

STONY KILL ALMANAC

BY AND ABOUT

Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center

Calendar of Events Inside

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Thanks for the Memories

by Kerri Brady, Environmental Educator

My story begins in the fall of 2000, when I started at Stony Kill Farm as a Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern. I had recently moved back to the East Coast from sunny southern California. New to the field of environmental education, I thought the position at Stony Kill Farm would give me a good chance to get my feet wet.

After completing two ten-month internships with SCA, I was hired as part of the year-round staff at Stony Kill. My responsibilities included teaching ecology lessons to local schools, performing outreach for schools and conducting weekend public programs. My experiences working with students convinced me to pursue teaching as a career. Many of you may already know that I have been taking classes and working towards my graduate degree in childhood and special education. I am almost finished and will complete the last piece by student teaching in Carmel, New York this fall. Since student teaching is a full time commitment, I will be saying goodbye to Stony Kill Farm.

My time at Stony Kill has been filled with great memories of working with students from local schools and New York City. Working with students from NYC has been especially rewarding. Many of these children had never been out of New York City nor on a farm. Their excitement about visiting the farm and seeing the farm animals was often contagious.

One of my favorite lessons was spinning wool. The lesson involved learning about the process of spinning wool into yarn. It's a wonderful hands-on activity that has the students using drop spindles. The students each spin a length of yarn to take home with them.

I also enjoyed working with the students in the greenhouse. A sunny room filled with plants was often very inviting for students. They enjoyed exploring by means of a scavenger hunt, which invited them to touch, taste, feel and smell herbs, flowers and vegetables. This was also a very hands-on lesson for the students. While they may not remember the names of all the plants, the important thing to me is that they remember the experience of it all. My day was often made when a child discovered that a wingless aquatic insect would someday metamorphose into a dragonfly. Or when a child smiled as a millipede cruised around her palm. My goal was to help foster appreciation of nature. I think this quote says it best.

In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught. - Baba Dioum, Senegalese conservationist

I am very excited to pursue a career as a teacher. I feel I can bring a love and excitement of learning and the natural world into my classroom. My experience with children here at Stony Kill has taught me the importance of always highlighting the positive. Thanks to the staff and volunteers for many great memories.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
George E. Pataki, Governor Denise M. Sheehan, Commissioner

**STONY KILL FARM
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
Main Telephone Number: 845-831-8780**

Office Hours

Monday - Friday, 8:45 AM to 4:30 PM
Saturday, 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM
Sunday, (April, May, June, September, October)
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
CLOSED ON ALL MAJOR HOLIDAYS
Grounds - Open seven days a week from
sunrise to sunset

EDUCATION STAFF

Reba W. Laks, Director, ext 303
James Herrington, Environmental Educator, ext 305
Rich Parisio, Environmental Educator, ext 302
Christopher O'Sullivan, Environmental Educator, ext 327
Cindy Simpson, Regional WET Coordinator, ext 321
Susan Kmiolek, Office Manager, ext 300
Jennifer Arcari, SCA AmeriCorps Member, ext 326
Ashley Wilhite, SCA AmeriCorps Member, ext 325

OPERATIONS STAFF

Ed Higgs, General Mechanic, ext 307
Jason Yaekel, Maintenance, ext 308
Cindy Laccone, Maintenance, ext 308

FORESTRY STAFF

Barbara Lucas-Wilson, Forester, ext 309
Lou Sebesta, Urban Forester, ext 316

STONY KILL FOUNDATION, INC.

Tina Cianciulli, Office Manager, ext 310

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Stony Kill Almanac is a quarterly publication and program listing of Stony Kill Farm EEC events. If you wish to be included on our mailing list, please call Stony Kill Farm at 845-831-8780, ext 300.

Rich Parisio, Editor
Susan Kmiolek, Production

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

by Reba W. Laks, Director

After a walk on the Sierra Trail this past June, one of the staff came back to the office reporting that a portion of the Sierra Trail was flooded next to the pond. Upon investigation, we discovered that the good news was "We had beaver!" The bad news was, "We had beaver!" It was exciting to think that we now had a wonderful opportunity for interpretation about the official New York State mammal. At the same time, we realized that we had to figure out a way to deal with the flooded part of the trail. We wanted to keep the beaver, but we also needed to come up with a solution for the trail. We discussed putting in a boardwalk, but that proved to be too costly. Devices to control a pond's water level have had minimal success in other areas and it takes a lot of time to maintain them. In the end, we decided to reroute the trail to a higher spot. By the time this newsletter comes out, this rerouted section of the trail should be completed. We are also planning on installing a sign at Sierra Pond that gives information about this very interesting animal.

