

STONY KILL ALMANAC

BY AND ABOUT

Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center

Calendar of Events Inside

email: skfarm@gw.dec.state.ny.uswww.dec.ny.gov

Gimme Shelter

By Joseph Roberts, SCA AmeriCorps Member

From New York City to Bangkok, most of the world's people find comfort and shelter in their houses and homes. Well-built homes and buildings keep people safe, protected, and comfortable. Anyone who has experienced penetrating icy winds, pouring rains, or extreme heat knows how important a good shelter can be. But has it always been so easy for humans to find and build good homes and shelters?



Before humans built homes out of brick, lumber and stones, people built simpler structures out of various combinations of available renewable resources such as mud, grass, trees, leaves, bark, reeds, grass, large leaves (palms), snow, ice, plant fibers, animal hides and sod. Shelter has played a very important role in human history. Among the primates, only humans construct such elaborate homes. Humans' ability to live around the world in various climates depends on



their use of shelters and fire. Shelters protect people from rain, snow, icy winds, burning hot sun, and predators. Knowledge of shelter and fire has allowed people to survive around the world.

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**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 4:30 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
Cindy Simpson, Regional WET Coordinator, ext 321
Jason Novak, Seasonal Environmental Educator, ext 317
Susan Kmiotek, Office Manager, ext 300

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
RoseMarie Brilliant, Volunteer Coordinator, ext 306

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Stony Kill Almanac is a quarterly publication and
program listing of Stony Kill Farm EEC events.

Rich Parisio, Editor
Susan Kmiotek, Production

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

by Reba W. Laks, Director

Kiosk Face Lift

You may have noticed some new signs on the kiosks at Stony Kill designed and produced by DEC staff. These would include the large welcome kiosk outside the Manor House, the large kiosk opposite the barn, as well as the smaller kiosk alongside the Verplanck Tenant Farmhouse. These new signs are designed in the same format as our trailhead signs, and provide information about Stony Kill to visitors who do not enter the Manor House, or choose to visit when the Manor House is closed.

The welcome kiosk provides an orientation to Stony Kill, its history, grounds and programs, as well as an updated map of the property, historical background and good stewardship practices. The barn kiosk gives an overview of the farmstead area and the activities and farming that take place there. It also includes the updated map of Stony Kill lands and trails. The Verplanck Tenant Farmhouse kiosk portrays the history of the house through photos, stories and an excerpt from an old contract between the landowner and tenant farmers.

In addition, signs in the new building inform visitors of the energy-and water-saving design elements incorporated in the structure. This includes a geexchange heating and cooling system, waterless urinals and the use of natural lighting. Given these and other features, the building itself can be used as a teaching tool to promote environmental stewardship. We hope that you will enjoy viewing these new interpretive displays at Stony Kill.

SLATE OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

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

JUNE

Saturday, June 2 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Splash the Otter's Birthday Party and Family Fishing Day

Enjoy a morning of fishing in our farm pond (poles and worms provided for those who need them). Children can have fun making colorful fish prints as they learn some fascinating fishy facts! In the afternoon, meet SPLASH, and find out all about life as a river otter.

Saturday, June 9 10:00 AM
300 Years of Land Stewardship

Tour the Manor House and the farmstead buildings and grounds. Find out how our land use has changed since the early days of the Verplanck family at Stony Kill.

Saturday, June 16 10:00 AM
Life in the Hudson

Discover the amazing diversity of creatures in the Hudson. We'll use a seine net to sample fish, crabs, and other aquatic life at Little Stony Point, just north of the Village of Cold Spring. Call 845-831-8780, ext. 300 for directions.

Saturday, June 16 10:00 AM
Nature Walk

Let's go exploring for signs of animals, new plants and migrating birds.

Saturday, June 23 10:00 AM

Wilderness Skills and Native People

Experience how Native Americans made a living from, and a life close to, the land. See demonstrations and try your own hand at fire starting, cordage making, wild teas and more.

