

**ANNUAL MEETING
MINUTES
MARCH 24, 2007
Holly House**

Executive Board Attendees: Kathy Salisbury, Millie and Hubert Ling, Peggie Leifeste, Tony Federici, Bill Young, Bob Swain, Rob Jennings, Isaac Martin, Dan DiLollo, Bunny Jaskot **Attendees:** 43

MINUTES:

Tony opens the Meeting followed by a reading of the Minutes, a Treasurer's Report, and the announcement of the raffle. Rob Jennings, President of the Northern Chapter spoke about the new Chapter. Education is one of their missions. We need to go to an Earth Day event in South Jersey to encourage membership there. Tony indicated that this was his last day as President. He thanked Bob and Bill for great mentoring. Tony encouraged all to check the website to find out when meetings are occurring.

Tony introduced the Slate of Officers-2007

- President: Kathy Salisbury
- Vice President: Robert Jennings (North) Isaac Martin (South)
- Secretary: Bunny Jaskot
- Co-Treasurer: Peggie Leifeste, Bob Swain (technology component)

Peggie's Treasurer's Report

- Dues are due for Board Members and the General Membership. Membership stands at about 300 or so.
- We have two oak trees that are the grandchildren of Joyce Kilmer's Oak Tree.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Fiscal Year starts in January. We need to indicate in the newsletter that dues were due. We need to raise the dues that are currently set at \$15 individual and \$25 family. Domain name, newsletter printing and mailing, web posting and snacks for monthly/Annual meetings use up our monies. Everyone voted that we increase the membership fee. Thanks were extended to Millie Ling for her role as Web Master. Thanks to Bill and Tony for doing talks and lectures. Tony asked for more volunteers to do talks. Kathy is putting together a basic Speaker's Bureau. The NPSNJ Board members are asked all year around to present. We have power point discs that are common talks we give: Native Plants, Rain Gardens and a few more. Bill volunteered to burn discs. Millie indicated we can put the power points as pdf's. Bill was thanked for the newsletter. Members were encouraged to send materials to Bill. Isaac will be presenting on Earth Day in Manasquan Sunday April 22.

Kathy indicated that there is not one accepted definition of Native Plants. Her goal is to consult with all and decide on a native plant definition that we can do with all of our talks. Her other goal is to get chapters. Issues in the Pine Barrens are different than the Highlands. We would then like to fill the board with representatives of those chapters. She is also interested in getting NJ landscapers involved. She wants to develop a regular series of workshops, hikes etc. She will be reaching out to volunteers. Kathy wants to take advantage of other non profits to get the word out about the importance of native plants. Newsletter deadlines are March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1. Information from all the chapters will be submitted to Bill prior to that point. There is a problem finding landscape sized native plants commented one member. Peggie indicated at the bottom of the membership form is an area for comments. Kathy wants to get the names of all new members who volunteer to be involved.

Sylvia Kovacs is from the Northern Chapter. There are grant opportunities for Sustainable Agriculture. Sylvia is looking for a Municipality who would be interested in taking part of this grant-(Native Plant Nursery in the Highlands). Sylvia wants NPSNJ to submit a letter of support for this initiative. She indicated that a definition of native is important. DEP also puts out seedlings that are non native. Millie indicated there is a listing of native plants on the website. Don K indicated it is the homeowners that have a problem obtaining native plants. Tony indicated we have a list of Native Nurseries.

Bob took a vote for the slate of officers at this point and the above slate was duly elected.

FEATURED SPEAKER (Ari's presentation is on www.npsnj.org)

Ari Novy is a Plant Biology student in the Graduate Program at Rutgers University.
Talk Topic: Swamp Pink

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Ari is supported by the University for his various Studies but actual money, for conducting the study, is his responsibility. He was reaching out for donations to assist in his research.

Helonia bullata is a Monotypic genus in the Lily Family (Liliaceae) It is the only member of the genus being closely related to *Chamelerium* and *Trilium*. It has pink flowers with blue/purple anthers. Fragrant flower, dense raceme, primarily asexual reproduction, and clonal vegetative characterize this plant.

It is found in Atlantic white cedar swamp, stream borders, and in Spring seepage areas. Historically it was found from NY (Staten Island) to Georgia. NJ is the lifeboat state having about 60-70% of the plants.

Ari is doing physiologic studies that capture ethylene to study flood tolerance adaptations. He is beginning a genetic diversity study to identify propagule sources, estimate gene flow, and compare this plant with other similar conservation stories. Seeds are not viable after 2-3 weeks. No known method of seed cryogenic storage exists.

