



Your Land & Water

A Joint Newsletter of
the Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds and
the South Jersey Land Trust

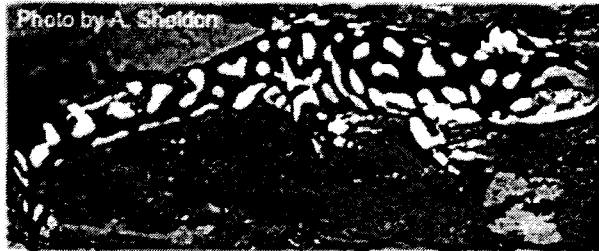


Winter 2005

"The great aim of education is not knowledge but action..." Herbert Spencer

HELP PROTECT FROGS, TOADS, AND SALAMANDERS

The Federation/South Jersey Land Trust is launching a long-term study of spring ponds ("vernal pools") in lower Gloucester County and upper Salem County. Vernal pools are confined wetland depressions, either natural or man-made, that hold water for at least two consecutive months out of the year and are devoid of breeding



Endangered Eastern tiger salamander fish populations. These unique ecosystems provide habitat to many species of amphibians, insects, reptiles, plants, and other wildlife.

Vernal pools come in an array of forms: isolated depressions within upland forests, seasonally flooded meadows, floodplain swamps, abandoned gravel pits or quarries, and even derelict swimming pools. However, no matter what the structure or genesis of the pool is, all vernal pools either dry out completely or draw down to very shallow levels

unsuitable for sustaining fish. Fish are highly predatory on amphibian eggs and larvae. Over the course of evolution, several species of salamanders and frogs exploited these fish-less water bodies. (Source: NJ DEP)

These ponds are the habitat of many of the rarer amphibians (frogs/toads/salamanders) found in our region. But vernal ponds are easily damaged or lost, causing major declines in populations of some of our most dramatic species. New Jersey has recently adopted legislation

to protect vernal pools, but only if they are identified and registered.

Your help is needed to conduct this survey. We need to know what pools exist and who is living in them. Come learn how to identify a vernal pool and its inhabitants by conducting a fast survey based on calls, egg mass sightings, and specimen collection. This can be done on your own time schedule this spring as a large or small project.

All interested individuals are welcome. This makes a great service project for students. For

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Vernal Pool Project

February 18th (Sat.)
9:00 AM – 12:30 PM
(Snow Date Feb. 25th)
call 881-2269 for cancellation)
RowanUniversity's
School of Engineering

Hosted by the Rowan Bio-Club
Training by the NJDEP Endangered Nongame Species Program

Registration Required
856-881-2269
contact@sjwatersheds.org

all participants, your involvement will be directly rewarding (fun!) and will also make a real contribution to the watershed database being developed by the Federation/SJLT.

INSIDE

- Grant Announcement
- FGCW & SJLT Merger
- Upcoming Events
- Storm Drain Labeling Activity
- Legislative Update
- Land Workshops

Are you getting our monthly e-mail alerts?

If not send your e-mail address to contact@sjwatersheds.org

Special Thank you to Carole & Mitch Brodtkin for their donation of a digital camera - a much need gift

Renewal Date?

Your renewal date is printed on the address label above your name. If your renewal date has passed, please fill out the form in the back of the newsletter and send it in. Remember that the payment of dues helps offset the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter. Most of all, your dues represent that you support the organizations.

Thank you to all members and friends who contributed to the annual gift appeal on behalf of the Federation and SJLT. A very special thank you to donors who gave contributions of \$100 and above in 2005.

- William Bennington
- Roger & Margaret Duerr
- Jane Galetto
- Joe Idacarage
- Brett Ingram
- Don Kirchoffer
- Suzanne & Brian McCarthy
- Keith & Gina Megay
- Joe & Anne Orlins
- Les Traband
- Richard & Emily Thomas
- Michael Vargo
- Joan Wagner
- Helen Weber

NEW MONITORING AND RESTORATION EFFORTS ABOUT TO BEGIN

The Federation/South Jersey Land Trust was among a limited number of organizations that were awarded grant this past December by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation to carry out assessment and restoration programs that will enhance the health of Delaware Estuary watersheds. (The Delaware Estuary consists of the watershed of the Delaware River and Bay up to the Trenton falls, which is the uppermost extent of tidal water in the Delaware River).

This generous grant will enable the organization to conduct the Vernal Pool Survey Project (see front page article), and to hire a part-time volunteer monitoring coordinator, to establish a monitoring program focused on stream assessments in Gloucester County, to carry out some invasive plant removal projects, and to

develop a database of information on stream condition and problem sites. This is a major advance in the ability of the organization to assess our region's waterways and to begin attacking restoration needs.



Volunteers who are interested in surveying, monitoring streams, invasive plant removal, and restoration will be needed for this multi-part project. All of these projects will be launched soon, but 2006 will be only a starting year because monitoring and restoration are long-term efforts. There is a lot to be done and we hope you will be part of it in whatever way you can be.

