



BKAA

GUARDIAN

Volume 39 • Number 1

Spring 2025





My wife and I are one of the remote participants in your Monday night series. We live in Pine Island so the Wallkill Refuge is essentially our backyard. Thanks to you, we ventured to the Basha Kill this weekend and searched for vernal pools. She found the eggs as the thin crust of ice melted. On our way back to the parking area, I saw five sluggish turtles sunning themselves. Thank you for showing us that there are still many fascinating things that can be found if you look closely enough.

Thank you again for an informative series and best regards,

Frank Wolfe



Spring 2025 New Member

Nancy Ferren

On The Front Cover:

Eagle photo by Gene Weinstein

SPRING 2025 NATURE WATCH

**Weekends from Saturday April 15 through
Sunday June 15, 10 AM to 4 PM**

Nature Watch at the South Road Boat Launch, across from the Bashakill Vineyards

Join our dedicated, trained BKAA Nature Watch volunteers at the South Road boat launch to learn more about eagles and the other diverse species of this amazing wetland. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you view nesting eagles and other wildlife in addition to answering your questions and hearing your stories. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors!

**For questions, please
contact the BKAA at (845)
789-2846 or
info@thebashakill.org**



BKAA GUARDIAN — Volume 39, Number 1 • Spring 2025

MISSION STATEMENT:

Since our founding in 1972, our mission has been to protect the Basha Kill Wetlands and surrounding area from ecological degradation, to promote education and respect for the environment in general, and to preserve the beauty of the area.

We welcome new members who are interested in protecting the environment. Dues are \$10 per person per year. BKAA is a not-for-profit corporation and donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The *BKAA Guardian* is published quarterly by the
Basha Kill Area Association Inc., PO Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790 • 845-796-5339
President: Leslie Otto • Vice President: Mark Otto • Treasurer: Lisa Schnitzer
Secretary: Christine Saward • Assistant Secretary: Jenn Davis • Membership Coordinator: Graham Vest
Board Members: Frank Coviello • Cliff Johnson • Bill Lucas • Walter Jahn
Graham Vest • Ellen Pilipski • John Pratt • Jackie Broder
E-mail Coordinator: Bill Lucas • Alerts Coordinator: Liberty Press - Jon Heaphy
Advocacy Chair: Frank Coviello • Nature Watch Co-Leaders: Nora Brusinski & Walter Jahn
Water Testing Coordinator: Cheyenne Otto
Guardian Editor: Frank Coviello • Guardian Layout: Liberty Press - Jon Heaphy

CONTACT THE BKAA — info@thebashakill.org website: www.thebashakill.org
CONTACT THE DEC — Call 24-hour DEC Law Enforcement Dispatch at 1-877-457-5680

Spring 2025 Donors

Jessica & David McClosky
Joanne & John Lyons Gray
Barbara Z. Restaino
Elizabeth Schettkoe
Judith & Henry C. Warnke

Louisa M. & Carl Lanzano
Janet A. Rosenthal Davis
Pauline Rica Rock
The Greater Pike Community Foundation
Liberty Press

In memory H. Neil Zimmerman
Thomas Eanelli
Muriel Patterson Huttenbach
Joan Reisman-Brill & Hal G. Brill
Sullivan County Audubon Society

D&H Canal Bicentennial - Groundbreaking Reenactment Schedule for July 13, 2025

12:00 Noon – to approximately 1:30

A parade / procession: Groups will assemble at the Wurtsboro Firehouse about 11 AM. At noon with cannon fire and church bells ringing, the parade will proceed down Pine Street, to 4th Street, then ending at the reenactment site at 85 Sullivan Street.

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM

Welcome and historic speech: There will be a welcome of dignitaries and guests and a repeat of a portion of Philip Hone's groundbreaking speech.

2:00 PM

Dignitaries and Guests light buffet lunch: This will take place after the ceremony and the speeches in the rear yard of 85 Sullivan Street, for invited guests.

2:00 PM-4:00 PM:

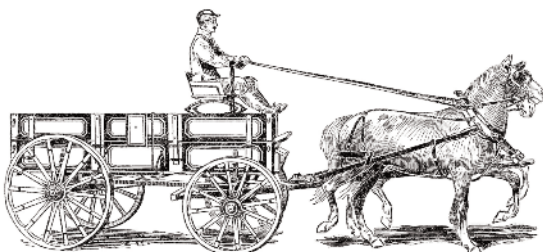
Living history presentations and displays: These are for public participation, also located at 85 Sullivan Street in the left side of the front yard. Tables will be set up with different activities for children and adults. An old-time photo booth will be available.

4:00 PM-5:00 PM:

Guided canal towpath walk: Follow the historic D&H Canal towpath past the Chase School and along the upper portion of the Bashakill marsh through the winding "Wurtsboro Turns" and a new section of federally financed trail to the Town Government center. Total distance 1.4 miles.

2:00 PM-4:00 PM:

Horse and Wagon Rides: Will be provided on Sullivan Street.



1:30 PM-3:00 PM:

Music ensembles West Point musicians will play at 85 Sullivan Street along with other musical groups (to be determined).

7:00 PM-9:00 PM

Period Costume Ball: To take place at the Wurtsboro Firehouse on Pine Street from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM on Sunday, July 13. Tickets \$10:00 per person. Venue capacity 110 persons. This is in the planning stage.

More events to be added in weeks/days before July 13th.

2025 Nature Watch Kicked Off in March

Saturday, March 22nd marked the opening rumbles of the 2025 BKAA Nature Watch season. That morning, a team of dedicated volunteers, both new and returning, gathered at the Mamakating Environmental Education Center for our Annual Training. After enjoying an array of refreshments provided by MaryAnn Geary-Halchak and Nature Watch co-leader Walter Jahn, participants were treated to a lively question-and-answer session with Mamakating Town Historian Virdanna Lawrence about the history of the Basha Kill.

The presentation covered many common questions we receive from visitors, such as the origins of the Kill's name. Our second presentation, from Walter, walked volunteers through the biology of Bald eagles and expected activity during the coming weeks. Training concluded with a group visit to the boat launch where John Kocijanski demonstrated spotting scope setup. He then trained his sights upon the two nests.

2025 is the second year that two Bald eagle nests are visible from the boat launch. Last year, only the new central nest saw an eaglet fledge, due to intraspecies aggression incidents early in the Spring. We are hopeful that visitors will be able to observe the activities of both nests this season.

2025 BKAA *Calendar of Events*

**Weekends through
Sunday, June 15 • 10 AM to 4 PM
Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards**

Join trained BKAA Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information.

**Friday, April 25 • 7 PM
Free Public Star Watch with
John Kocijanski of the
Catskills Astronomy Club**

Bring scopes and/or binoculars. Meet at the South Road Boat Launch, across from the Bashakill Vineyards. To register call John at (845) 798-8087. For event updates, visit Catskill Astronomy Club's Facebook Page. Rain date is the following day.

**Saturday, April 26 • 9:30 AM
Annual Bashakill Clean-up**

9:30-10 AM Registration and site assignments in the DEC Haven Road Parking Lot. Celebrate Earth Day! Enjoy a walk and fresh Spring air while ridding the wetlands of debris. Garbage bags are provided. Wear boots, work gloves and insect repellent. Bring chairs as refreshments are provided by the BKAA to be eaten al fresco. BKAA merchandise will be on sale. Email info@thebashakill.org for further information.

**Sat. & Sun., April 26-27 • 10 AM to 4 PM
Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards**

Join trained BKAA Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds.

Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information.

