

FORGET-ME-NOT



The Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Inc.
& Biological Research Station

P.O. Box 189, Rensselaerville, NY 12147

Tel/Fax: (518) 797-3440

www.huyckpreserve.org

Volume 27, Number 1

Things to See and Hear on the Huyck Preserve

When you hike the trails of the Huyck Preserve and if you are quiet and watchful there is no telling what you may see. Forest floor wildflowers are out so that they may flower and reproduce before leaf out of the trees.

These include trillium, spring beauty, wild violets, and trout lily. Hardwood trees are beginning to flower and leaf out.

The more common trees are sugar maple, hemlock, beech, and yellow birch.

The branch ends of conifers have begun to form cones with male cones on higher branches than female ones. Apple and pear trees flower abandoned in old fields and along the roadways are shad bush blossoms. In Ten-Mile Creek above Lake Myosotis, there are hundreds of spawning white suckers. These are beautiful foot-long to twenty-inch fish, the males decorated with tubercles and bright silver and orange colors. Overhead around the shore of Lake Myosotis and preying on these suckers are three bald eagles and several ospreys. On Lincoln Pond several great blue herons are jockeying for territorial control. Beaver are visible in Lincoln Pond and Lake Myosotis.

This winter we saw mink and river otter around Lincoln Pond and black bear sightings are becoming frequent. Bobcats, owls and foxes call in

spring to find mates. Spring peepers, wood frogs, gray tree frogs, and American toads are chorusing also to attract mates. Coyotes call with their puppies to celebrate a kill.

Along trails you may run into wood turtles and garter snakes and around the ponds and lakes female snapping turtles will emerge to lay their eggs. Under the leaf litter are red-backed salamanders and two-lined salamanders are under the rocks along the streams. Yellow spotted salamanders and blue spotted salamanders have already courted and lay their egg masses in ephemeral pools and small ponds. Migrant warblers are searching for insects on branches and twigs and newly opened leaves. Barn and tree swallows are flying near the water's surface to catch emerging flies. Redwing blackbirds are also establishing territories around beaver ponds with

their rackus

"congree" call.

Marilyn (my wife) was hunting isopods (pill bugs) under boards and rocks to use in a teacher-training workshop. Also under there were centipedes, ants, earthworms, spiders, beetles and springtails.

Walk quietly and be watchful
— you might see a bear.

Richard L. Wyman



The Value of Field Stations and NEON

I recently received a new write-up of the importance of biological field stations by Sedra Shapiro, David Shaw and Eric Nagy entitled *Organization of Biological Field Stations: 180 living laboratories and museums serving America*. I have excerpted some of the following from this document.

The Huyck Preserve belongs to the Organization of Biological Field Stations (OBFS) a consortium of 180 field stations and marine labs dedicated to supporting and facilitating modern field biology. Member stations are located in almost every state. Field stations like the Huyck Preserve provide resources for research, teaching and outreach in ecological and environmental sciences. Our programs include K-12 education, university research and education, agency and government fieldwork, policy and decision maker workshops and citizen science.

Field station research has served public health, policy, and the environment. For instance, scientists at the Sevilleta Field Station in New Mexico discovered the relationship between deer mouse populations, El Niño and the Hanta virus epidemics. Researchers at Jasper Ridge Preserve have identified the potential for future carbon storage in certain habitat types in North America. Policies based on these findings could dramatically impact rates of global climate change.

Contributions to society from research at field stations are hard to predict. For instance fieldwork on bats in the 1930's at the Huyck Preserve helped the development of sonar and radar technology used in World War II. This research resulted in perhaps the most important military application of new technology of the century.

A major task at field stations is the monitoring of the environment. The Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve and the James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve lead the nation in building wireless networks to send remote field data on water, climate, atmosphere, and wildlife to a variety of users in real-time via the Internet.

In addition to gathering new data, field stations curate and archive long-term data. For over 100 years America's field stations have served as stewards of this national treasure – priceless data on our nation's health. Without these historical data, predictions about the future are impossible. Field stations also serve their communities by keeping track of local environmental change. Acid rain was first discovered because of work done at the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest in New Hampshire. Today field stations are strategically positioned as an environmental early warning system.

Biological field science has changed from a natural history undertaking of documenting the presence and absence of the flora and fauna to sophisticated multidisciplinary research and teaching laboratories serving the scientific community and the public at large. OBFS field stations can serve as frontline centers for ecosystem sensing and are poised to serve as nerve centers for ecological research.