We have no way of knowing how long the beaver will stay at the Sierra Pond. Once the food supply in an area is used up, a beaver will usually move on. It could be as early as this fall, or one to two years or more away. Don't wait. Treat yourself to a walk to Sierra Pond this autumn. The best time to try and catch a glimpse of the beaver is either early in the morning or later, towards dusk. Their handiwork (the dam by the outlet of the pond, chewed tree stumps and branches, etc.) can be seen at any time during the day.



Beaver chew

SLATE OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

We welcome those who have any type of physical challenge to all of our programs.
If you call ahead to let us know your needs, we will be happy to learn how we can best serve you.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 2 2:00 PM

Open Barn

Spend some time this Labor Day weekend with our cows, pigs, chickens, sheep and turkeys, and get a behind-the-scenes tour of the barn from our farm manager.

HUNTER SAFETY COURSE

*Wednesday, September 13, Thursday, September 14 (6:00 PM - 9:00 PM) and Saturday, September 16 (8:00 AM - Noon)
You must attend all hours on all three days and be 11 years of age or older.

Advance registration is necessary by calling Stony Kill at **845-831-8780, ext 300.**

*note date has changed from previous issue of the *Almanac*.

Saturday, September 16
Sugarloaf Hill Hike 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Join a DEC naturalist on this scenic hike, mostly on old carriage roads, to the top of Sugarloaf Hill, which offers superb views of the Hudson River and Highlands. Moderately difficult hike, 5.5 miles round trip. Call 845-831-8780, ext. 327 for more information and to preregister.

Saturday, September 23 2:00 PM
Sierra Trail Walk

Join a Stony Kill naturalist on this two mile hike through a variety of forest types and wetlands.

OCTOBER

Sunday, October 1 Noon - 5:00 PM

Fall Harvest Festival

Bring the whole family for a day of fun and learning on the farm! Our annual celebration will feature children's crafts and activities, hayrides, barn tours, delicious home-cooked food, live music by "Two Dollar Goat" and much more! Suggested Donation: \$5.00/Adult, \$3.00/Senior or Foundation Member, \$2.00/Child 12 years and older. Children under 12 free.

Saturday, October 7 2:00 PM

Autumn Flowers

Though less well known than their spring-blooming cousins, the asters, goldenrods, Joe Pye weeds, and other fall wildflowers are worth getting acquainted with. Join a Stony Kill naturalist and find out what's in bloom.

Saturday, October 14 2:00 PM

Pumpkins!

Come learn about fall's favorite vegetable, the pumpkin! Pick your own pumpkins and gourds for jack-o-lantern carving and lighting. Snack on freshly harvested pumpkin seeds.

Saturday, October 21 2:00 PM

Leaf-Peepers' Jubilee

Come to Stony Kill at the height of the fall foliage season and discover the chemical and biological secrets behind the magic of autumn colors.

Friday, October 27 7:00 PM

Not-So-Haunted Hayride

Fun and slightly scary activities for the whole family including hayrides, crafts, live animals, trick-or-treating and storytelling by the campfire.

NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 4 **2:00 PM**

Turkeys Aren't Just for Eating!

Meet "Terence the Turkey," Stony Kill's guest from the Fresh Air Fund Farm and learn fascinating turkey facts.

Saturday, November 11 **2:00 PM**

Muller Pond Trail Walk

Join a Stony Kill naturalist on this two mile hike through a variety of forest types and wetlands.

Saturday, November 18 **7:00 PM**

Night Forest Discovery Walk

Find out what's stirring in Stony Kill's woods at night. We'll listen for owls and other nocturnal wildlife as we develop our own night vision and sharpen our other senses on the trail.

Saturday, November 25 **2:00 PM**

Freedom Trail Family Hike

Give thanks for the beauty and solitude of the late autumn woods on this leisurely two and a half mile ramble.

A GLANCE AT DECEMBER

Saturday, December 2 2:00 PM
To Be Announced

Saturday, December 9 2:00 PM
Animals Get Ready for Winter

Saturday, December 16 2:00 PM
Hudson River Clean Up

Saturday, December 23 2:00 PM
Holiday Hike

Thursday, December 28 Noon - 4:00 PM
Holiday Open House

Saturday, December 30 2:00 PM
Winter Open Barn

This year's "River of Words" Grand Prize winner for Grades 3-6 is Devin Felter, a sixth grader at Vails Gate Elementary School in the Newburgh School District. Here is his prizewinning poem:

"River of Words" is an international poetry and art contest for grades K-12 on the theme of watersheds. Prizewinning poets receive an expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC, where they participate in readings with the US Poet Laureate. Devin is our first grand prize winner from the Hudson Valley. Congratulations, Devin!