**Sunday, April 27 • 9 AM
Hike the Shawangunk Ridge Trail
North from High Point State Park**

Join Ethan Glenning from the NY-NJ Trail Conference, meet at the High Point State Lookout Parking Lot (end on Monument Road in Wantage NJ) and hike north about one hour and then turn back. Please email info@bashakill.org to register for this new event. Please specify you are registering for the April 27, 2025 Shawangunk Ridge Trail Hike and indicate the number of attendees.

**Sat. & Sun., May 3-4 • 10 AM to 4 PM
Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards**

Join trained BKAA Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information.

**Sat. & Sun., May 10-11 • 10 AM to 4 PM
Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards**

Join trained BKAA Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information.

2025 Calendar — continued from page 4

Saturday, May 10 • 10 am
Canoe/Kayak the Basha Kill
with Elly Knieriemen

Join photographer extraordinaire Elly for a mid season venture. Bring your own vessel and binoculars. Meet at the South Road Boat Launch. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org

Sunday, May 11 • 10 AM
Nature Walk

Join BKAa Board Member Dr. Walter Jahn for a season appropriate Nature Walk. Meet at the Boat Launch opposite the Wurtsboro Winery at 10:00 AM. . Bring camera, binoculars, insect repellent and wear good walking shoes. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org.

Saturday, May 17 • 10 AM
Spring Migration Warbler Walk

Meet walk leader John Haas at Stop Sign Parking Area off Haven Road (from Route 209, cross Haven Road Bridge and take first left just before Haven Road ends at South Road). Bring Binoculars and insect repellent. We should see an array of spring migrants including warblers, orioles and grosbeaks. We will then move to the Nature Trail, finishing at the Main Boat Launch. A visit to Mamakating's Environmental Center is included. To register and/or for more information contact John at (854)-807-2437

Sat. & Sun., May 17-18 • 10 AM to 4 PM
Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards

Join trained BKAa Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information

Sat. & Sun., May 24-25 • 10 AM to 4 PM
Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards

Join trained BKAa Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill

better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information

Saturday, May 31 • 10 AM to 4 PM
Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards

Join trained BKAa Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information

Sunday, June 1 • 10 AM to 4 PM
Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards

Join trained BKAa Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information

Saturday, June 7 • 10 AM to 4 PM
Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards

Join trained BKAa Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information

Sunday, June 8 • 10 AM
Nature Walk

Join BKAa Board Member Dr. Walter Jahn for a season appropriate Nature Walk. Meet at the Boat Launch opposite the Wurtsboro Winery at 10:00 AM. . Bring camera, binoculars, insect repellent and wear good walking shoes. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org

2025 Calendar — continued on page 6

2025 Calendar — continued from page 5

Sunday, June 8 • 10 AM to 4 PM

**Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards**

Join trained BKAA Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information

Saturday, June 14 • 10 AM to 4 PM

**Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards**

Join trained BKAA Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information.

Saturday, June 14 • 9 AM

Nature Walk

Take a stroll with BKAA Board Member and MEEC Director, Jackie Broder, to check out what's happening on the Bashakill as Fall approaches. We'll focus on wildflowers, migrating birds, and anything else that comes along! Meet at Haven Road parking lot. Call 845-644-5014 to register.

Sunday, June 15 • 10 AM to 4 PM

**Nature Watch at the South Road
Boat Launch, Across from the
Bashakill Vineyards**

Join trained BKAA Nature Watch volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about the many residents of this amazing wetland. View nesting Bald Eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you know the Bashakill better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for fun in the outdoors. Contact Nora Brusinski at norabrusinski@gmail.com to receive more information

Tuesday, September 9 • 10 AM to Noon

Take a stroll with BKAA Board Member and MEEC Director, Jackie Broder, to learn about exotic species invading the Bashakill. We'll do some light invasive species removal as we go. Bring gloves if you are interested in helping, some will be provided if needed. If you just want to walk, that's ok too! Meet at Haven Rd parking lot. Call 845-644-5014 to register.

Saturday, September 13 • 10 am

**Canoe/Kayak the Basha Kill
with Elly Knieriemen**

Join photographer extraordinaire Elly for a late season venture. Bring your own vessel and binoculars. Meet at the South Road Boat Launch. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org.

Sunday, September 14 • 10 AM

Nature Walk

Join BKAA Board Member Dr. Walter Jahn for a season appropriate Nature Walk. Meet at the Boat Launch opposite the Wurtsboro Winery at 10:00 AM. . Bring camera, binoculars, insect repellent and wear good walking shoes. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org.

Sunday, October 12 • 10 AM

Nature Walk

Join BKAA Board Member Dr. Walter Jahn for a season appropriate Nature Walk. Meet at the Boat Launch opposite the Wurtsboro Winery at 10:00 AM. . Bring camera, binoculars, insect repellent and wear good walking shoes. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org.

Friday October 17 • 7 PM

**Free Public Star Watch with
John Kocijanski of the
Catskills Astronomy Club**

Bring scopes and/or binoculars. Meet at the South Road Boat Launch, across from the Bashakill Vineyards. To register call John at (845) 798-8087. For event updates, visit Catskill Astronomy Club's Facebook Page. Rain date is the following day.

Sunday, November 9 • 10 AM

Nature Walk

Join BKAA Board Member Dr. Walter Jahn for a season appropriate Nature Walk. Meet at the Boat Launch opposite the Wurtsboro Winery at 10:00 AM. . Bring camera, binoculars, insect repellent and wear good walking shoes. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org.



**Recent sightings of a bird
species in the Basha Kill
Wildlife Management Area**



**Great Egret (above) and Sandhill Crane (below).
Photos by Walter Jahn**



Poetry Corner

Hope Springs

A rainbow!
I saw it clearly
In the midst of clouds
And light rain
A beautiful sign
That hope prevails
A promise
A spark
to encourage us
To carry on
For the possibilities
Are limitless

— Susan Erny

Blustery Beach Yoga

Christine Saward

*Wind at 20mph, blowing, trying to unbalance me
My feet are rooted like a tree to the earth,
my balance is strong
I hear you whistling past my ears
I feel you whipping my pant legs and my hair
I hear the surf
I'm in my bubble, you're not going to distract me
I hear Albert say, "And if your mind wanders...."
Sorry Albert...
I am a sea gull catching the updraft
I am a sail catching the wind making the boat fly
I am a kite climbing higher and higher
I am the clouds traveling to places unknown
You try blowing even stronger
Not happening
Feeling like a sphinx being sandblasted and covered
in sand
I stay in my meditative bubble
I hear you
I feel you
I am you*

2025 DEC Summer Camp Scholarship Winners



My name is **Noah Fello**. I am in the 5th grade in Mrs. Unverzagt's class at Chase School in Wurtsboro, NY.

I like to go ice fishing, hiking, camping and shooting my bow and arrow with my Dad. I am also a Boy Scout in Troop 92.

I am interested in the environment because I like learning about animals and how

they affect the environment. I would love to go to DEC Camp this summer.

Thank you,

Noah Fello

5th Grade - Emma C. Chase School, Wurtsboro, NY 12790

Hi, my name is **Anabelle Segal**, and I am 11 years old. My parents are Roberta Gibson, and Robert Segal. I am interested in the camp because I love the environment, and I always go on hikes with my friends and I enjoy the nature.

The environment has always fascinated me, I have always loved looking at all of the plants and the animals. I have a forest by my house, so it is very common that I see deer, or bears at my house. I have always just loved looking at them. And in general nature is just so amazing, and I love spending time in it.

The school I go to is Robert J Kaiser Middle School, and I am in 6th grade.



Thank you for your consideration
Anabelle Segal

Hi, my name is **Frank Hooper**. My school is RJK Middle School in Monticello. I'm in 6th grade and I'm 12 years old. I am interested in this camp to hunt and fish. I've been hunting and fishing ever since I was 3, so I am pretty



experienced in those activities. I really want to go here to get my hunting license. If I get this, I can shoot my first doe or or buck with my dad. I have gone to a different DEC camp last year and I met a lot of people that I turned into friends. So, I'm really excited to go here.