The next steps include further genetic analysis (AFLP), mechanism of seed dispersal, tolerance to indirect effects of development, suitability for genetic infusion, and re-introduction via constructed and restored wetlands. Ants actually help in dispersing the seed.

His survey costs involve \$200-300 for purchasing reagents, travel and etc. per population studied. He is trying to raise \$5-7,000 to do NJ and the following year he will survey Delaware and south. Ari will write for the next newsletter and provide his email.

Bill and Isaac will be raffling off a \$1,000 Native plant Garden along with plants donated by Don Knesick of Pinelands Nursery and Supply

SECOND FEATURED SPEAKER

Rob Jennings, President of the North Jersey NPSNJ Chapter and Superintendent of Natural Resources Management for the Morris County Park Commission.

Rob indicated he has lots of handouts. He also has a collection of spiritual/emotional reflections that provide a connection to native plants. Rob reiterated that the APLD (Association for Professional Landscape Designer) has contact via Susan Olinger who is the NJ President. Additionally, Rob will be updating the list of Native Plant Growers and then putting it on the web.

Talk Topic: Highlands through the Seasons.

Pyramid Mountain, located above Boonton, is the facility from which Rob will be showing change through the seasons. He began with the Highlands in the winter time. It is a treasure trove on geology with its beautiful scenery and glacial deposits. Gaps in the forest provide incredible diversity. There are lots of little streams (mountains weep with water) with many sugar maples surrounding the streams as they sink and re-emerge in various locations. The sandy beaches of NJ initiate from the Appalachian streams as the mountains erode. Mice and coyote tracks are found in the snow. Late winter and early spring finds male Mallards in their best colors. Skunk cabbage, with an internal temperature of 72 degrees, is the first sign of spring. Skunk cabbage melts snow as it emerges with its beautiful but unusual flower. Red winged blackbird also heralds spring. Males arrive first to pick out the best spots followed by the females. Friday March 2, 2007 brought them back this year. Great blue herons, once threatened, have been removed from the list due to improved habitat restoration. We need native plant habitats to support these "guys." (that's a Pennsylvania term, take no offense!) They like secluded areas for their rookeries and are

indicators of an improving environment. Juncos eat giant purple hyssop seeds and spread these native plants around.

Spring brings wood frogs. Only males make sound with air being forced from the sac in their throat area. These are day time callers. 'Toad Abodes' can be made from Terra cotta pots broken in half, filling the bottom with soil and leaf litter to provide good habitat for them. They are a natural insect control in a garden. Skunk cabbages are deer resistant but they like it wet. The first tree to flower is the red maple (*Acer rubrum*). Male flowers provide a yellowish tinge to the male trees. Bear Rock is a massive glacial erratic. The potential story of the origin of people in North America starts at this rock. The great white bear was probably a relic polar bear due to the climate at that point. This rock is huge and provided an overnight lodging shelter for Indians in their movements.

The heart of spring in the Great Swamp shows the great Oaks (a four foot elevation increase imitates a drier, mountain top habitat). Spring peepers are tiny and are considered tree frogs due to sticky pads on their feet. They need native vegetation in the marsh and are a great sign of good habitat quality. Trilling may often represent a male frog grasping another male frog in error. Spring happens slow but is over fast. The Eastern painted turtle just emerged on March 23, 2007 at Pyramid Mt. The Eastern box turtle (male is red eyed) have plummeting populations due to habitat destruction by humans. Pollution and collecting is somewhat of an issue. They are the only turtles that can pull their whole body in their shells. Tadpoles emerge at this time. Bullfrogs last for two years as tadpoles. The Lenape were drawn to the many waterfalls where they inferred that Thunderbirds would carry "their good thoughts and prayers" to the Creator. Trout lilies, aka dogtooth violets tend to grow around yellow birch. Spicebush can be somewhat referred to as our native forsythia. They are aromatic and edible. They benefit native wildlife and Spicebush is a larval host site for butterflies. Spicebush is dioecious and produce berries that coincide with the bird migration that is heading south at this time. Rue anemone has a very slender stalk. The Greeks revered these plants. Fiddlehead ferns begin to emerge at this time. The state flower of NJ is the common blue violet. There is a connection with pollinator animals to these flowers- an interdependence relationship among native plant and native animal! The true flower of the common blue violet is brown and on the forest floor. Spring beauties like full sun areas. There is iridescence in their petals and much color variation. Pokeweed and warblers arrive for insects bring birds. Eastern blue birds that stay all winter are eating multiflora rose which is keeping them here but causing them to die from the cold at times. Their scat reveals their diet.