Today field stations are models of cooperation and ingenuity. But informal academic collaborations are no longer enough. With the development of a nationally networked infrastructure, field stations will be ready to serve as regional sentinels serving local, state and national interests. Cutting edge science requires global collaboration and modern highly sophisticated equipment and facilities. To meet regional and global challenges, field stations need support to upgrade facilities, enhance infrastructure and expand research, education and outreach.

What follows is excerpted from *Rationale, Blue print, and expectations for a National Ecological Observatory Network* a white paper by the American Institute of Biological Sciences (2003):

One new initiative at the National Science Foundation is the proposal to develop a National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON). NEON would network facilities, databases and scientists among the nation's field stations. "NEON is envisioned to be a research platform that will apply experimental, observational, analytical, communication, and information technologies to investigate the structure, dynamics and evolution of ecosystems in the United States, to measure the pace of biological change from natural and human influences at local to continental scales, and to forecast the consequences of that change.

NEON is also envisioned to be composed of 17 regional observatories to cover a broad range of ecosystem types. Each regional observatory in the network will itself be a network of facilities such as biological field stations, national parks, college and university campuses, marine laboratories, government agencies or nature preserves. Each observatory will include a core site that is extensively instrumented and a number of satellite observatories that will be less extensively instrumented. Specialized research infrastructure including field-based sensor arrays, flux towers, stable isotope analyzers, micro array analyzers, and automated DNA sequencer will be part of the NEON infrastructure.

Thus far congress has not funded requests from the NSF to begin NEON development. There is some 14 million requested in fiscal year 2004. Hopefully, some day the Huyck Preserve will be a part of a nationally integrated network of observatories keeping track of the health of our nation's ecosystems.

Richard L. Wyman



Eldridge Research Center by Patricia Kernan,
COM. EN. ART 1998

Geologist, Dr. Robert Titus to Give Special Presentation at Annual Science Symposium July 19th, 2:00 p.m.

If you are interested in the story of the geologic past of this area come hear Dr. Robert Titus give a special presentation at the E.N. Huyck Preserve's Annual Science Symposium. Dr. Titus has written many engaging articles about the geology of the Catskills and the Hudson River Valley. He is also a professor of geology at Hartwick College and is a local resident. There will also be presentations by the various scientists who have been conducting research at the Huyck Preserve this season. Please come and join this event. It will be on July 19th, 2:00 p.m., at the Eldridge Research Center on Pond Hill Road in Rensselaerville. For more information contact the Preserve at 797-3440.

2003 Huyck Hike Schedule

Eldridge Research Center, Pond Hill Road, Rensselaerville, NY
2:00 p.m.

Sunday - June 15, 2003

April Boulton, Villanova University
Wood Ant Ecology

Sunday - June 29, 2003

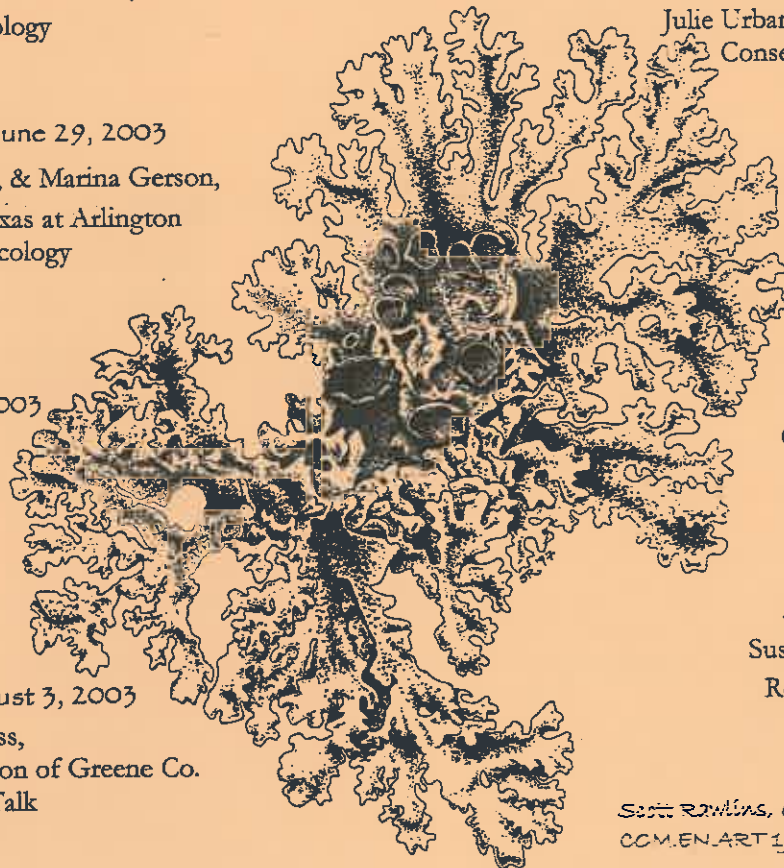
Hill DeVito, Jesse Meik, & Marina Gerson,
University of Texas at Arlington
Stream Spider Ecology