Thank you.

Frank Hopper

I have always really loved nature. It just makes me happy. When I was little I would take out all of the books I could find in the library about Jane Goodall and all of her adventures with her monkeys in the jungles of Africa. When SHE was a little girl she really loved nature too!

I live in an apartment complex in Middletown and there are trees and squirrels and cats, but not really that much else, so I'm always on the lookout to see more. When I was in 4th grade (I'm in 9th grade now) the volunteer @ "homework help", Bob Muller, invited me and my family to see the baby eagles in The Bashakill. I could not believe what a BEAUTIFUL place it was!! I had never seen any place like it. I was SURROUNDED by nature. Animals were everywhere! Eagles, blackbirds with red on their shoulders, bright blue birds going in and out of the little birdhouse on a stick in the water, frogs, fish, snakes, salamanders and so, so many butterflies! I actually held one in my hand.

The idea of a chance to go to a camp surrounded by nature is so, so exciting to me! I would love to see more birds, more fish, more turtles, more butterflies! And it would be so great to enjoy all of it while making new friends who love nature as much as I do. It would be a dream come true for me. I have my fingers crossed as I finish this letter. Hope I get picked as one of the lucky kids that get to go on such a great adventure.

Sincerely Yours,

Rebecca Tejada

To Jackie Broder,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is **Khileigh Bruno**, and I am



Summer Camp — continued on page 9

Summer Camp — continued from page 8

writing to express my interest in applying for the scholarship to attend the D.E.C. Nature Camp. I have attended this camp in the past and would be thrilled to return and continue learning about the environment and nature.

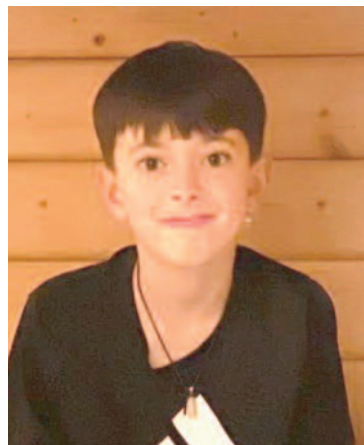
I have a deep passion for outdoor activities and regularly engage in hiking, swimming, skiing, and camping, among others. Being in nature is something that I truly value, and I believe that this opportunity would help me further develop my love and knowledge of the outdoors.

I am currently a 6th-grade student at RJK Middle School, and I would greatly appreciate your consideration for this scholarship.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of participating in the D.E.C. Nature Camp again.

Sincerely,

Khleigh Bruno



To whom it may concern,

My name is **Justin Hackett** and I am a 5th grader at Emma C. Chase school in the Monticello Central school district. I am interested in this because I am in boy scouts and this gives me an opportunity to learn more about the environment. When I am outside I like to go fishing, watch animals, explore the stream, and play

sports. I would love the opportunity to go to a camp where I can learn more about the environment and animals. I have never been at a sleep away camp so I think this would be a great experience.

To BKAA,

I want to thank you for the scholarship to the NYS DEC Teen Ecology Camp. I personally can't wait until I am able to stay there and learn about the great outdoors of New York. The other day I was with my grandmother and spotted an osprey flying in between two ponds. I am hoping to see more interesting wildlife this summer.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Depew

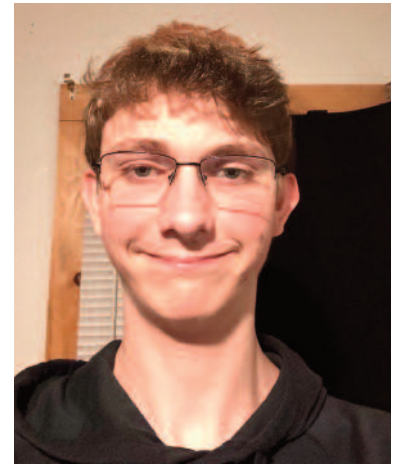


Dear Jackie Broder,

I am emailing because I am interested in the Summer Camp program you have going on. The reason I am interested in the program is because the occupation I would like to pursue relies a lot on the environment. The more I know, the greater I can succeed. My name is **Brayden Davis** and my parents are Jennifer Davis and Jesse Riffard.

I attend school at Ellenville and I am in 11th grade. Thank you for the chance at this opportunity. I look forward to hearing from you.

Brayden Davis



Hello, my name is **Skylar Bricker**. My mom's name is Danielle Bricker and my dad's name is Jim Bricker. I'm in 6th grade and I go to Robert J. Kaiser Middle School.

I would love to go because I love nature. My family and I go hiking locally. We also go snowmobiling and we ride ATV's. I love reading outside, playing outside

and the sun and the sounds of nature. Last year I went to Camp Rushford and had a great time. I learned how to start a fire and how to shoot a bow and arrow. I also made new friends. I look forward to taking a hunter safety course and night camping again and meeting new people.



SNAPSHOT OF BKAA HISTORY:

2011 Bald Eagle Rescue, Rehabilitation & Release

Maryallison Farley

In August of 2011, a newly fledged Bald eagle from the southern Basha Kill nest, although injured during one of its first flights, was given a second chance. Nature Watch volunteers and friends, along with several experts, came together in a successful rescue, rehab and release operation.

Briefly, John Haas, expert birder, determined that the nest's solo eaglet had fledged either Monday or Tuesday of the week before the 4th of July. John saw one of the bird's early flights in which it crashed and recovered. However, by Wednesday afternoon, when Gene Weinstein, long-time DEC volunteer monitor for Bald eagle nests in Sullivan County, put his scope on the nest, he observed the immature lying down in the nest, moving its head from side to side. He saw that one of bird's wings was abnormally positioned.

The next report came on Saturday when John Haas kayaked in the area south of the boat launch. He spotted the bird hopping on the ground not far from the nesting tree. Both adult eagles were nearby, perched on low branches.

BKAA Nature Watch members had been in touch with the DEC about the immature eagle when it was exhibiting distressed behavior in the nest. However, as we moved into the holiday weekend with the bird grounded and exposed to both air-borne and ground predators and with more bad weather expected, the consensus was to try and quickly assist the bird. We contacted the Delaware Valley Raptor Center (DVRC), a licensed raptor rehabilitation center in Milford, PA. They agreed to receive the bird if we could retrieve it.

