



Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge Winter Newsletter 2022

Friends Build New Osprey Nest Platform

In a true joint effort, the Friends of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge (FMNWR) assisted partner organization Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR) to build and install a new osprey nest platform in the marsh behind Amy Brown Road in Mashpee. WBNERR Stewardship Coordinator, James Rassman, led the effort, assisted by FMNWR Directors MaryKay Fox and Glenn Davis, volunteer Neil Barkin, and a curious neighbor who lent the team a forgotten, but crucial wrench. Wearing boots and facemasks, the team was able to successfully build and raise the platform during a tricky high tide on March 27, 2021.

The osprey is one of the iconic wildlife species on Cape Cod, and the Mashpee Refuge is fortunate to host a number of nesting pairs which raise their young each year. The Friends group supports ongoing efforts to build and repair platforms in the area, which provide safe nesting places away from utility poles, rooftops and other hazardous locations for these majestic birds.

Thanks to all who helped, as well as homeowners on Amy Brown Road who allowed us to access the site from their property. Now we wait and hope to see how quickly the new site is claimed as home by a pair of returning osprey. We'll post an update when the new platform is adopted!



New Pollinator Garden at Red Brook Road Trailhead

Spring is eternal, and so are perennials! With relaxed pandemic restrictions and some cooperation from the weather, the Friends of MNWR (FMNWR) have been busy tending our Pollinator Gardens.

A new site was created on Red Brook Road connecting to the Jehu Pond Conservation Area. Initial work was led by Tom Eagle and a team from US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Mashpee Conservation Department and Department of Public Works, and FMNWR volunteers. Over the course of several initial weeks, the site was prepared and a new trailhead sign was installed. Then over the past month, planting native shrubs, trees, groundcover, wildflowers and other perennial flowers.



A wide variety of native species were planted, including:

- Dogwood
- Bearberry
- Virginia Rose
- Andromeda
- Wild Raisin
- Blue Stallion Holly
- Blue Prince and Princess Holly
- Hollyhock
- Joe Pye Weed Chocolate
- Phlox
- Rose Campion
- Mum
- Cape Cod Poppy
- Anise Hyssop
- New England Aster
- Perennial Baby's Breath

While planting one day, we observed a curious Painted Lady butterfly, flying by to see our progress and imagining the nectar that lies ahead.

Thank you to the Friends of MNWR who participated: Katelyn Cadoret, Glenn Davis, Neil and Joan Barkin, and especially to MaryKay Fox who researched and produced the appropriate varieties and nurtured seedlings until they could be put in the ground.



Preserve Our Homeland

The 9th year of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal (MWT) Youth Camp was another success! Since 2012, tribal youth have participated in a month-long, hands-on interactive Summer Science Program, serving 6th, 7th, and 8th grade native students. This is a partnership with MWT's Natural Resource Department, USGS, the local science community and the Wampanoag Language Reclamation Program. The purpose of the program is to facilitate a deep understanding of the Mashpee Wampanoag cultural and scientific ties to their land along with their sacred obligations to protect the environment.

Each year since 2017, the Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge have participated in all-day, hands-on educational/scientific projects with the tribal youth and staff, and Refuge partners including the US Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge staff, Massachusetts Fish and



Wildlife, Massachusetts Department of Conservation fire crew, and US Fish and Wildlife Partners Program staff, to assist tribal youth in creating new pollinator gardens, learn archery, and observe how forestry land practices change the landscape through fire management to restore and maintain important wildlife habitat along with community safety within the fire-prone, rare pitch pine forests of Mashpee and Falmouth.

This year's camp event took place on July 8th, 2021, with 20 native students involved in the environmental education day. The day started out

with the lovely ceremonial and spiritual burning of sweetgrass within a large quahog shell, carried by a youth member to each participant who, while holding hands with others side by side, link and enclose the circle. This year, it felt



deeper and richer at this sacred landscape, surrounded by Wampanoag ancestors as the burning sweetgrass scent filled the air around us, binding us together, past to present. We each shared what we were grateful for and

what project we were most excited to experience today. Archery seemed to be the winner for most of the kids!

