter Cove Purchase

When: Saturday, September 12, 2009

Where: Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center

Time: 2 p.m.—5 p.m.

In appreciation of all our members and the generous donations towards the protection and purchase of the Otter Cove land parcel, the Friends of the Dyken Pond Center wish to invite you to the Center for a tour of this great habitat and a celebration of this accomplishment!

Join us for a few words, cake and ice cream, and tours of the Otter Cove land. Our kayaks and canoes will also be available for anyone who wishes to explore Otter Cove by boat.

We hope you can join us as we recognize the stewardship of those who made this act of preservation possible.

We look forward to thanking you in person. Together we have made this purchase possible and are truly making a difference at the Center.

Sincerely,

The Board of the Friends of the Dyken Pond Center

Call the Center at 518-658-2055 if you have questions.

A Long Hard Walk

by John Deignan

I was on my way to meet Lisa Hoyt and Rachel Reimann to help out with an after-school program at Grafton Elementary School. As I barreled up the Rt. 2 hill out of Petersburg, I spied a fatigued woman walking along, and asked her if she needed a lift. Her daughter forgot to pick her up, and she had been on-foot for some time. As we made small talk along the way, she told me of how it was so rare for her to walk anywhere nowadays, so accustomed was she to driving. “What’s amazing,” she said, “is all the things you notice when you walk the road because you move so slowly. “What is it that you saw?” I inquired. She said, “You would not believe the amount of litter on the roadsides, but you never see it at 50 mph.”

A couple days later at the Center, Lisa asked if I would take a quick run through the Dustin Swamp trail, and clear some branches out of the way. I had been on that path with another youth group just a few days prior, and they sped down the trail convinced that the destination was more important than the journey. But this day my knee was bothering me, and I had no choice but to go slow. As the woman’s comment came back to visit me, I decided to try something different. I would, with intention, walk this trail as slowly and as quietly as I possibly could. I wanted to investigate the impact of trail speed on the outdoor experience.

I began taking ten slow gentle steps then pausing. The first thing I noticed was that I never looked directly up or straight down. Also, my eyes would default to scanning 20-50 feet away. It really was an effort to forcibly restrict my viewing radius to about 10 feet, but with each pause, entire new vistas came into focus. So many different shades of moss began



to appear. I began to see trout lily and other assorted vegetation poking themselves out of the leaves like periscopes. Every ten steps there was something new.

Like finding the perfect side-alley café in Paris, the colors, textures and scents disclosed themselves only when I quit walking like some tourist obsessed with “seeing” every attraction highlighted in the city’s vacation brochure. Mind you, I’m not begrudging anyone who enjoys an aerobic trail workout with their dog. That’s one of my favorite pastimes. But as my energetic canine “walks me” on the leash through the woods, it is largely about the two of us, not about the forest and me.

How many times have I gone to Dyken Pond and muttered to myself, “I’ve already walked Witch Hobble, or the Long Trail. I want something new.” My first inkling that such sentiment was off-kilter came at Dan Yacobellis’ tracking workshop a few months ago. I asked him at the outset, “How much ground will we get to cover today?” Clearly, my question was rooted in a sort of consumer-materialist mindset, where I somehow equated “amount of ground covered” with “degree of nature experienced.” As he smiled and cocked his head slightly, he gently reminded me that there was more sign (and subsequent story) within a 200 yard radius of where we stood than I could possibly imagine, and it began to dawn on me that the ramifications of taking the quantity over quality “buffet approach” have corollaries well beyond my dining experiences.

If you truly want to see what’s living at Dyken Pond, quit flying down the trail with a purpose. Try it sometime, but know in advance that it can be remarkably challenging. You may likely find yourself accelerating your pace without even noticing it. I turn it into a game, where I refuse to advance until I spy some truly unique aspect of the forest I hadn’t yet observed. You may be surprised how much you find, and if you’re lucky, you’ll lose track of time in the process.

Next time you take a walk at the Center try improving your observation skills and enjoyment level by walking more slowly!

FRIENDS FUNDRAISERS IN 2009

Flyers and dates will follow in the mail, newsletters or by email.

This year we will be holding many fundraisers as we continue to raise money for the Otter Cover Appeal and support for the environmental center. The board welcomes all Friends to join us in our efforts. Call any board member or the Center to participate.

Recap of recent fundraisers:

- ▲ **Benefit Concert:** Our benefit concert was held on June 27th at Northern Lights and several bands donated their time and energy. We raised approximately \$770 which will go to the Otter Cove appeal. Thanks to Greg and Alyla for making this happen. There may be another concert this year so watch you mail!
- ▲ **Great Escape Discount Tickets:** This Spring we sold advanced day tickets the Great Escape which turned out to be a "win-win" for us and the purchasers! People got a great discount on a day pass and we got money for each sale. We raised \$500.
- ▲ **T-Shirt Sale:** We sold Earth Day shirts in April and may great selections of shirts from the Earth, Sun, Moon series in June. Sales were down from last year and after printing the flyers we broke even.
- ▲ **Capture the Flag:** We have held 3 events at the Center and raised \$500. If you missed it you really missed out on the fun!

Upcoming fundraisers:

- ▲ **Recycle Ink jet cartridges:** This on-going collection of ink jet cartridges and used electronics will be a way to help the Friends and the environment. Ask your co-workers, friends and relatives to bring them to you. Then bring them to the Center next time you visit. Call or visit our website for more details.
- ▲ **Bird Seed Sale:** Now in its 19th year, we will offer a fall sale again this year. Enjoy your hobby of bird watching and support the Friends.
- ▲ **Holiday Wreaths:** Plan for your holiday decorating and pre-order balsam wreaths from the Friends. Place your order in November for pick-up in the beginning of December.

Please call us with your suggestions!

Upcoming Workshop:

Lake Ecology Workshop At Dyken Pond Center With David Hunt

Want to get more than your feet wet? Spend a day studying lake ecology as a scientist. The workshop will be held August 22 from 9 am to 4pm at Dyken Pond Center and will focus on Dyken Pond as an ecological community, with a strong emphasis on its plants and animals, including some rare species in Rensselaer County. Dr. David Hunt is a professional ecologist and botanist with extensive experience in aquatic communities and intimate knowledge of the ecology of the Rensselaer Plateau.



Bring a lunch, footwear that you don't mind getting wet, and, if you have them, a mask and snorkel. The fee for the session is \$25 for the day, \$20 for members. Please call the Center at 658-2055, or email dykenpond@fairpoint.net as pre-registration is required for this event.

Friends of the Dyken Pond Center, Ltd.

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