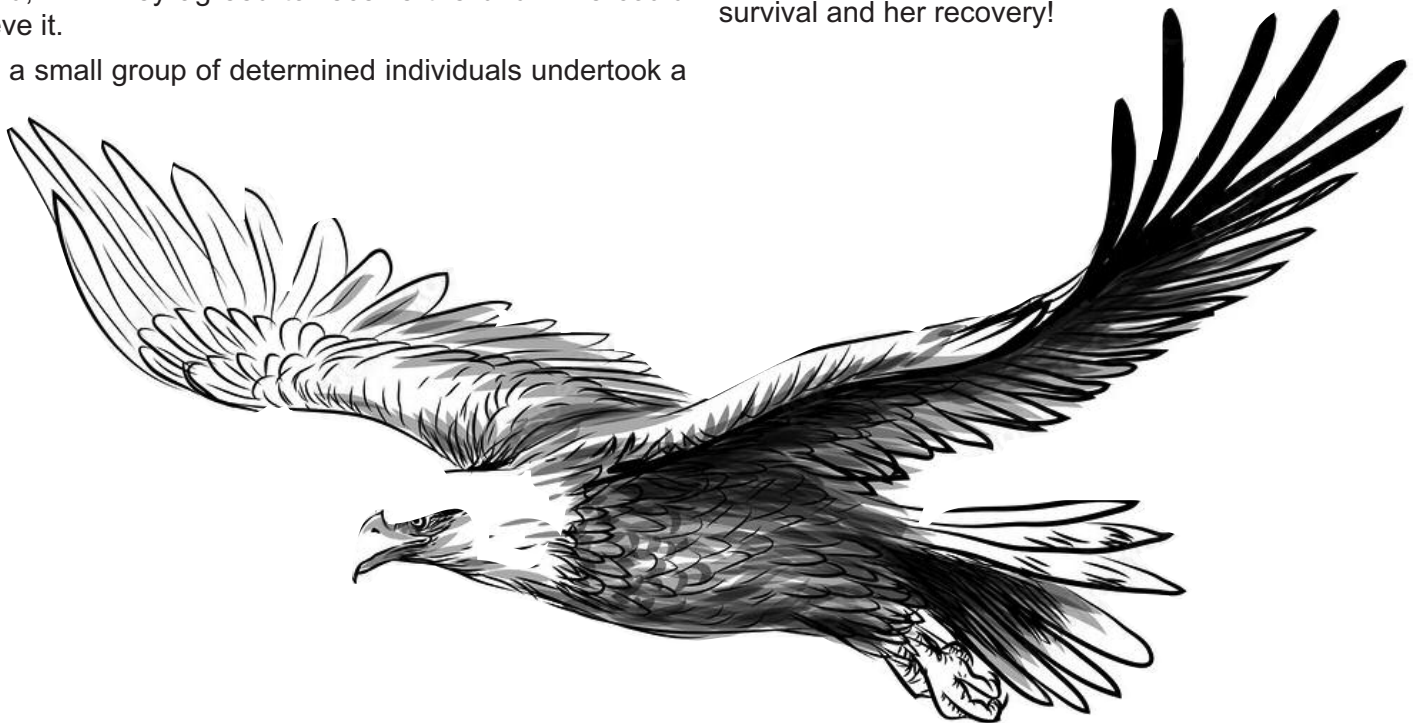
Thus a small group of determined individuals undertook a

rescue operation on July 3rd, a rainy Sunday. Gene Weinstein was in touch with the DVRC and staffed the boat launch, while Nature Watch volunteers, Patricia Diness and Louann Lewis, waited to drive the bird to Port Jervis for transfer to a DVRC volunteer. John Haas, Michael Rider, Ed Morse and I kayaked and canoed out to the nesting tree area to find the bird and then attempt the rescue. John immediately spotted the bird. In the pouring rain, Michael and Ed were able to capture the bird. We then raced to shore with the bird carefully confined.

Within two hours, Bill Streeter, Director of the DVRC, called with his report about the bird. From x-rays, he observed a broken radius or wrist bone at the tip of one wing. That was the injury to an otherwise very healthy, 13 lb. female bald eagle. Bill Streeter said that she was an impressive specimen for her age – at the large end of the scale for female bald eagles who at maximum grow to a weight of 14 or 15 lbs. His decision was to keep her quiet in a small enclosure so that her injured wing would be kept as immobilized as possible.

The call came August 11th from Bill Streeter who felt the bird was ready to be released back at the Basha Kill the next day. She was flying well in a larger enclosure and he did not want her to injure herself in captivity.

As Bill Streeter said to us on the day of the release, "this bird was given a second chance." Those of us in the BKAA's Nature Watch program and our friends and advisors were thrilled to have been a part of this bird's recovery and release. Rescued on the 4th of July weekend, she was truly a wonderful symbol for all of us, both by her survival and her recovery!



Navigating the Bashakill with Map and Compass

Gary Cormier

The spring season brings thoughts of warmer weather, singing birds, budding trees and enjoying the great outdoors. Whether hiking, boating, fishing or backpacking, it's the best time to get out and explore some new territory, and there is no better place than the Bashakill Wetland area.

If you look closely as you hike along the rail trail at the Bashakill Wetlands, you will notice the old wooden railroad ties embedded in the ground. It is hard to imagine that less than 75 years ago, a large and heavy, noisy locomotive train cruised along the wetlands, bellowing smoke and vibrating the ground. That same quiet and peaceful path today is where turtles bury their eggs and waterfowl raise their young along the waters of the old railroad bed.

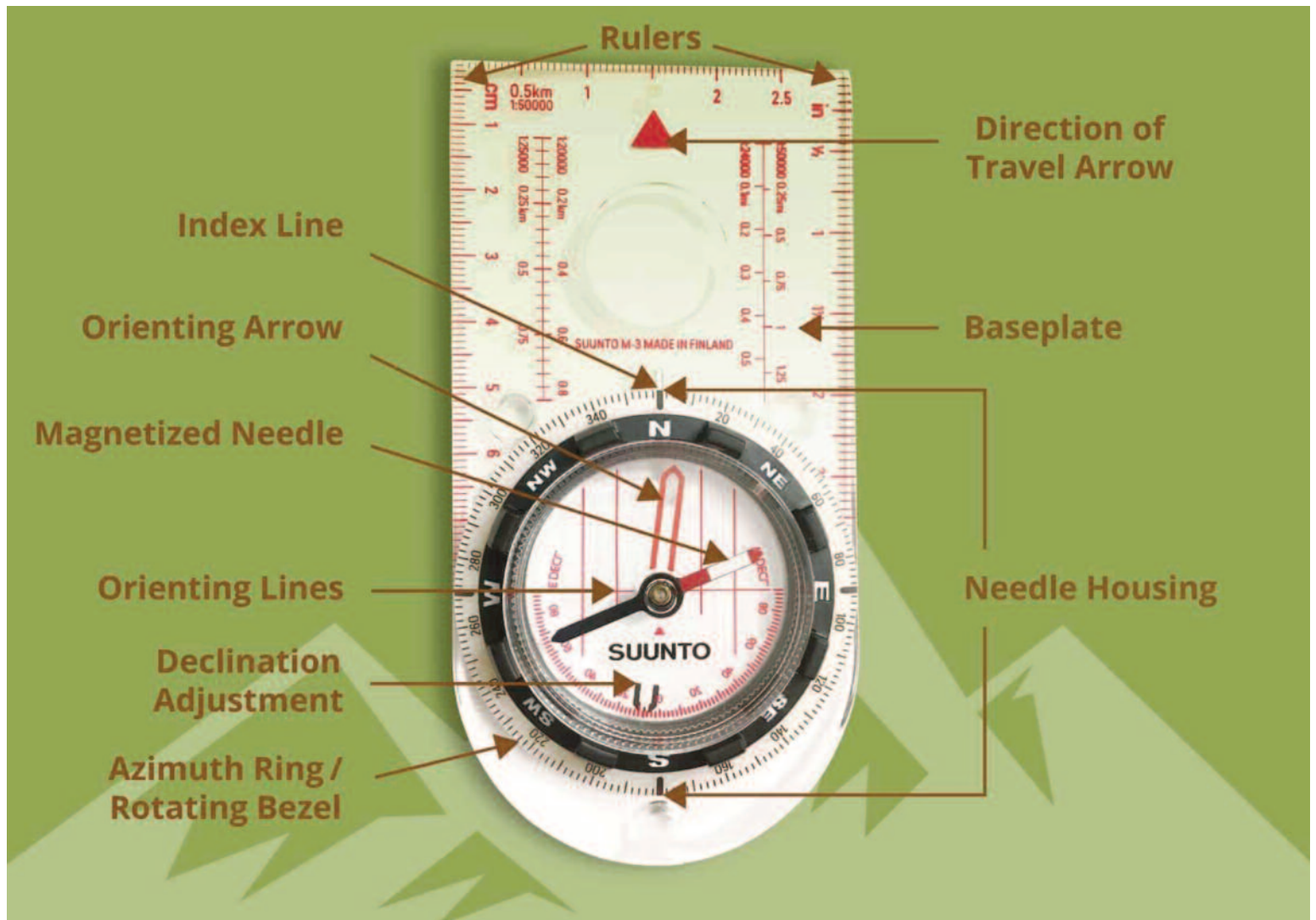
In the middle 1800's, teams of surveyors navigated these wooded lands to layout the O&W Railroad Kingston line, which ran from Port Jervis to Kingston along the Bashakill. Their equipment likely included a surveyor's transit (for measuring angles), a surveyor's chain (to measure distance) and a magnetic compass to measure direction of

travel. Today, modern electronic equipment, such as the GPS, supplement these tools. However, to some extent we still use the compass and earth's geomagnetic field to find direction.