UPDATE ON FGCW & SJLT MERGER

It was reported in the last newsletter that the Boards of the Federation and SJLT had voted to merge the two organizations. Since then, the Boards have met both separately and together to identify issues and procedures that must be addressed, in order to maintain the key goals of both organizations. A joint subcommittee has been formed to complete this process.

The Merger Subcommittee is now in search of a new name for the organization. A new name should be relatively short and should be relevant to our purposes of protecting water

NEW NAME WANTED

Do you have any suggestions?

Please submit any ideas you have by February 10 to Christine Nolan at 856-881-2269 or contact@sjwatersheds.org.

(Gloucester Co.) and preserving land (South Jersey), but there are no particular requirements or specific rules.

HELP us CONTACT YOUTH and ADULT GROUPS

The Federation needs contacts and names of leaders of youth groups, scout troops, civic clubs, and other organized groups that might be interested in a one-day service project, in their own community, of labeling storm drains and distributing door hangers to residences. The Federation is spearheading this effort as part of the Gloucester County Improvement Authority's Stormwater Management Program assisting towns with their storm drain labeling requirement.

Did you know that the major cause of water pollution in the U.S. today is from stormwater runoff? When it rains, the water picks up our lawn chemicals, car chemicals on the streets and in parking lots, pet waste, and litter. It then runs off thru storm drain to

the nearest stream or lake. We all contribute to this pollution and we can all help by changing our own actions and by educating others about storm drains - that they are meant to carry rainwater only and do not flow to any kind of treatment plant. Labeling them and distributing accompanying doorhangers has been found to be the most effective way of getting this message out. But it takes the work of many people.

This is a great one-time activity for your group. The Federation's Program Manager will organize the event with the group leader, and meet the group in the field for a short, fun lesson on where rainwater goes and on how the labels are to be placed. Materials and instruction provided



Dominic Lanciano Jr., Eagle Scout Project

FREE! This activity can take place in all months except the coldest. If you know of such groups and can give us a contact name and number, let Christine know at 856-881-2269 or contact@sjwatershed.org. Remember, only rain in the drain!

FGCW EVENTS

Gardening for Wildlife

March 4th (Sat.)

9am-12:30

Gloucester County Bldg., Clayton

Bring nature to your backyard. Come learn how to create a healthy, attractive habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.

Topics:

Butterfly Gardens
Rain Gardens
Native Plants
Composting

*Activities for kids
(5ys. & older)*

**Members Free
Nonmembers \$3**



Registration Required

856-881-2269 or contact@sjwatersheds.org

Annual Celebration Dinner & Art Silent Auction

April 5th (Wed.)

Auletto's Catering, Deptford

Join in celebrating accomplishments and thanking volunteers, with delicious food and great entertainment. Watch for your invitation soon.

Stream Clean-up

March 18th (Sat.)

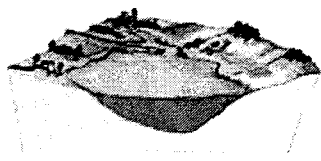
Location TBA

Volunteers needed to pick up litter along stream banks and help restore natural habitats

American Holly

We are all familiar with the American holly tree because of it's association with winter decorations. These trees are commonly found in southern New Jersey. There are about 15 varieties, most of which are shrubby. The American holly is the best known and one of the largest, reaching a height of 50 ft.

There are both evergreen and deciduous (leaf-dropping) varieties of holly. Holly trees are either male or female, although a particular tree sometimes is both. The female tree bears bright red berries in autumn, which stay on the plant through winter. The leaves are thick and leathery and have small sharp points on them to prevent deer from eating the plant, which is especially important since the evergreen types of holly stay green through the winter. Holly leaves can stay on trees for up to three years. The berries are poisonous for humans to eat, but they attract songbirds and are valuable winter food.



What is a *Watershed*?

A watershed is the area of land that drains into a body of water such as a river, lake, stream or bay. It is separated from other systems by high points in the area such as hills or slopes. It includes not only the waterway itself but also the entire land area that drains to it. There are eight watersheds in Gloucester County. Not sure which one you live in? Check out our website at www.sjwatersheds.org.

MALAGA LAKE WOODS CLEAN-UP

A clean-up on Oct. 29th was a group effort shared by Federation volunteers and the Franklin Township Environmental Commission, with support from the Franklin Township Public Works Department. The area is being cleaned up in preparation for a nature trail that will wind along Malaga Lake. A total of 35 people attended (adults & children) and in just 3 1/2 hours cleaned up 47 bags of trash, 23 bags of recyclables, at least 10 piles of concrete, tires, metal scraps, shingles and other junk from the forrest and along Malaga Lake Drive. It was a real achievement.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

LEGISLATIVE ACTION on LAND PRESERVATION

The lame duck session of the New Jersey legislature, which ended Monday, January 9, 2006, included action on a few bills pertaining to land preservation. Some are pluses and some appear to be minuses.

A bill authorizing \$30 million more for the Garden State Preservation Trust (GSPT) for open space, farmland, and historic preservation over the next couple of years was approved and signed by Acting Governor Codey.