Sunday - July 27, 2003

Sean Madden,
University at Albany
Water Quality in
Ten-Mile Creek

Sunday - August 3, 2003

Bob Beyfuss,
Cornell Coop. Extension of Greene Co.
Ginseng Talk



Sunday - August 24, 2003

Barry Kuhar, Local Naturalist
Observations of Nature

Sunday - June 22, 2003

Julie Urban, NYS Museum, Laboratory for
Conservation & Evolutionary Genetics
Planthopper Evolution

Sunday - July 13, 2003

Susan Beatty,
University of Colorado at Boulder
Disturbance in Ecological Systems

Saturday - July 19, 2003

Science Symposium
Guest Speaker: Robert Titus,
Hartwick College
Geology of the Region

Saturday - August 2, 2003

Susanne Foitzik and Miriam Brandt,
Regensburg University, Germany
Slave-making Ants

Scott Rawlins, Lichen
COM. EN. ART 1997

Sunday - August 10, 2003

John Amason, University at Albany
Mercury in Ten-Mile Creek

Wildlife Wears the Worst of Winter

Tales from the Wildlife Rehabilitator's Perspective

By Kelly Martin

It has been a long, hard winter to say the least. The early arrival of snow, the amount of snow and the severe cold not only was hard on the human population; it was harsh for our wild neighbors as well. Winter can be a difficult and sometimes depressing time for wildlife rehabilitators, as the animals we take in are generally suffering from serious problems due to the weather.



Eldridge Research Center, Winter 2003

In my younger days, I could lift an unconscious adult deer into my vehicle without assistance. As that is no longer the case, I had to seek help from a friend in town to lift a deer hit by a car on Pond Hill Road into the back of my SUV (yes, where I live I DO need a four-wheel drive SUV). Deer with broken bones should be humanely euthanized as soon as possible to end suffering, as they are not generally good candidates for successful rehabilitation. This deer had head trauma and hypothermia, both potentially treatable problems. The wonderful veterinarians at Howes Cave Animal Hospital attempted unsuccessfully to treat this deer; no doubt there were internal injuries not easily seen.

Two Screech Owls, both with broken wings, either from car or window collisions were my next candidates. They were both quite thin, as smaller prey items, such as mice and voles, may remain in tunnels under the snow

and therefore are difficult for little screech owls to access. Both birds, one red screech and one gray, were found near houses and may have been hunting rodents feeding on birdseed from feeders. The birds were looked at by the Howes Cave Veterinary Hospital, but both had injuries that the veterinarian felt might be better treated and surgically repaired at Cornell, by their wildlife veterinarians and surgeons. Both birds are now being evaluated at Cornell. If the red one survives its injuries, it may find a permanent home at the Syracuse Zoo.

Also sent to Cornell was a House Finch with conjunctivitis. This is a commonly observed problem for house finches and is readily treatable. House Finch conjunctivitis is caused by a bacterial pathogen, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, and is in itself not fatal. However, severe conjunctivitis and subsequent irritation around the eyes can cause near blindness in these feeder birds, resulting in starvation or becoming easy prey for predators. This is a contagious disease that easily gets spread among house finches as they congregate at bird feeders, but so far does not spill-over into other species (some documented cases in goldfinches). Cornell has an ongoing survey that the public can participate in if you notice birds at your feeders with this problem (birds.cornell.edu/hofi/abtdisease.html).