Learning to navigate with a map and compass can be a valuable skill, helping you to explore the great outdoors. Some of you are already thinking, 'but I can navigate by pressing a few buttons on my smartphone GPS app'. This may be true, but there are many other advantages to using a compass and map. GPS devices need battery power and a clear signal, and you may also find your smart device screen difficult to read in bright sunlight. But experiencing the traditional non-tech methods of exploration through a natural wilderness environment is the best reason.

Safety is another reason to keep a light weight compass and map with you while hiking in the woods. Years ago when I was a younger man deer hunting, I fell asleep sitting under a tree only to be awakened by a few inches of snow. It was getting dark and everything looked all white. I got disoriented and lost without a compass. I ended up miles away from

MAP AND COMPASS continued on page 12



MAP AND COMPASS continued from page 11

home and luckily was able to follow a stone wall out to the road just before nighttime. I learned my lesson and now always carry a compass while in the woods. Even when I am familiar with the surroundings!

The Bashakill Wildlife Management Area is an excellent place to hone and practice your compass navigation skills. You can find local maps of the Bashakill area online for free (https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2023-12/bashakillwma_0.pdf.) You can hike for miles Northeast and Southwest along both sides of the wetlands by following either the old O&W Railroad bed or the old D&H canal path, exploring the hidden treasures along the way.

I prefer navigating with a baseplate style compass that provides both magnetic direction and a compass baseplate for plotting directions on a map. The clear baseplate also includes a ruler for measuring scaled distances on the map. The magnetic baseplate compass establishes direction by using a 360 degree bezel, which is turned and set to your direction of travel. This is called an AZIMUTH angle (the clockwise angle from north). The north index is then aligned with the magnetic needle by turning your body to locate your direction of travel. The procedure is reversed for plotting on a map. It is easier than it sounds. Brand name compasses like Sunnto, Sylva and Brunton, include detailed instructions, beyond the scope of this article.

For those of you just getting started, I suggest first learning how to read and orientate a map. Begin by finding north on the map and aligning your map with north on the ground. Most maps have an arrow that indicates TRUE NORTH. True North is aligned with the geographic lines of longitude, running vertical along the map. This is NOT the same as your compass north or MAGNETIC NORTH. Many beginners are unaware that the magnetic compass doesn't really point exactly north. Magnetic North continues to move away from Northern Canada and is heading towards

Siberia, miles away from the geographic North Pole. The difference between True North and Magnetic North is called the MAGNETIC DECLINATION. At the Bashakill the magnetic declination is currently about 12.3 degrees west of True North. Some compasses have a setting to adjust for declination. However, keep in mind that the magnetic declination changes over time and will be different next year (or maybe even next month).

There are many uses for map and compass navigation skills besides keeping track of your location. Maybe like the famous explorers Lewis and Clark, you would like to document the natural resources, plants and other geological features, using your compass to plot the azimuth on your map to share or use at a later date. I find it handy to locate or plot points of interest. This could be an interesting nesting site, prominent land feature or other place of interest. For example, you can be standing in one of the Bashakill's observation towers looking at a bird nest in the distance. Using your compass you can measure the azimuth. Next time you return and want to find the same nest, you simply set the azimuth on your compass and point to the location. Or maybe you are looking for migrating birds reported to be flying from North to South and are searching for a good observation site, needing to find the direction the birds will travel.

The compass works equally well out on a kayak, providing direction to and from those secluded coves and waterways. Also to find the North Star, and plan your evening with binoculars or telescope while observing the night sky. Whatever your interest, your compass can be a useful tool, adding fun to your chosen adventure and assisting you along your way to exploring the unknown.

As a reminder, for your safety and health of the ecosystem on State lands, regulations usually encourage people to stay on the marked trails.

Tell A Friend About the Basha Kill Area Association

Fill out this coupon for membership or more information:

Mail to: P.O. Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790

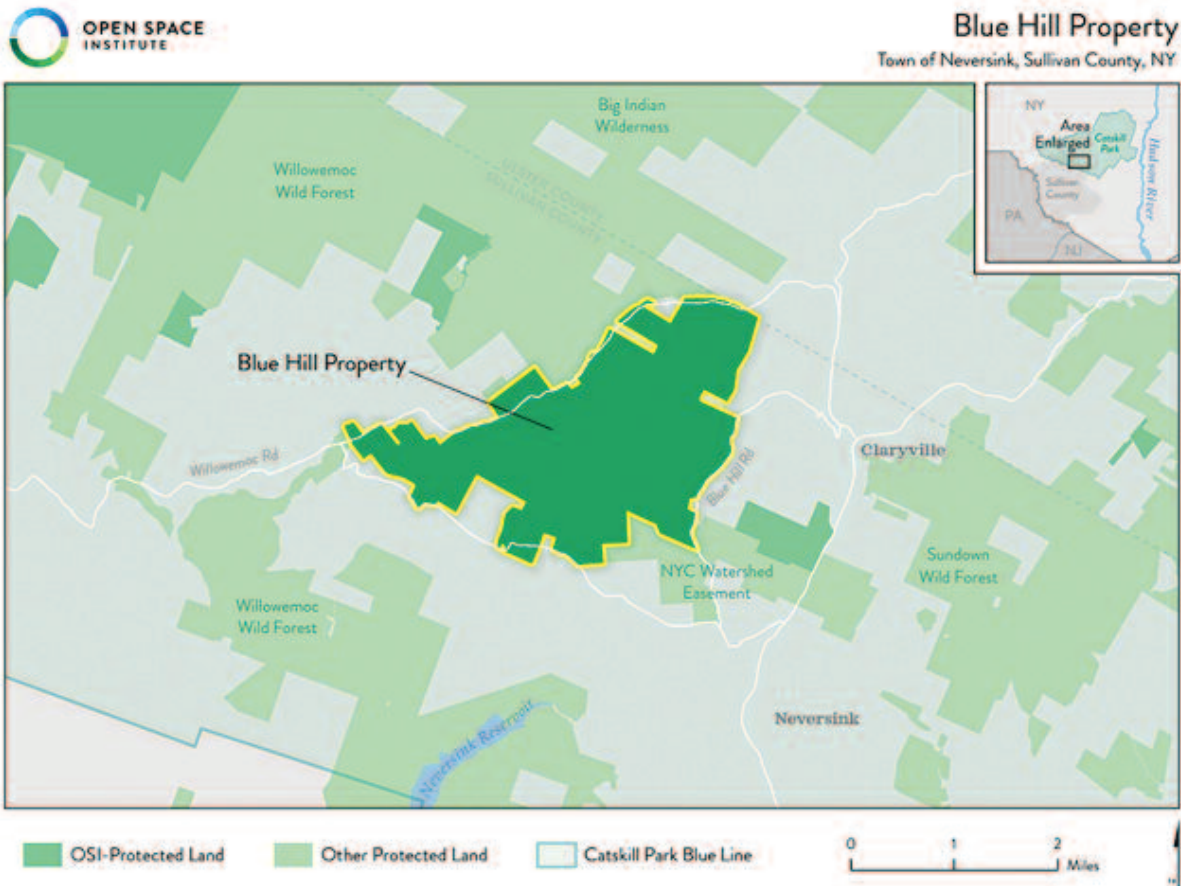
☐ \$10 per membership ☐ Other Donation ☐ Prefer mailed newsletter (Not available to seasonal residents due to forwarding costs)
☐ \$20 Family Membership (every family member aged 14 years and older holds voting rights)

Name

Phone

Address

Email (required)



Catskill Forest Preserve Grows by 3,100 Acres

Largest Addition in 25 Years

Shawangunk Journal Staff

NEVERSINK - The Open Space Institute (OSI) has announced the purchase of more than 3,100 forested acres in the Catskill Park. The property, referred to as the “Blue Hill” property, lies in Neversink and is one of the largest parcels of privately owned, contiguous forestland remaining within the Catskill Blue Line. The property was previously proposed for a large-scale development of housing, resort and commercial uses.

