

RIDING THE WAVE

Undoubtedly, life will have changed greatly between the writing and receiving of this newsletter. We are several weeks into understanding COVID-19, adopting practices to avoid the virus, and we all continue forward despite great uncertainties ahead. Our hearts go out to all of you, our community, as well as the larger world, as we make many life adjustments for our health and safety, for work and for the protection of our families.

For WLC we remain steadfast in our mission, to protect land, water, habitat and the abundant natural resources we enjoy here. They are so important to us – and that reverence for the natural world is something that protects us, helping ensure our health. We also recognize the deep nourishment we continually receive from the beauty of our mountains, streams, forests and the wildlife in our midst. In these challenging times we seek comfort and healing, turning to the outdoors to inspire and calm us. And, despite our current great threats, we are witnessing the blooming of another spring, reminding us of renewal while recognizing that we as world citizens have much work to do.

In recent years WLC has grappled with the impact of our changing climate, focusing a variety of programs on this, while working and partnering on local initiatives to reverse these trends toward increased temperatures, cycles of drought and flooding, and loss of important species. This year we have jointly launched a community-wide pollinator pathway planting project. While COVID-19 has affected our planned roll-out, we've quickly rebounded, bringing the information to our community via online webinars, a website, and email blasts. Like you, we are learning how to employ technology to share our vital programming with you. Elsewhere in this newsletter is more project detail.

WLC also has several public preserves for community enjoyment. And our deep involvement in the Ashokan Rail Trail remains. We continue to hear from so many of you of its importance in your daily life. We're so fortunate that it opened last October and we support Ulster County and NYC DEP in maintaining it in these important times. We understand the current risk our public spaces can present – relying that all will utilize social distancing while enjoying them. Guided by NYS, Ulster County and CDC recommendations, we hope to keep our preserves open. Should we need to close preserves, we will post this information prominently



on our website and Facebook page.

We love this community. We are all here to help one another. Be in touch with suggestions and thoughts.

Our best to you and your loved ones.

Maxanne Resnick, Executive Director

YOUR DONATIONS MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE

Understandably, times are uncertain for many of us. Your annual contributions make our work possible, including land, water and habitat protection; our programming offering active responses to climate change, while fostering a deep knowledge and appreciation for the natural environment; and beloved celebrations like Longyear Farm Day. Our public preserves safeguard open spaces and we continue supporting expanding recreational opportunities on appropriate lands for public health and enjoyment – which, in the case of the Ashokan Rail Trail, has to-date been an 8-year relationship. And in this past year, we stretched our staff capacity leading the effort to understand the proposed 850 Route 28 project, as well as supporting efforts to stop the construction and debris dumping in Saugerties.

We don't know your personal circumstances, but if everyone receiving this newsletter makes even a small contribution to us it would make a tremendous difference. Enclosed is a remittance envelope for your convenience. You can also donate online at www.woodstocklandconservancy.org (look for the donate button). We thank you for supporting us through 32 years – and we look forward to continuing our mission for years to come.

POLLINATOR PATHWAY PROJECT

Pollinators are vital to the health of our ecosystems, including our food supplies. Entomologist, Doug Tallamy, has linked widespread pollinator decline to American lawns and gardens planted with exotic ornamentals. Over the past five years with our Thorn Preserve BioBlitz, WLC and the Catskill Center observed the marked decline of various area pollinator species. Inspired by Doug's work, we've created the "Pollinator Pathway" project, a collaborative community project joined by Woodstock Transition and community member partners. This replaces our annual BioBlitz and demonstrates to people how changing their plant choices and mowing practices can help provide much-needed habitat for pollinators, birds and many other forms of wildlife.

The colony collapse of our domestic honeybees along with pictures of people in China using little brushes to pollinate plants to replace the lack of insects is a stark reminder of the vital importance of supporting all pollinators. These include honeybees, wild bees, butterflies, moths, insects, also small mammals, hummingbirds and even amphibians. Our food web is dependent on pollinators, and a large number of our food crops would disappear without them. In addition to habitat loss, pollinators are stressed because of pesticides and other chemicals, climate change, invasive species and possibly artificial light.