Cardinals remain here throughout the Winter and are absolutely gorgeous. Tripod rock is found in the Highlands. The rock is not indigenous to the mountain it's found on (Pyramid Mountain) and the Lenape didn't put it there according to them. There are the Solstice Stones adjacent to it. The Summer solstice sun sets between the stones, and the original sighting boulder was replaced by a housing development. The Lenape used animal and plant signs to identify the seasons. No one knows why these Solstice Stones were placed here. There is also an image on a rock (Tripod Rock) that the Lenape thought resembled the head of a turtle.

Later in the season we see the highbush blueberry. The flower has a nice aroma with deer resistance to the foliage. In May *Cornus florida* (dogwood) comes out. This is a critical food source for migrating songbirds and small mammals. *Geranium maculatum* (wild geranium) is right along the paths-they may like disturbed/sun shade tolerance. We have native geranium, impatiens, and other flowers and they provide life, habitat and food for all the "critters." Elderberry is another great wildflower. It is important for pollinating insects. Forty nine species of bird consider it a prime food source. Ferns are deer resistant and are a showy landscape plant for shady areas. Mountain Laurel is showy too with white to pink diverse coloration. Rainstorms will cause the flowers to drop. They "shoot out" or catapult their pollen.

Catbirds generally herald late spring and summer. Blueberries are ripening. *Rubus allegheniensis* is rich in antioxidants (blackberry) that attract bears and foxes. *Spirea tomentosa* (steeplebush) is really showy and flowers from the top down. It attracts butterfly and nectar requirers. We have a native snapdragon (turtlehead) that likes full sun and wetness. An overlooked landscape plant is Milkweed. They are deer resistant, and wonderful sources for butterflies. Monarchs lay their eggs on these to complete their life cycles and they are easy to grow and are low maintenance. Rattlesnake plantain grows in leaf litter and shoots up waxy white flowers. Solidago species are very abundant. They may be deer resistant. They do not cause hayfever. There is no wind dispersal. Ragweed is also native, wind pollinated and causes hayfever. It grows under the Solidago and gives the Solidago the bad reputation. Joe Pye, a butterfly plant, formerly called Joe Pye Weed gives the wrong impression to Joe Public. They

are not weeds. They can get really big are relatively deer resistant and they like full sun and moist areas. Stunted growth is the result of non ideal growing conditions. Joe Pye is an aberration of the Cherokee term for typhoid. Purple giant hyssop is deer resistant as is *Bergamot*. Both are in the Mint Family. *Lobelia cardinalis* and New York Ironweed are also deer resistant. Native habitats are free gardening-work with nature. Bullfrogs are the "king of the jungle" in vernal pools. When you plant native plants you encourage animals that can now have food to eat. Snakes like the garter snake eats up garden pests. Indian Pipe is a parasitic plant also found in NJ.

Fall is brought on by the Harvest and Hunter Moons. These moons appear larger and farmers can have additional lighting from the size of the moon and the light it shines. Oak-hickory forest are typical of this area. Virginia Creeper adds wonderful color and is a very important food source for birds. Witch hazel blooms at this time and can shoot out its seeds to twenty feet. Nocturnal critters like Screech Owls need tree hollows. Barred owls (call sounds like who cooks for you) is native. Milkweed and dogbane go to seed along with pokeweed and attract many birds. Dogwood provides color all year around along with service berries. Chestnut Oak acorns, white oak, black oak and red oak (NJ state tree) are very important. Every color in the crayola box is in the woods in NJ. Every season finds something special. Sassafras and mulberry are the only trees with 2-3 lobes all found on the same tree. Mice, flying squirrels (more numerous than gray squirrels) make whistling noises. Flying squirrels are bigger than a chipmunk smaller than a gray squirrel. Grey squirrels are filled with insects. Wood chucks hibernate. Skunks are great for insect controls and eat lots of Japanese beetles. Rabbits are important food source for hawks, foxes, coyotes-they have a role. Raccoons and red fox are numerous along with beavers that are on the increase. Proper hunting of female deer can reduce the population. Reducing deer numbers from 60-12 deer/ area allows us to re-vegetate the forest. Black bear are found in every county in NJ. They are defensive animals.

Old man winter yawns and goes back to bed and the Earth is all OK because hope, happiness, health, and small signs of life come back. Take the time to go out and appreciate the miracle of life. Spring time happens. Even a cut tree learns to smile as Rob displays a tree stump with apparent eyes and grin.

Raffle is held
Meeting adjourns at approximately 1 PM.

Respectfully submitted
Bunny Jaskot

EMAIL LIST OF ATTENDEES AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

These participants will be emailed the verified Minutes of this meeting along with timely announcements during the course of the year.