OSI purchased the property for \$6.2 million, using funds from its Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund and an anonymous foundation, and plans to convey the land to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). It will be the largest addition to the Catskill Forest Preserve in nearly 25 years.

The property contains a variety of natural resources, including native hardwood forests, undisturbed wetlands, nearly 20 miles of streambanks, and a ridgeline of peaks with views of the surrounding mountains. The highest peak is over 2,700 feet in elevation.

The purchase is considered a major victory for clean water protection, since the land plays a major role in protecting water sources for the Delaware River watershed. The watershed provides clean water to more than 15 million

people in New York City, Trenton, Philadelphia, Wilmington and northeastern Pennsylvania. The property’s streams and wetlands filter water into the Neversink River, Fir Brook, and Willowemoc River, all within the Delaware River watershed.

The DEC has been operating within a state goal of conserving 30% of the state’s land and water by 2030, and DEC Acting Commissioner Amanda Lefton praised OSI, among other partners, as “instrumental” to this goal.

OSI President and CEO Erik Kulleseid said, “This new acquisition is a rare find, both for its sheer size and for the wealth of benefits it provides. OSI is committed to conserving those landscapes that are most important for the health and well-being of both people and wildlife.”

The Blue Hill property borders the 14,800-acre Willowemoc Wild Forest and the 33,500-acre Big Indian Wilderness in the Catskill Forest Preserve. The addition creates a large block of unfragmented conserved lands in the southwestern Catskills.

The property’s varied topography supports a range of wildlife, including songbirds, wood turtles, black bears, fishers, and bobcats. The property also provides important cold-water habitat for native brook trout in the Fir Brook and upper Willowemoc Creek.

The BKAA is grateful to the Shawangunk Journal for their permission to reprint this article.



Josh Riley Visits Wurtsboro Congressman Opposes Exit 114 Closure

John D'Amico - Shawangunk Journal

WURTSBORO - From the Board of Trade to store owners, the village of Wurtsboro has rallied around an attempt to stop the closure of exit 114 off of state route 17, which would cut off access from the highway to the central business district.

The rationale for the closure dates back to 1998, when a federal project began with the goal of turning it from a state route to an interstate highway, called I-86, the Southern Tier Expressway. I-86 now runs through the southern tier and northern Pennsylvania, but much of the eastern leg still has to be converted.

The problem is there are federal standards for interstate on- and off-ramps, and exit 114 doesn't meet those requirements. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have put forward a packet of solutions that range from building a new off-ramp – which would mean blasting through a mountain, moving the exit, or shutting it down entirely.

None of those options are particularly appealing, but it's that last one that has residents most alarmed, as it would mean totally bypassing the Sullivan Street drag, which has

been booming in the past few years.

Into the fray has stepped Wurtsboro's new congressional representative, Josh Riley. Riley won against incumbent Marc Molinaro last November with a campaign built around helping small businesses. Molinaro never visited the village, and it's possible Riley will lean into this cause to make his mark on his new constituency.

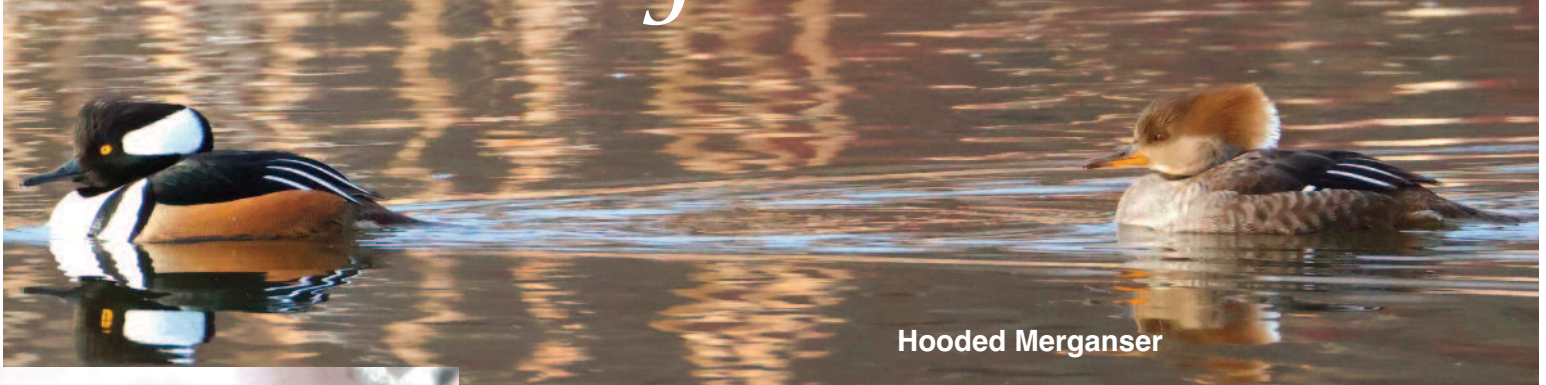
"If a bunch of bureaucrats want to come in and close down Exit 114 and hurt the small business owners, hurt the community, and make people less safe," he is reported to have vowed, "I'll introduce federal legislation to override it."

The congressman put on a "KEEP EXIT 114 OPEN" tee and spoke to local leaders and business owners, including some from Wurtsboro Wares and Canal Towne Emporium. Afterwards, he announced that he spoke to regulators and project managers for the highway conversion and encouraged them to reconsider.

On Facebook, he posted a message of strong support for the Keep Exit 114 Open movement. "The future of Wurtsboro depends on it," he wrote, "and we're not backing down."

The BKAA is grateful to the Shawangunk Journal for their permission to reprint this article.