Providing improved habitat is a solution to this problem. By joining the network of Pollinator Pathway Northeast, we are encouraging Woodstock area gardeners to use specific native host plants as well as those rich in nectar and pollen production. Lawns can be downsized and maintenance practices changed. Participants will be invited to place attractive 6" signs on their property to identify that they are part of the Pollinator Pathway, pesticide free, and with native plantings. A map will be made showing the scope of a connected network of gardens (individual properties will not be identified). The project and its members will give help and support in choosing native plants, in designing and planting a pollinator garden, in avoiding pesticides, and in dealing with deer, ticks and invasive species.

Further resources can be found now at www.pollinator-pathway.org/woodstock

OUR ADVOCACY CONTINUES:

850 ROUTE 28 PROJECT

Over the past year WLC has been actively involved in reviewing application documents, commenting and notifying the public regarding the proposed precast concrete and steel manufacturing facility in Town of Kingston adjacent to Onteora Lake, Pickerel Pond and the Bluestone Wild Forest (BWF) recreational trails. Along with Catskill Mountainkeeper and the Bluestone Forest citizens group we continue to review the Town Planning and Town Boards' activities on this project. The applicant continues to submit updated information, which can be found on their website at <http://850route28.com/application-documents>.

COVID-19 has also impacted the municipality's schedules. We will continue to keep people updated. If you haven't already signed this petition, please do so. https://www.catskillmountainkeeper.org/onteoara_lake_bluestone_forest_petition

For further info: www.woodstocklandconservancy.org or FB: Save Onteora Lake, Pickerel Pond and Bluestone Wild Forest

THE BELOVED ASHOKAN RAIL TRAIL

Since opening in late October there have been more than 48,000 visitors. It has offered a chance for locals to be outdoors, exercise, enjoy the extraordinary beauty of the trail and bump into friends they may not have seen for some time. We've heard countless enthusiastic stories about it. The trail has also been discovered by visitors from all over and on beautiful days the parking areas, particularly in West Hurley and Boiceville are very busy. With the opening, we launched a terrific volunteer trail stewards program together with NY/NJ Trail Conference to support this County amenity. In the fall nearly 60 volunteers served as trail ambassadors. At this time, with the uncertainties from COVID-19, individual stewards are choosing when and whether to volunteer based on their comfort level. When using the trail everyone must thoughtfully use social distancing. Also, remember to practice "Leave No Trace", leaving no dog poop, disposables or garbage behind. There is no maintenance staff to collect it. The port-a-johns have been sealed off, so please plan accordingly. For further info: www.ashokanrailtrail.com or on FB at Ashokan Rail Trail.

WE'VE GOT PRESERVES



Thanks to you we have wonderful preserves to share. Enjoy them while practicing social distancing. If parking areas are full, please have an alternate backup plan. Remember to "Leave No Trace", such as dog poop, disposables or garbage. There is no maintenance staff to collect it. Thank you. Further details on woodstocklandconservancy.org

Israel Wittman Sanctuary

Enjoy a two-mile loop forested trail. Medium Difficulty. Parking at end of Old Sawmill Road, Saugerties. Dogs are not allowed here.

Sloan Gorge

Walk this lovely gorge's looped trail. Approx. one-hour walk. Medium Difficulty. Reference the geologic brochure affixed to the kiosk. Parking at 487 Stoll Road, Woodstock.

Zena Cornfield

Easy 15 minute walk on mowed looped trail. Enjoy views of Overlook from the Joy Hopkins-Hausman memorial picnic table or the Irina Branzburg bluestone memorial bench. Parking at Gitnick Road, or across Zena Road at Little Deep.

Ashokan Rail Trail

11.5 miles along the Ashokan Reservoir's north shore. Easy. Three trailheads, off Rt. 28 in West Hurley, Shokan and Boiceville. Dogs on leash. Stay on trail. Ashokanrailtrail.com

Comeau Property

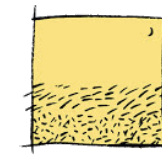
Enjoy this forested, streamside, meadowed loop trail by the Woodstock Town offices. Moderate Difficulty. 95 Comeau Dr.

Catskill Center's Thorn Preserve

Walk the mowed trail surrounding grassland habitat, streamside forest with beautiful Overlook Mountain views. Easy. 55 John Joy Road, Woodstock.

Other Resources:

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/77168.html
www1.nyc.gov/assets/dep/downloads/pdf/recreation/open-rec-areas-maps.pdf
https://ulstercountyalive.com/sites/default/files/ULS_HikeAndBikeBrochure_V8_Web.pdf



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