Every year, the Friends are charged with selecting a wide variety of native plants for the yearly native pollinator gardens which, this year, occurred at the entrance of the Wampanoag Cemetery and Meeting House location. The sites were prepped the day before so working the soil with the kids and volunteers would be more enjoyable. A good turnout of Friends volunteers and board members helped make the work go smoothly. All together, we successfully planted a total of 271 plants which will be host for our native pollinators in the seasons to come.

A sincere thank you goes out to the many people who helped make the day such a success. A big thanks to all the volunteers that helped supervised the kids and helped dig in plants. We also thank the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal's Natural Resource Department for organizing and inviting us to share in the camp events, and finally to our Refuge partners who shared the day's hard work along with good laughs throughout the day.



Creature Feature Corner

Osprey on Cape Cod



With the changing of the seasons from winter to spring comes the return of migratory birds all across the northeast. One of the most distinct birds to mark the coming of springtime is the osprey; with their stark brown and white appearances and intense yellow eyes, these large raptors are difficult to miss.

Ospreys, also sometimes referred to as fish hawks due to their 99%

fish diet, can be found in every continent across the globe apart from Antarctica. While many populations are migratory, populations of osprey living in the lower latitudes of the breeding range may live there year-round. They're not picky about where they get their food from -- ospreys can be found hunting around rivers, lakes, estuaries, and the coastlines. You can certainly find them around herring runs in the late spring due to the high concentration of fish as the herring swim towards their breeding grounds.

Mated pairs of ospreys typically will remain together for life. Each year, pairs will either return to their previous nest and add to it or build a new nest. You may see poles built with a platform for osprey nests; this is because ospreys tend to nest in areas with a high vantage point to the water, which could be on a structure like a house, a telephone pole, or dead tree. Moving an osprey nest from an undesirable location can be a dangerous and difficult task, so we build platforms specifically to encourage safer nesting.

The mid-20th century was a tumultuous time for ospreys and other fish-eating species. Before the pesticide DDT was banned in the 1970s, it would linger in the tissues of fish which caused female ospreys to lay eggs with brittle shells. This caused failure of reproductive success, pushing ospreys to the point of critical population loss. With the banning of the



pesticide came a resurgence of birds, and the future of osprey populations is no longer a concern.

It's refreshing to see the return of these striking birds each spring. Ospreys are one of the first indicators of the coming of more life, greenery, and warm weather here on Cape Cod. Keep an eye out for juvenile ospreys as they will soon fly from their nest for the first time, learning how to hunt with mom and dad by their side.



Written by Emilie Brush and Nicole Westfall, AmeriCorps Cape Cod Year 23 and 22 member.

2021 Friends of Mashpee NWR Board of Directors

Katelyn Cadoret, President, Mashpee ConCom Liaison

Glenn Davis, Vice President, Web Page Coordinator

MaryKay Fox, Treasurer

Thomas Fudala, Clerk, Historian



Membership Form

YES! I want to support the *Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge* - enclosed are my dues as checked below.

Name: _____
Phone: _____(H) _____(C)
Street: _____ Town: _____ State: _____
ZIP: _____
Email: _____
Date: _____

Enclose payment for the membership – please make checks payable to F.M.N.W.R. Mail to: P.O. Box 1283, Mashpee, MA 02649. Thank You!

- | | |
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| <input type="radio"/> Junior (18 and under) - \$10 | <input type="radio"/> Refuge Sponsor - \$500 |
| <input type="radio"/> Individual - \$25 | <input type="radio"/> Lifetime Gift - \$1000 |
| <input type="radio"/> Family - \$50 | <input type="radio"/> Corporate Gift - \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Conservation Friend - \$100 | <input type="radio"/> In Memory of _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> _____ Wildlife | Sponsor _____ - \$200 |
| _____ \$ _____ | |

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# Volunteer Form

I would be interested in the following opportunities listed below:

- [ ] Stewardship Projects
- [ ] Newsletter Editor
- [ ] Native Pollinator Gardens
- [ ] Educational talks/walks, Events at Schools
- [ ] Volunteer & Membership Coordinator

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The Friends meet monthly on the first Tuesday at 5pm on Zoom, Please, come join us and get involved with Refuge projects, Friends group, pollinators, and community events!