Winter Wildlife at the Bashakill



Hooded Merganser



Fox Sparrow

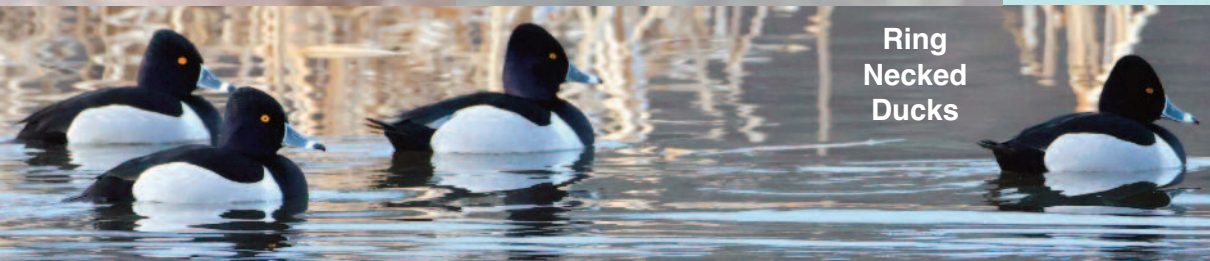
Although the temperatures fluctuated throughout the winter, the Bashakill was constant in being a great habitat to observe wildlife. As March heralded the onset of spring, ring-necked ducks, hooded mergansers, and black ducks were among the early migrating waterfowl. As trained MEEC volunteers helped amphibians travel safely to the Bashakill to breed, spring peepers and wood frogs were the first to make the journey. — *Photos by Walter Jahn*



Black Ducks



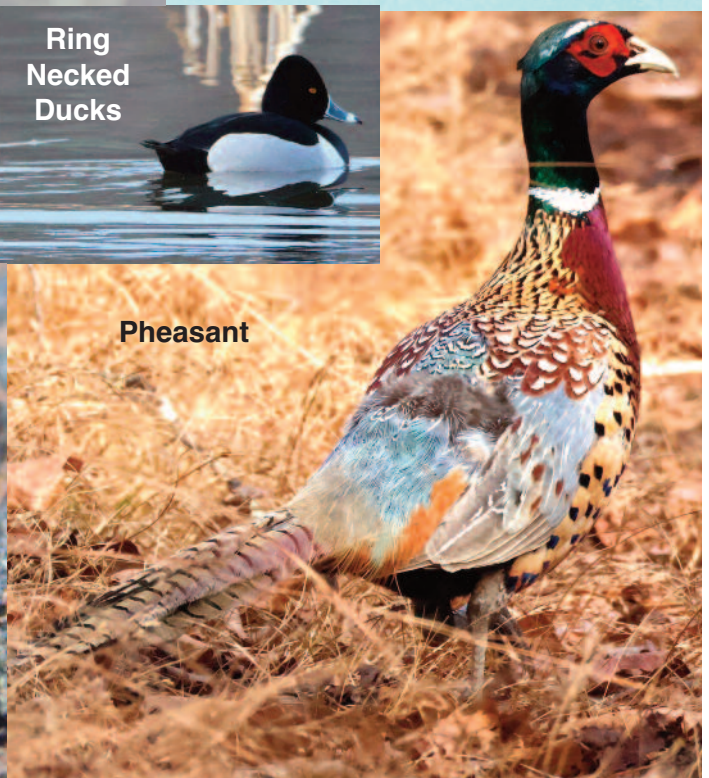
Golden Crowned Kinglet



Ring Necked Ducks



Spring Peeper



Pheasant

14 Eagles Along the Bashakill!

Walter Jahn

On March 9, a large group of bald eagles were observed during a nature walk along the Bashakill—10 immatures (which occasionally flocked together) and 4 adults for a total of 14 eagles! The adults formed two pairs around two eagle nests which were active last year, indicating that these lifelong mating partners had returned to last year's nests. This was not the first time a large number of eagles were observed at the Bashakill boat launch since at least seven eagles had been observed the previous week.



Photos by Walter Jahn

Two weeks later, only a single immature eagle was observed alongside the resident nesting pairs of mature eagles at the boat launch. Apparently, the Bashakill had served as an important rest stop for most of these immature eagles along their spring migration routes.

As observed in these images, pairs of bald eagles were apparently sitting on eggs in the two eagle nests that can be observed from the South Road boat launch. By April, we hope to get our first glimpses of a new generation of eaglets!

If you would like to observe these nests through a spotting scope,

dedicated Nature Watch volunteers will be present at the boat launch from 10 AM to 4 PM Saturdays and Sundays throughout the spring breeding season beginning Saturday, April 15 through Sunday June 15. Let's observe the biodiversity of the Bashakill together!



Bloomington Waste Water Treatment Plant Update - April 5, 2025

You have read about the problems at the Bloomington Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) in previous issues of The Guardian. To summarize, since the summer of 2022 a key component of the plant known as Bar Arm or Swing Arm has only been operational intermittently. The function of the component is to remove large pieces of solid waste from sewage entering the plant, specifically in this case Flushable Wipes. The problem is the number of Flushable Wipes entering the plant overwhelm the ability of the Bar Arm and whole or pieces of the wipes enter the plant resulting in clogged pipes, pumps and filters. It is then necessary to remove the filters for cleaning and wipes are then able to pass and exit the plant through the Effluent pipe, sometimes without being disinfected. The Effluent pipe exits to a channel about 8 feet long and drains into the Shawangunk Kill.

The BKAA became aware of this problem mid January 2024 and immediately implemented a water testing protocol for the detection of two types of bacteria, Fecal Coliform and E. Coli, both are indicators of fecal contamination. Below are the results reported by an Environmental Certified Laboratory.

Permissible limits for recreational waters are ≤ 126 for E.coli and ≤ 200 for Fecal Coliform. You will notice that other than the 5/3/2024 sample all other 2024 samples exceed the 20 limit by 5 to 12 fold. For E. Coli 6 of the 2024 exceeded the 126 limit by 3 to 19 fold. The obvious exception are the 4/2/2025 results, both well below the limits! Observations made while collecting the water

samples were:

1. The Bar Arm had been repaired and was functional.
2. The water in the effluent channel was clear, had no odor and contained no wipes.

The Village of Bloomington has turned over management of the WWTP to an outside contractor and has also signed a contract with an independent engineering firm to design, build and install a new Bar Arm. There is currently no estimated date as to when this will be completed.

It is my sincere hope they are on the path to resolution of this problem.



Location	Date	Coliform MPN/100ml	E Coli MPN/100ml
WWTP Effluent Pipe	41.554256 -74.433284 2/20/2024	>2419.6	>2419.6
WWTP Effluent Pipe	3/12/2024	>2419.6	1011.2
WWTP Effluent Pipe	4/17/2024	>2419.6	>2419.6
WWTP Effluent Pipe	5/3/2024	195.6	>2419.6
WWTP Effluent Pipe	7/2/2024	>2419.8	456.9
WWTP Effluent Pipe	8/6/2024	1119.9	58.1
WWTP Effluent Pipe	8/26/2024	>2419.6	8.6
WWTP Effluent Pipe	11/4/2024		10.7
WWTP Effluent Pipe	11/8/2024	>2419.6	
WWTP Effluent Pipe	12/3/2024	>2419.6	>2419.6
WWTP Effluent Pipe	1/6/2025	>2419.6	>2419.6
WWTP Effluent Pipe	4/2/2025	21.3	9.7

Top photo: rags in the effluent channel.

Bottom: rags in the swing arm.



MEEC Connection Vol 19 — March 2025

Jackie Broder, MEEC Director

"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade." - Charles Dickens

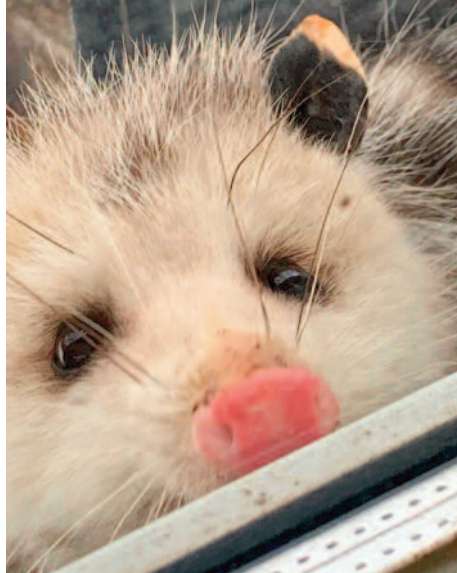
We've seen a lot of those days this year, but the frogs and sallys (salamanders) are moving and the birds are singing, so spring is surely gaining ground! We've seen record numbers of eagles on the kill (11 at once during a walk with Dr. Jahn) and there is activity at both nests that can be viewed from the boat launch.