Saturday, June 30 10:00 AM

Life Under a Log

Discover the surprising world of creepy-crawlies under logs in the forest. We'll take a "microhike" and experience the world from a centipede's point of view!

JULY

Saturday, July 7 10:00 AM

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird

These feisty little birds travel hundreds of miles each year between Central America and the eastern United States. Learn about their amazing lives!

Saturday, July 14 10:00 AM

Gathering Sunbeams

The sun brings life to the earth--come learn how! We'll look at electricity from solar panels, heat in solar ovens and solar homes, and sugar production in plants. Hands-on demonstrations and tasty treats will be available for all participants.

(Continued next page)

(July continued from page 3)

Saturday, July 21 10:00 AM
Damsels and Dragons

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's an ... insect? Come to Stony Kill to see how these jumbo flying insects prowl the skies above the farm pond.

Saturday, July 28 10:00 AM
Spectacular Snakes!

Slimy, scary snakes? No way! Experience snakes up close at Stony Kill and learn how spectacular these slithering reptiles truly are.



Students and teacher from the Oakwood School assisted the Stony Kill Foundation's wacky weeders this spring in preparing the Verplanck Memorial Perennial Garden for visitors.

Front row (left to right) Jin Young, Mary, Telma (teacher), Jessica, and Jerry. **Back Row** (left to right) John, Wesley, Max, Allison, Russell, and Tina Cianciulli, Lisa Manderville of the wacky weeders. Missing from photo but also participated are: Gladys Whyte and Judy Dugan of the wacky weeders.

AUGUST

Saturday, August 4 10:00 AM-2:00 PM
Butterfly Festival

Do you know what it's like to be a caterpillar and change into a butterfly? During the festival, learn about the butterfly life cycle and local species. Listen to butterfly stories and create a butterfly craft. Visit an enclosure to view butterflies up close. Fun and educational for the whole family.

Saturday, August 11 10:00 AM
Farm Trail Walk

Grab your binoculars and bring the kids for a summer stroll on our farm trail. A great opportunity to see and hear grassland birds like redwinged blackbirds, savannah sparrows and tree swallows.

Saturday, August 18 10:00 AM
Campfire Cooking

One of the best parts of summer camping is cooking over a campfire! Taste delicious food cooked on an open fire, and learn the techniques of pit cooking, cooking over coals, and roasting over flames.

Saturday, August 25 10:00 AM
Worms Glorious Worms!

Come meet some of our favorite "pets" here at Stony Kill, our worms! Learn why they are so important to us, and how you, too, can raise worms at home. We'll also look at our wild worms and other decomposing organisms and their role in helping us to grow our food.

(Shelter from page 1)

Hunters and gatherers of the past needed to know how to build both long-term seasonal shelters and quick shelters when they were traveling or hunting. Both shelter designs needed to be simple enough to be made out of local resources and with limited stone or bone tools. We're talking *simple* here-- strong shelters that keep out the elements. Around the globe, people have created many kinds of shelters to fit their particular environments. For example, in the arctic, the Inuit people traditionally have used snow and ice to create dome-shaped igloos that shut out the wind and hold in the warmth of oil lamps.

For quick and easy shelters, Eastern Woodlands Indians would often cover a frame of branches with leaves to create a waterproof roof and walls. A modern term for this type of shelter is *debris hut*. Debris huts are simple in design, but do require some hard work. I've built many of them by myself and with others. In fact, building debris huts is a popular wilderness summer camp activity for children. Here at Stony Kill, we are planning to make them part of our "Summer Explorers" nature day camp for 6-10 year olds (call us at 845-831-8780, ext. 325 or 326 for more information on the camp program).