For more information about River of Words, contact Rich Parisio, NYSROW Coordinator, at Stony Kill (845-831-8780, ext. 302), or visit www.riverofwords.org

My Trip to the Hudson River

Footprints all around -
Rabbit, deer, dog, coyote, squirrel, wild turkey -
Eyes watching all around.
Fog in the distance
Rocks on the shore
Sounds of crows in the background
Smell of snow in the air
Water sits calm and quiet.
Fog disappearing slowly
Buds in the tulip trees
Sound of footsteps in the snow
Shadows of the trees in the water.

Verplanck Garden Club, Inc.

By Joyce Banner, VGC Community/Education Liaison

During the rainy days of June and the hot summer days of July, the Verplanck Garden Club has been rebuilding the herb bed. Replanting of the two culinary beds and the medicinal bed is almost complete. Borders of lavender and thyme will be installed for the public to enjoy at the Harvest Festival. Scented geraniums and several unusual herbs will be planted in the spring. Children, and adults too, love to sample herbs, especially Stevia, which has a sugary taste and chocolate mint.

The club is landscaping around the Manor House to enhance the grounds of Stony Kill. During the summer months, the exquisite plants in the urn on the Manor House porch were dragon-wing begonias.

The Club's objectives are "to encourage interest in, and education of our community in all phases of home gardening, sound horticultural practices, civic beautification, conservation of our natural resources, and enhancement of the grounds of Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center."

Our summer was a gardener's delight with summer socials and tours of two of our members' gardens. The wet June created gardening issues and questions which were addressed by a number of members during our garden strolls. Jim Grey, the Hudson Valley Gardener, will answer more of our gardening questions at our November meeting.

At our September meeting, David Vitek, our DEC camper, will entice and entertain members by recounting tales of his experiences as a recent environmental educational camper. Afterwards, membership will finalize plans for Beacon Day and Stony Kill's Harvest Festival. At the annual Harvest Festival, our venue will be the giant tent by the herb bed with offerings of homemade soups, baked goods, hot and cold beverages, floral and craft

items, mums, pumpkins, children's crafts and much more. Members will answer your garden related questions. Educational garden handouts and tours of the rebuilt herb bed will be available.

The Verplanck Garden Club, Inc. meets the second Tuesday of each month, September through May at 7:00 PM in the Manor House at Stony Kill and hosts an educational gardening program. Guests and new members always welcome.

Stony Kill Foundation, Inc.

"A Changing of the Guard"

by Tony Riccobono, President

After nearly four years, Stony Kill Foundation Office Manager Elaine Case has decided to spend more time with her husband Bill traveling and seeing the world. With regret, she will be leaving her post effective August 11, 2006. We wish her well and enjoyment in her travels. The Stony Kill Foundation has been extremely fortunate to have had Elaine fulfill the duties of this position so efficiently. Elaine promises that we will still be seeing her and Bill around Stony Kill in the future.

At the same time, we are very pleased to announce that Tina Cianciulli will be the new Stony Kill Foundation Office Manager. Tina is no stranger to Stony Kill Farm. She has been a very active member of the "Wacky Weeders," volunteers who maintain the beautiful perennial garden that graces the approach to the Manor House. She is also a member of the foundation's board of directors. Tina's pleasant personality, work background and love of Stony Kill make her just the right person to fill the position of Office Manager. Congratulations Tina!

Where Rivers Meet the Sea

by Sue Kmiotek

Estuaries are among the most biologically productive ecosystems on the planet. More than two thirds of the fish and shellfish we eat spend some part of their lives in estuaries. These ecosystems also provide many other important ecological functions; they act as filters for terrestrial pollutants and provide protection from flooding.

Estuaries also have economic importance. These dynamic bodies of water not only provide us with an important source of food, but are also a popular tourist destination. Millions of people visit the nation's estuaries each year to boat, swim, bird watch and fish.

What is an estuary? An estuary is a partially enclosed body of water where saltwater from the sea mixes with freshwater from rivers, streams and creeks. These areas of transition between the land and the sea are tidally driven, like the sea, but sheltered from the full force of ocean wind and waves, like a river. Bodies of water that may be estuaries are: sloughs, bays, harbors, sounds, inlets and bayous.

The Hudson estuary stretches 153 miles from the Troy dam to New York Harbor; nearly half the river's 315 mile course between Lake Tear of the Clouds, its source in the Adirondacks, and the Battery at the tip of Manhattan. The estuary feels the ocean's tidal pulse all the way to Troy.