Here at MEEC, we are gearing up for the grand opening of our kayak rental service! It will be held at MEEC after the Clean Up on April 26th, tentative time is 2pm. If you've always wanted to try kayaking but didn't want to invest in the equipment, now is your chance! Don't want to haul your boat long distances? Worried about the spread of invasive species? Use our kayaks!! Each rental includes boat, paddles, life vest, and straps/pads for your car. It's a short drive to the boat launch (1.7 mi) where the kill is easy access. While you're there, don't forget to visit the Nature Watch Table (April – June)! And make sure you leave time to visit MEEC as well. My only caution is that if you've never been on the kill before, go with an experienced person. As the flora gets thick, the main channel can become obscured, and it's easy to get lost. Do NOT go out without your phone (in a Ziploc, blow some air in the Ziploc so your phone floats if it gets knocked in the water).

We are also preparing for a Spring and Summer full of fun programming,

including the return of our Fairy Festival and Summer Camp! Our art/nature related programming is popular so we will continue with those as well, starting with a macrame workshop on April 27th, and more paint 'n sips with Jess Pirren. Nature Tots is going strong, the highlight of my week, and we plan to continue that as well.

Don't forget that we are here Wednesday- Sunday 9am-4:30 pm, whether you plan a visit to us or you are out and about and just need a restroom and some water. Our boutique sells the BEST tick and mosquito repellent (it actually works and it's non-toxic) by 3 Moms Organics, and we are planning on selling light snacks as well. You'll also be able to find us at the Farmer's Market in the Village this summer as well as Funder's Day and Spring Fling. Check out our programs on our web page, the town web page or on FB & Instagram (links below). If you stop by on a Saturday, you may run into our amazing new part-time employee, Liam Bartels. He has been a huge asset to our team and we are grateful for his knowledge, initiative, and friendliness.



I want to say a huge thank you (again) to our Friends of MEEC volunteers, without whom I would've been lost these past few months. Without enough staff, things become overwhelming quick and they have helped me keep it together.

We are still looking for different funding avenues in order to acquire and maintain staff so that we may continue to provide the quality of programming you've all come to expect from us. To that end, the Friends of MEEC are seeking foundational and corporate sponsors willing to support our mission and vision. Significant annual funding is the goal, but we are open to smaller or one-time gifts as well. If you can help us achieve this goal in any way, please give us a call at

845-644-5014.

<https://www.facebook.com/Mamakatingnaturecenter>

<https://www.friendsofmeec.org/>

PS - Check out the great photo of a MEEC visitor who wandered by after the first thaw!



Deerpark Rural Alliance and NYenvironcom

Grace Woodard

Spring Awakening. We reference not the daring German play directly but the direct changes happening in our community. Both address reality's mix of denial and confrontation of emotional and rational issues.

So folks, after a long wait, our appeal to the 2nd Circuit Federal Appeals Court on the Clean Water Act took place in a beautiful courtroom at 40 Centre St. in Manhattan on March 20th at the Thurgood Marshall Federal Courthouse. The appeal was under 50 minutes in a beautiful courtroom with brief pleadings by attorneys. NYenvironcom and two neighbors vs Dragon Springs. Judges, chosen randomly — one man and two women were serious, engaged with questions and comments. A decision will come down in the next few months, we hope. The issue was focused around Notice of Intent. We have the audio of the hearing on NYenvironcom's YouTube Channel. We recommend listening to it.

The right of petition, in this case, an appeal by citizens, is a cornerstone of our democracy. Was a good morning. Outside, after questions with our attorney, our group made its way to Ping in Chinatown and was treated to a delicious lunch — vegetarian and meat dishes—all yummy with super attentive service. A fine day. Whatever the outcome, we have experienced our Constitution in action.

DEERPARK: More reality. A public hearing on Wednesday April 23rd at 7pm is scheduled regarding Quarry Management, the huge mountainous project that has grown from Rte 6 and expanded across and down to the valley below on Lime Kiln Rd at the edge of Deerpark. Please see

the monster mountain for yourself. The PH is about whether QM can move ahead with an expansion on additional land. We cannot emphasize too much the importance of having BKAA members and friends attend the public hearing.

Thankfully, the Planning Board has finally spoken up with objections, questions and dismay about QM, an out of control 5-year old project. Chronic violations, remedial directives from DEC and other state agencies, stop work orders, outside oversight and conflicts of interest have dogged this project, to say nothing of degrading the value and quality of life of a modest residential neighborhood. The real nature of this project is under scrutiny — a reprocessing, recycling asphalt and concrete reclamation site, or is it a growing waste dump and massive earth build-out intended to transform the hillside, level it, and top it off with asphalt millings as a ready to go large commercial site? You can follow QM articles in the Tri-State Lookout which give a full picture of QM and all the players.

To wind up, we always attend TB and PB meetings, have FOILED much regarding the absence of DS inspections and ongoing construction. Finally, Deerpark's new Ethics Guidelines and Commission formation moves at a snail's pace.

We wrapped winter up with a Spring Breakfast March 30th with a joint support effort with the Cuddebackville Firehouse, DRA, Lower Huguenot Neighborhood Alliance and NYenvironcom. Modest attendance, but great food, everything but eggs was donated. For summer, look for us at the PJ Farmers Market. We love to listen and talk!

Cheyenne the Water Woman

Cheyenne Otto

As written in previous issues, continual water quality testing is important to monitor the health of our ecosystems. But how do we choose the sites of interest? There are a multitude of factors to consider when choosing your sites, including tributaries entering the water body, the tributaries exiting the water body, areas in the middle of the water source, and areas of potential pollution risks.

In the water testing program conducted on the Bashakill, there are eight sites that are tested every first and third Saturday of the month. This data is used to gain an understanding of the quality of water entering and exiting the Bashakill. Of these eight sites, six are located in tributaries entering the Bashakill, one is located at the exit of the Bashakill, and the last is located on Haven Road in the center of the Bashakill.

Once the sites have been chosen, it's imperative to locate a section of the water body which represents the general conditions. For example, sampling a small pool of unmoving water adjacent to a running brook would not indicate the overall qualities of the stream. However, discretion in the field is just as important. If volunteers note a difference in appearance, whether there's odors, abnormal colors, etc, biasing the water sample to the location of potential contamination would provide helpful data to determine the cause.

Please be on the lookout for the next article in this two part series, as I will be discussing each testing site within our program and why the site was chosen. Thank you to all of our volunteers and everyone who has reached out to volunteer for our water testing program at the Bashakill. If you have any questions or you would like to inquire about volunteering for our water testing program, please reach out to info@thebashakill.com with the subject ATTN: Cheyenne - Water Testing Program for more information.



In this issue:

<i>Mailbag & New Member</i>	2
<i>Spring Donors & D&H Canal Bicentennial</i>	3
<i>BKAA Calendar of Events</i>	4-6
<i>Rara Avis & Poetry Corner</i>	7
<i>DEC Summer Camp Scholarship Winners</i>	8-9
<i>BKAA History: 2011 Bald Eagle Rescue</i>	10
<i>Navigating Bashakill with Map & Compass</i>	11-12
<i>Catskill Forest Preserve Grows by 3100 Acres</i>	13
<i>Congressman Riley Visits Wurtsboro</i>	14
<i>Winter Wildlife at the Bashakill</i>	15
<i>14 Eagles Along the Bashakill</i>	16
<i>Bloomington WWTP Update</i>	17
<i>MEEC Connection</i>	18
<i>Deerpark Rural Alliance & NYenvironcom and Cheyenne the Water Woman</i>	19

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 52
LIBERTY, NY 12754

BASHAKILL AREA ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 1121
WURTSBORO, NY 12790