

streamside

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF SUNKHAZE MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

ISSUE 40
FALL 2010

PO Box 450
MILFORD, ME 04461
WWW.SUNKHAZE.ORG

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO..

For Peat's Sake

On the Peatland Hike led by Lindsay Seward, we were all reminded of the Refuge's uniqueness and one of the main reasons Sunkhaze Meadows NWR was established back in 1988: the peat! After a short hike through the forest, we were out on the bog, exploring the leathery leaves and strong odor of Labrador tea, the carnivorous habits of the pitcher plant, and the wide open expanse of short shrubs interrupted here and there by single stunted spruce trees. With each step, we could feel the sponginess of the floating earth beneath our feet. What a cool sensation!



Purple Plague: The Battle Has Only Just Begun

With the help of Caleb Slemmons, we now have a purple loosestrife brochure that is specific to Sunkhaze Meadows NWR. We had 3,000 color copies printed and have distributed some to local town offices and businesses, and made them available at our kiosks. It is available at <http://sunkhaze.org/PurplePlagueWEB.pdf> and have a link to it on our website's Volunteer page. These brochures will be extremely helpful in the coming years during our battle against purple loosestrife. Several volunteers found and pulled many NEW infestations along the County and Stud Mill roads this year. Thus, the battle has only just begun. While the plant may be dying back for the winter, we hope to develop a strategy to get the message out to locals next year through news releases and other types of publicity, and could use your help. If you are interested, please contact us.

UMaine Students Help With Trail Work

The University of Maine's Bodwell Center for Volunteerism arranged for 12 incoming freshmen and an adult supervisor, Bud Walkup (also a member of the Friends) to do some trail work for the Refuge on August 28th. We split up into 3 groups: one group focused on the Oak Point Trail, one group on the Johnson Brook Trail, and one group to find and tackle purple loosestrife along the roads bordering the Refuge. The trail work primarily consisted of removing overhanging limbs, bent over birches, other trees blocking the trails, and trees that might block the trails in future years. One hour of work by 18 people really accomplished a lot! The day ended with a hike out to Oak Point to enjoy a wide open view.



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**A NEW VOLUNTEER FOR THE REFUGE**

Hello Friends of Sunkhaze Meadows NWR members! My name is Morgan Burke. I am a transfer student to the University of Maine studying wildlife ecology. I am originally from Newburgh, ME and grew up with a family that appreciated wildlife and nature. Although as a teenager going outside was very 'uncool', I am now understanding and appreciating the outside world. That is why I've decided to pursue a degree in wildlife ecology. Now I can study for classes just by stepping outside and exploring (very convenient).

I just recently returned to the area from the University of New England in southern Maine. I am very happy with my transfer and I'm so excited to be taking some very cool and challenging classes at UMaine. I've been volunteering with various organizations ever since I was in high school so when I learned about Sunkhaze Meadows National Wildlife Refuge I figured that would be perfect for continuing my volunteer work. With Sunkhaze Meadows, not only am I doing something that is rewarding but I'm also learning a lot that will help me in the future. So far I have been able to kayak the stream looking for purple loosestrife on the banks and I fortunately didn't find any. I've also been able to distribute flyers about purple loosestrife to local libraries, town offices, and businesses.

This has actually taught me a lot about how people react to the wildlife refuge and everyone seems really excited and very happy to display the flyers.

I'm very excited to continue volunteering and learning new and useful skills. I hope that I can recruit more UMaine students from the Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society to help out at Sunkhaze Meadows because so far it's been a great learning experience.

**THERE'S STILL TIME TO PADDLE!**

Just because it's fall doesn't mean you can't get out for a relaxing paddle down Sunkhaze Stream! Choose from a shorter, 2-3 hour trip or spend 5-6 hours enjoying the great outdoors and all there is to see at the refuge. Be sure to bring your camera for some great wildlife (and land) photo opportunities. Bring your canoes or kayaks and take advantage of the season (no bugs!) before the snow flies!



For more information about how you can enjoy Sunkhaze Stream, visit our canoeing page online at www.sunkhaze.org/canoeing. See you there!

Visit <http://www.sunkhaze.org> for important information and events!

ENJOYING SUNKHAZE IN THE SPRINGTIME

BY ROD JOHNSON

The Johnson Brook Trail at Sunkhaze Meadows NWR is the best trail to use in the spring of the year. This location is usually dry and free of obstructions and with an abundance of wild flowers. In 2010, I was involved with two rewarding experiences at Johnson Brook.

On April 17, I led a group of eleven (all ages) from my church on a three-hour hike on most of this trail.



Photo courtesy of Leigh Osgood

The biggest fascination was a vernal pool which contained several egg masses. Everyone was impressed by the environmental diversity observed along the way and appeared to have had a fun time. The second adventure occurred on May 30. I accompanied a local photographer to a very large colony of lady's slippers (*Cypripedium acaule*). This plant was growing in large numbers this year. Two hours and 200+ photos tell the story here! The visitor was extremely pleased to have had this opportunity and rewarded me with several pictures of this interesting flower.

In conclusion, remember this Sunkhaze trail next April and pay a visit before insect season begins!