More than 200 species of fish are found in the Hudson and its tributaries. The estuary's productivity is ecologically and economically valuable to much of the Atlantic coast; key commercial and recreational species like striped bass, bluefish and blue crab depend on nursery habitat here. Bald eagles, herons, waterfowl and other birds feed from the river's bounty. Today the Hudson River is one of the healthiest estuaries on the Atlantic coast. As part of a nationwide system of more than 20

estuarine research reserves in 17 coastal states and Puerto Rico, areas of New York's tidal wetlands have been set aside as field laboratories for estuarine research and education. A network of four distinct sites were set aside in 1982: Piermont Marsh and Iona Island in Rockland County, Tivoli Bays in Dutchess County and Stockport Flats in Columbia County. Visit:

<http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/udson/hrnerr.html> for more information on NYSDEC's Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve.

The last Saturday in September is National Estuaries Day--an interagency celebration. It began in 1988 as part of Coast Weeks to educate the public on the importance of estuaries and the need to protect them. The annual event has matured into a national campaign with festivities across the country. National Estuaries Day and its feature event, "EstuaryLive" are

brought to you by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS), in collaboration with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Estuary Programs (NEP). NERRS and NEP have a unique partnership. They work together to protect estuaries around the country. "EstuaryLive" features free "live" Internet field trips to four different estuaries around the country.

The fragile balance of these productive estuarine environments may be easily destroyed by human activities. Changes in water quality, or alterations, by dredging and construction, to the multiple components of estuaries can result in harmful changes to the ecosystem. The dual purpose of National Estuaries Day is to promote the protection of these important areas and to learn how we can safeguard their irreplaceable resources.

Go to www.estuaries.gov to read more about estuaries, the partnerships and what you can do to participate in "EstuaryLive".





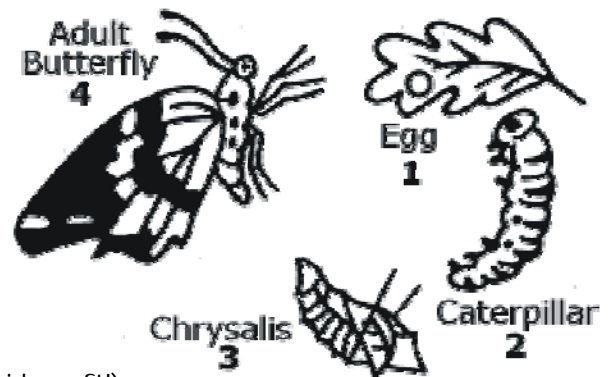
SPLASH'S PAGE

The Official Page of Stony Kill's Mascot,
Splash the River Otter

THE BUTTERFLY'S LIFE CYCLE

Butterflies go through four stages of life. They only look like butterflies in the final stage. (Birds, frogs, snakes, salamanders and insects also change as they go from eggs to adults.)

1. An adult butterfly lays an egg.
2. The egg hatches into a caterpillar or larva.
3. The caterpillar forms the chrysalis or pupa.
4. The chrysalis matures into a butterfly.



CREATE YOUR OWN BUTTERFLY (Kerri Brady's favorite kids craft!)

Here's what you need:

- toilet paper tube
- tongue depressor or ice-cream pop stick
- heavy paper
- 6" piece of pipe cleaner, folded in half
- markers or crayons
- scissor and glue



Here's what you do:

1. Cut out and color a butterfly from the heavy paper. Use any colors, but make both halves look the same. Put a small hole at the top of the butterfly's head.
2. Color the toilet paper tube to look like a chrysalis. (A monarch butterfly's chrysalis is green, but you can use any color.)
3. Take a piece of pipe cleaner and shape it like the letter "V". Put one point through the little hole in the butterfly's head and then twist it to look like antennae. Butterflies use these "feelers" to learn about their environment.

4. Glue the butterfly to one end of the tongue depressor/pop stick. Let the glue dry.
5. Curl the butterfly's wings and slide it into the chrysalis.
6. Pull the stick to make the beautiful butterfly come out of the chrysalis.

Fly your butterfly like a real one!

Inclusive Outdoor Recreation Day

Recognizing that everyone should be able to enjoy a full and rewarding outdoor experience, NYSDEC Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center will host an event in honor of Disability Awareness Month. Join us from 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM on **Wednesday, October 25, 2006**. The program will include the grand opening of the newly renovated, wheelchair accessible, Woodland Trail. Other items on the program will include an open barn, exhibits and demonstrations.

This program is open to all who wish to attend. Please contact us at 845-831-8780 for more information or to request a sign language interpreter (two weeks notice required).

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NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Bureau of Environmental Education
STONY KILL FARM ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
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