Another "patient" this year is not a surprising one, a male Ring-necked Pheasant, also a starvation case. I have a strong bias against the release of these birds for so called sport hunting, although this is not a bias against hunting in general. Specifically, these are introduced, pen-reared, exotic birds raised solely for the gun. Often these birds are released where there is unsuitable habitat to support them. Few survive past the first days of open season, as they are quite visible and ill adapted for survival outside the safety of their pens. They lack the appropriate predator avoidance skills and foraging behavior needed to survive. From a rehabilitator's perspective, this is a sad thing and inhumane thing to do to living creatures. Winter also takes its toll on these creatures, as there is not good food or habitat to support them, and the male I received was much too thin to survive.

This winter we treated a few extremely thin, hypothermic and frostbitten opossums. These creatures suffer terrible frostbite in winter as they have no fur on their ears, tails or toes and they do not hibernate. One poor 'possum was euthanized due to severe frostbite; the other is under veterinary care for relatively minor injuries and will be released.

One interesting phenomena that occurs periodically during winter



Opossum in the snow

is the grounding of grebes and loons. Grebes and loons have lobed paddles for feet and their legs are extremely short and set far back on the body. They need large bodies of water for take-off for flight and are unable to take off from land.

Two grebes, one Horned Grebe and one Red-necked Grebe, were found in the Rensselaerville area in late February. Both were found on the roadside literally grounded. It is an occurrence not unfamiliar to rehabilitators. These birds were probably early migrants returning from coastal wintering areas and were unable to find open water along their route. When flying at night, these birds often mistake wet or icy roads for water and land on the ground and find themselves grounded.

Incidentally, at the same time, a dead Horned Grebe was found near the Alcove Reservoir, and learned from communicating with rehabilitators across the state, others were found from Binghamton to Buffalo. These birds are often uninjured when they land and can often be quickly released if no other problems are found. Unfortunately, the Red-necked Grebe probably had internal injuries or, again, may have been flying for a long distance, expended all its energy reserves and was too weak by the time it was picked up.

The difficulty in rehabilitating these kinds of birds is in providing food – minnows in large quantities, keeping stress minimal, maintaining the waterproofing of the feathers, and then in finding a suitable release site. Since we still had frozen waters in this area, the Horned Grebe was transferred to a rehabilitator in Binghamton after a two-week stay with me, for ultimate release in the Susquehanna River.

The other winter residents still under my care are three banded racing/homing pigeons, not exactly wildlife, but birds in need. These birds are shipped to a release spot, often hundreds of miles away, and whichever bird returns to the roost first wins the race, suffice it to say, not always a humane endeavor. The problem is that these birds fly and fly and fly and fly, totally expending all their energy reserves and often depleting their pectoral or flight (breast) muscles to the point of emaciation.

All three of the birds in my care were emaciated with the third having been hit by a car, sustaining two broken legs. Leg

injuries are difficult to repair, especially on a bird with short legs but as they are not wild birds, but used to cages and people, there are options. All three birds are actually doing so well I had to separate one male from the other two as he was too aggressive, making cage life stressful. The remaining pair became a mated pair and second week of March saw the birth of two tiny, ugly (some may think cute) yellow downy hatchling pigeons. Unfortunately, owners don't usually want these birds returned. Anyone interested in a pet pigeon?



Injured
Great Horned Owllet

...O.O...

New Educational Animal

By Barbara Bolster Barrett

Wildlife Rehabilitator, Kelly Martin introduces other educational staff members to this fledgling Great Horned Owl. Unfortunately, he sustained multiple fractures of his wing, and would thus be a poor candidate for release.

He is at an age, however where he can successfully bond with humans, so he will make an excellent educational animal. Note his posture. Owllets often lie down to rest, a behavior they outgrow when they reach maturity. In a few short weeks, this owl's soft downy feathers will be replaced by adult plumage.

Elementary students will have the opportunity to see this impressive raptor "up close and personal," both during in-house fieldtrips and as part of our new *Wildlife Alive!* educational outreach program.

At this time, the owl does not have a name. Animals that Kelly expects to fully rehabilitate generally do not get named, because attachments can interfere with a successful return to the wild. Educational animals are different—they'll have plenty of interaction with people! If you think you have a good name for our owl, feel free to contact us at 518-797-3440 or by mail at the E.N. Huyck Preserve, P.O. Box 189, Rensselaerville, NY 12147.



Owllet resting



Sandra Orris, detail
COM.EN.ART 1996

Junior Nature Study 2003

Tuesdays, July 8-August 5
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
at the Jessie Huyck Center on Lake Myosotis

Junior Nature Study classes are designed for children of kindergarten age through second grade, although younger children may attend if an adult is in attendance with them. The theme for this year's five-week class is Animals and their Natural Homes.