The Green Acres rules were adopted and are scheduled to be published in the NJ Register this month. These rules make it harder to divert parkland for other uses. As reported by the NJ Conservation Foundation, they have been a long time coming.

Conversely, a bill was passed that allows construction of a non-farm-related structure on farmland that has been preserved through the farmland preservation program. The bill was originally

intended to allow only cell phone towers and like structures, so there is a restriction on size of new buildings of 500 square feet. However, other provisions enable farmers to attract other types of businesses as long as the size of the facility is not more than 500 square feet larger than existing farm structures. That means that an existing building could be replaced by a business of the same size plus 500 sq. ft.

The bill's sponsor, Assemblyman Robert Smith (D. Gloucester), defends the bill as a means of supporting the farming livelihood. Supporters say it enables farmers who preserved their farms before they were permitted to subdivide a smaller parcel for development, to gain added income at this stage. Opponents say that this bill allows development of convenience stores, fast food sites, and big box retail on land that has been preserved with public dollars.

FIRST LAND PRESERVATION WORKSHOP IS A HIT

Many compliments were received about "The Nuts and Bolts of Municipal Land Preservation Programs" workshop presented on October 20th by the South Jersey Land Trust and the Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds, cosponsored by New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF) and the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC). Participants at all levels of experience seemed to find it very informative, to a degree that is often hard to achieve with such a large topic.

The goal of this first workshop was to provide detailed information to those working or interested in furthering land preservation on the municipal level. The workshop drew at least fifty people, including county and municipal officials, professionals, farmers, and interested citizens. Janet Eisenhauer, NJCF's Delaware Bay Regional Manager (and a Trustee of SJLT) introduced the panel and led the discussions with a general overview of land preservation programs. Informative literature was provided and participants were also presented with a Land Preservation Manual, which will hopefully serve as a valuable resource tool for anyone interested in increasing land preservation efforts in their community.

Funding for these workshops is from a grant from the Conservation Fund to promote and facilitate land preservation in the southern tier of Gloucester County and northern tier of Salem County. *Look for the Land Preservation Manual on the Fedation/SJLT website soon. www.sjwatersheds.com*

Upcoming Land Preservation Workshops

**PRESERVING THE FAMILY FARM:
Financial Planning Options**

Tuesday, January 31st, 6:30 – 9 pm
(Snow Date February 7th)
South Harrison Township Municipal Building

The workshop will help landowners, municipalities, and organizations understand how to consider the financial planning options of land preservation. *It's not what you get but what you get to keep!*

Presenters:

Wade Martin, a highly engaging speaker and a leading expert on financial planning and land preservation.

Virginia Bryant has practiced as an attorney since 1996 and focuses her law practice exclusively in the areas of estate planning.

March 30: *Municipal Planning Tools for Preserving Land*
Woodstown Friends Meeting, Woodstown, Salem Co.

May 18: *Designing Greenways and Trails in Your Community*
Location TBD.



Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds
& South Jersey Land Trust
Working together to
Preserve Land and Water



- New Member
- Contributor - \$35
- Renewal
- Sponsor - \$100
- Basic - \$15
- Large Donor - \$200

- I am interested in info about volunteering

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Send this form along with your check to
FGCW or SJLT
PO Box 233, Glassboro, NJ 08028

Your contribution is tax-deductible.

Regular Meetings & Events

(Call to Confirm 856-881-2269)

Open to All

**Federation of Gloucester County
Watersheds Board Mtg.**
4th Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Scotland Run Nature Center

Development Committee
1st Tuesday of the month
7:00pm - Federation Office, 34 S.
Delsea Dr.

**Membership/Education/Outreach
Committee**
2nd Tuesday of the month
7:00pm - Federation Office

**Water Quality/Habitat Protection
Committee**
4th Monday of the month
7:00pm - Federation Office

Land Preservation Committee
3rd Thursday of the month
7:00pm - Federation Office

SAVE THE DATE

PRESERVING THE FAMILY FARM

Jan. 31st 6:30 – 9pm (Snow date Feb. 7)

The workshop will help landowners, municipalities and organizations understand how to consider the financial planning options as part of land preservation.

VERNAL POOLS SURVEY PROJECT

Feb. 18th (Sat.) 9-12:30 (Snow Date Feb. 25th call 881-2269 for cancellation)

Learn how to identify vernal pools and their inhabitants.

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

March 4th (Sat.) 9am-12:30

Come learn how to create a healthy, attractive habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Activities for kids (5ys. & older)

STREAM CLEAN-UP

March 18th (Sat.) Location TBA

A morning to pick up litter along stream banks and help restore natural habitats

CELEBRATION DINNER & ART SILENT AUCTION

April 5th (Wed.)

A celebration of accomplishments and a time to thank volunteers and supporters with delicious food and great entertainment.

EARTH DAY FESTIVAL at Washington Lake Park

April 22nd (Sat.) Lots of great exhibits and a chance to win at our plant auction.