Photo courtesy of Leigh Osgood

SUNKHAZE COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLANNING BEGINS!

We are getting this important planning effort underway. Biological Technician Steve Agius has been collecting trail use data over the summer, and a couple of public use experts from the Regional Office in Massachusetts are visiting the week of October 18th to look at the refuge's facilities and talk to the staff and Friends. I hope that some of you can join us the evening of October 19th to share your thoughts with these visitors. I will let you know when the meeting location and time are confirmed.

In addition, since we are required to do a Wilderness Review as part of this plan, a person with expertise in this area is also coming to look at the refuge (also sometime in October) and help us evaluate it. Some federal lands are designated by Congress to be managed as part of the Wilderness System; the minimum qualification is 5,000 roadless acres. Specific areas can be included or excluded. Included areas must be managed to meet both their original purpose (in this case, as a National Wildlife Refuge) and also the purposes of the Wilderness Act - to remain "untrammeled" to the extent possible. People can continue to hunt, hike and enjoy these areas as before, but it means that no motorized vehicles will be allowed and managers must carefully consider what management is necessary and how to accomplish it with the lightest touch.

Sometime in the winter we will begin soliciting public input, and I expect that you will have a lot to tell us about what you would like to see for Sunkhaze in the future. I look forward to that conversation!

P.S. Many Service employees have been helping clean up the BP oil spill, and some of the refuge's staff will be going down to the Gulf of Mexico to help this fall. Steve Agius will be there from Sept 19th until early October. We look forward to hearing about it when he returns.

--Beth Goettel, Refuge Manager

ANNUAL MEETING, POTLUCK AND PADDLE SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23RD AT 11:00 A.M.

Changing colors, cool crisp air, NO BUGS! What can be better than a fall paddle along Sunkhaze Stream? **Mark your calendar now and plan to join us for our Annual Meeting to be held “streamside” on Saturday, October 23rd.** Our meeting will first consist of officer and board member elections...Here’s your chance to become more involved!

We will then talk about the Comprehensive Conservation Plan and what we, as a Friends group, envision for the Refuge over the next 15 years. It is important for us to develop a unified position that we can then present to the USFWS. Please come and share why the Refuge is important to you, where you think there’s room for improvement, and what you think is working well. If you cannot make it to the meeting, your voice can still be heard! Send an email to Danielle D’Auria, or write down your thoughts and mail it to the Friends’ address: P.O. Box 450, Milford, ME 04461.

After our Potluck lunch, those who are interested can enjoy a leisurely paddle up Sunkhaze Stream to the meadow.

MEET...at 11am at the Milford On-the-Run convenience store to carpool and follow us to the cabin. The store is located at 12 Main Rd in Milford, on Rte 2 just south of the junction with Rte 178.

BRING...Your favorite dish (appetizer, main dish, side dish, or dessert) to share and your canoe/kayak/paddles/PFD to enjoy the water. If you know what food you plan to bring or need ideas, please let Danielle D’Auria know. Be sure to dress for the weather and be prepared for no facilities at the cabin.

QUESTIONS...Contact Danielle D’Auria, dauria@roadrunner.com or 825-3746 if you have any questions.



Stay current with news and events online at www.sunkhaze.org

CATCH THE SPIRIT BY DANIELLE D'AURIA

Jan Beckett, our current President, is an amazing woman. She has so much spirit, strength, and optimism that it truly can be contagious! While many of you know that she fell ill this past year with lung cancer, her spirit, inner strength, and optimism have never waned. I have stayed in touch with Jan through her battle these past months and have been repeatedly humbled by her. She was enduring "treatments" that sounded more like torture to me. The side effects and cumulative effects of chemo sounded unbearable. And despite all this, she has remained hopeful and motivated; you can hear it in her voice and see it in her face.

Sunkhaze Meadows NWR has a special place in all of our hearts, but it may take up the most room in Jan's. To let her focus on healing, several board members have stepped up to keep the Friends group moving forward these past months. It is our way of helping, despite our feelings of helplessness. Now we have a better understanding of all the work that she does as President!

Despite the challenge of juggling "one more thing" on our lists, Jan's spirit has motivated us to help get things done. We have planned and attended meetings, had the "Purple Plague" brochures printed and distributed, controlled several NEW(!) infestations of purple loosestrife, and enlisted volunteers from UMaine to help with trail work.

Of course, our work is not yet done. We're just getting started, and I do think we are on a roll! We are embarking on a new year for the Friends. With our upcoming elections, new members, and the CCP, we can only get excited for what is to come. We can really make a difference for the Refuge, and for the wildlife and people who use the Refuge. I've caught some of Jan's spirit...have you?

Jan is on the mend, having finished her chemo almost a month ago now. She is gradually regaining her physical strength, and preparing for her return to the Friends group, and more importantly to the Refuge. We can't wait to have her back!



NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Suzanne Shaw
David Purdy
David Jaffe
Lyn & Randy Adkins
Christina Diebold
Gerald & Joyce Kim
Cheryl & Scott Jones
Peter & Nadeane Averill

FRIENDS OF SUNKHAZE MEADOWS
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

STREAMSIDE

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