I've made debris huts using just my hands, from leaves and branches I gathered from the ground. It has usually taken me about three hours to build the structure and cover it with a layer of leaves three feet thick. I have also filled the inside with leaves and created a long, narrow door. Amazingly, I have slept in these huts in 30 degree

A Look Ahead to September

Saturday, Sept 1	Farmstead Walk
Saturday, Sept 8	Spiders!
Saturday, Sept 15	Family Sierra Trail Hike
Sunday, Sept 23	Hudson Valley Ramble: Sugarloaf Mountain Hike

weather! The leaves trap my body heat within the small space, just like goose down in a sleeping bag. A plug of leaves in the long, narrow door completes the insulation.

Debris huts are enjoyable for all ages to build and blend in well with the forest. Listening to the wind and birdsong while huddled in the comfort of these shelters, I have felt a very close connection to nature.

There is something enjoyable about just building with sticks and leaves. Kids can use their imaginations to create their own shelters to play in. The best part is that they can disassemble these shelters whenever they like, just by scattering the leaves and branches, leaving few or no traces.

WISH LIST

Items for the intern cottage.

Dish rack, area rugs, fans, clock radio, dresser, TV, VCR, DVD player, night table, washer and/or dryer.

Please call Rich at 845-831-8780, ext 302.



SPLASH'S PAGE

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

As you know, SPLASH lives in and around fresh water. SPLASH meets many creatures in his travels and one in particular catches his interest. SPLASH made a list of facts about this creature.

At the bottom of this list, see if you can fill in the blanks and guess the creature's name. There is a closeup picture of the creature's face to help you.

- * This creature's species has been around for 300 million years.
- * Prehistoric fossils as long as $2 \frac{1}{2}$ feet have been found.
- * Today, the largest one is found in Costa Rica and its wingspan is $7 \frac{1}{2}$ inches long.
- * Its eyes have 30,000 lenses and can see 360 degrees.
- * When flying it can hover, fly backwards, and do a loop-the-loop.
- * It can fly as fast as 36 miles per hour.



- * They do NOT sting or bite humans.
- * Metamorphosis is essential for it to become an adult.
- * It eats thousands of mosquitoes a day as an adult.
- * As an adult, it only lives for about a month.

Answer: This creature is a dragonfly.
Come to Stony Kill Farm and see which
kinds we have here.

Songs for the earth: Poems read at Stony Kill's Earth Day on April 22, 2007

The Flowing River by Gabrielle Bruno

I know of a river.
 It flows and flows and flows.
 This river flows through ice.
 Listen in silence for a sudden ...
 Snapping and Popping!
 I know of a river
 That keeps many animals alive.
 Wolves, coyotes, and eagles of all kinds.
 Many other animals live near here, too.
 When I think of these animals ...
 I think of a happy life.
 I knew of a river,
 I now have seen this river.
 This river will always make people happy
 And will always be in my heart.

Rain by Eleni Katavolos

Rain is a dog playing in a meadow.
 Rain is a sugar maple blowing in the wind.
 Rain is a shovel digging in the ground.
 Rain is a new little baby crying for the wind.
 Rain is a solo piano playing just for you.



A Hudson River view from Storm King Mountain in Orange County looking north.

Down By The River

by Benjamin Siper

The waves,
 Rippling.
 The water,
 Glistening.
 The sound of ice,
 Tinkling-
 Down by the river.
 Eagles,
 Swooping.
 Trees,
 Standing tall.
 Salmon,
 Swishing -
 The rainbows of the river.
 And the river flows on.
 The sun,
 shining.
 The grass grows,
 Still green.
 The wind,
 Blowing hard.
 Trees,
 Shaking.
 Animals,
 Scurrying -
 Leaving tracks upon the sand.
 And the river flows on.
 The river -
 Curving, swerving,
 Winding through the land
 Then opening its mouth wide -
 Into the ocean.

NEW YORK STATE
CONSERVATIONIST

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YES, start a one-year subscription to *Conservationist* for just \$10. I understand \$5 from each subscription goes directly to support educational programs at Stony Kill Farm EEC. **Make checks payable to: Stony Kill Foundation.** Mail to: Stony Kill Foundation, 79 Farmstead Lane, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590.

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