A focus on the development of science skills is the primary goal of the program. All of the activities of Nature Study are based on the child's central role in the discovery process with a focus on problem solving. It is our aim to encourage the development of the following core

skills: observing, classifying, comparing and contrasting, gathering data, predicting and communicating.

The program is organized and delivered by Huyck Preserve Educators, Deb Monteith and Kelly Martin. Deb's background is in Outdoor Education, along with many years experience as an elementary teacher. Kelly is a New York State licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator, actively involved in educating about wildlife. Both have worked as environmental educators at the Huyck Preserve for several years.

A major part of our program is the inclusion of real animals, presented by Kelly Martin. A variety of animals will be included each week, with students guided through predicting and questioning to learn more about each animal. Each lesson will also include a nature walk or short hike, games and arts and crafts.

Program Overview-2003

Animals and their Natural Homes

Week 1-Living Things/Weather/Collecting data

Week 2-Trees/Leaves and Birds

Week 3-Pond Life and Water Creatures

Week 4-Plants and small animals (mammals and invertebrates)

Week 5-Scavenger Hunt/Bird Feeders/Review

2003 Environmental Education Camp

August 18-22, 2003

The Environmental Education Camp for middle school students has grown in stature over the past few years, encompassing both an extensive learning experience and a fun social environment. Again this year, we will host 12 students for a week-long residential experience at the historic Bullfrog Camp, utilizing all the wonderful resources the Huyck Preserve has to offer, both indoor and out.

The camp attempts to allow participants maximum opportunities for interacting with nature, building a relationship with our natural world and enhancing our appreciation of it. Activities and workshops are designed to challenge students to develop both their personal skills, such as self-esteem, and their social skills through teamwork and cooperative learning experiences.

While specific workshops have not been finalized, we can promise the range of learning experiences will offer a little of everything, covering a broad array of subjects and content. General subjects to be covered include; Art and

Nature, Creative Writing/Journaling, Wildlife Rehabilitation (including a hands-on animal rehabilitation project), Scientific Discovery, Outdoor Education skills (including survival skills in the woods and canoeing), Cooking and Photography.

The week would not be complete without the daily activities of residential camp, including the preparation of meals, sharing the cleaning responsibilities, games, swimming, walks and the campfire ghost stories! Each year, we try to include new activities and workshops, and this year will be no different. We have a lot of fabulous new ideas for this year, promising some of the most exciting workshops to date. The camp culminates in an afternoon BBQ and presentation of science projects on Friday afternoon at the Lake.

Unfortunately there are presently no openings for participating students but we are keeping a waiting list in case a spot opens up. Please call the office to add your child to the list if you are interested or keep us in mind for next year.

2003 Nature Study Program for Grades 3-6 Looks at John Burrough's

Thursdays, July 10-August 7
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Jessie Huyck Center on Lake Myosotis

John Burroughs' legacy continues to inspire us here at the Huyck Preserve. He gave voice to both the small natural wonders of the Catskills and a way of life. John first grew to love the hills, woods, and waters of the region as a boy on the family farm in Roxbury, Delaware County. The family built stonewall, kept cows, churned butter, scythed and stacked hay, and myriad other daily chores. Young John Burroughs clambered Clump Mountain at the rear of the farm, tasted from the its many springs and daydreamed at Boyhood Rock. He was so taken with the spring peeper (*Hyla crucifer*) that he wrote the following: "[I] used to watch and woo the little piping frogs in the spring marshes when I had driven the cows to pasture at night, till they would sit in my open hand and pipe."

This year's Nature Study for grades 3-6 will give students a taste of the life young Burroughs and other farm kids led during the 19th century. The following sessions are tentatively scheduled:



Stonewall—Burroughs noted, of his fence building days: "How many rocks we turned out of their beds, where they had slept since the great ice sheet tucked them up there. maybe a hundred thousand years ago."

- We'll look at stonewall on the Preserve, discuss the farmer's need for fencing, why stone was an ideal material, talk about the creatures who make stonewall their homes. We may, in addition, view a demonstration of drywall technique by a local mason.

Birds—Burroughs became known as an expert birder.

- We'll look for and listen to birds on the Preserve, talk about the traits and habits that make them unique.

Cemetery day—Young Burroughs used to hurry past the burying ground on the way to school "spooked" by the tales that his Granther Kelly used to tell him.

- We'll hike to the Wheeler-Watson family burying ground on the Preserve, learn about 19th century burying grounds and perhaps share our own stories.

Glacial rock—As a youth, Burroughs would explore the rock outcroppings on the family farm. His favorite place to daydream (and escape chores) was atop a huge sandstone boulder, which came to be known as "Boyhood Rock." John Burroughs' gravesite is in the shadow of this very stone.

- We'll learn about the geology of local glacial stone and about the creatures that make rock and ledges their homes.

One-room schoolhouse—Burroughs not only attended the one-room schoolhouse down the road from his farm; his first adult job was as a teacher, as well. Like most teachers of the day, John Burroughs "boarded round" at the homes of his pupils.

- We'll learn about this vanished institution that played such an important role in the history of this country, and perhaps take a field trip to a local one-room school building that has been preserved by a nearby township.

MARAH O'BRIEN, Stonewall detail, COM.EN.ART 1999

As part of the class, all students will be asked to keep journals. This activity should heighten both observational and writing skills. We look forward to an exciting new program and to working with your youngsters this summer.

Swimming Lessons at Lake Myosotis

Red Cross affiliated
Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays
July 7 – August 8
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Instructor: Barbara Bolster Barrett

Registration for Swimming Lessons and Nature Study classes will be held the first day of class. Students may pre-register by contacting the Preserve Office at 797-3440. Cost: Family level membership plus \$10 class fee per child (max. \$25 per family).

5th ANNUAL BIRD FESTIVAL

Eldridge Research Center, Pond Hill Road, Rensselaerville, NY
Saturday, MAY 31, 2003
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.



Rich Guthrie: Mist net set-up & bird banding
Expert birder, photographer & author
of *Bird Watching in Greene County*

Larry Fedderman: Display & bird ID walks
Northern Catskill Audubon Society

Scheduled Hikes

Dan Rubino: Binocular cleaning
& adjusting advice on selecting binoculars
Mirakel Optical

Chris Keefer: Children's games & informational table

Jim Coe: Display
Local nature & bird artist

Kevin Berner: Display
SUNY Cobleskill & NY Bluebird Society

Kelly Martin: Live bird display
Huyck Preserve

Natural Landscape Artist Rick Darke to speak at 72nd Annual Meeting

The Huyck Preserve will hold its 72nd annual meeting at the Eldridge Research Center on Saturday, June 21st at 3:00 p.m. The meeting gives the Preserve's Board of Directors and staff an opportunity to update members on Preserve activities. It is also the time when Preserve members vote on a slate of Board members.

This year natural landscaping artist Rick Darke will present a talk on how to use natural vegetation in landscaping. Because of a generous contribution from a patron, the Preserve is embarking on a multi-year venture to upgrade the appearance of visitors access points around the Preserve. These include the Mill House area in the hamlet, the beach area, and Lincoln Pond area.

Rick Darke will also talk about his new book, *The American Woodland*, and offer some views on the Preserve's landscaping plans.

"In this unique and often thought-provoking new book, Darke promotes and stunningly illustrated a garden aesthetic. . . A clarion call to a new awareness of humankind's relationship to the natural world. This book will take its rightful place among the classic works that have influenced the concept of the American landscape."
-Biology Digest

Plein Air Landscapes in Oil Workshop planned for July 11-13

Artist Jim Coe will again hold a painting workshop for Plein Air landscapes in oil July 11-13, 2003. The workshop will begin Friday evening with a slide presentation on plein air painting and the step-by-step process Jim uses to complete a landscape painting in an hour and a half. Saturday morning, Jim will demonstrate plein air techniques participants will begin their paintings.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE:

Friday Evening
7:30-9 P.M.: Registration and orientation.
Saturday
9 A.M.-12:30 P.M.: Morning Painting Session.
12:30 – 1:30 P.M.: Lunch.
1:30 -5 P.M.: Afternoon Session.
Sunday
9 A.M.-12:30 P.M.: Morning Session.
12:30 – 1:30 P.M.: Lunch.
1:30 -3 P.M.: Afternoon Session & Evaluation.

Cost of the Workshop is \$100 for members; \$110 for non-members. Limit: 10 participants. For more information, call the Preserve at 797-3440.

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Joan Smith
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Edith Waterman Ten Eyck
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In honor of niece and nephew's
Grace Tagliabue

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In memory of my aunt and uncle
Neal Elmore

Student

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Other

Richard and Leslie Tollner
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