

Autumn 2010

HUYOCK PRESERVE



Myosotis Messenger

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Message from the Executive Director:

The Importance of Field Stations: Discovery and Training



Many new visitors and members of the Preserve quickly fall in love with the majestic falls, the stillness of Lake Myosotis, and the miles of gentle footpaths that roll through the Preserve. Perhaps they spend an afternoon at our Mushroom Festival in the fall, bring their kids to brave the chilly early summer waters of the lake for swim lessons, attend a local native wildflower gallery opening at the visitor center, or enjoy a few of the stimulating Thursday evening lectures from prominent scientists throughout the summer. This issue of the *Myosotis Messenger* seeks to connect our membership to the dynamic inner-workings of our biological field station. The fact that our

modest campus—with its 6,000-square-foot research center and residential facilities for 32 people on Lincoln Pond—has a national reputation and is historically important for scientific discovery often comes as a surprise to many people in the Helderberg hilltowns and greater Capital Region. If you do a search for “Huyck Preserve” on Google Scholar it returns 1,690 results for published papers with a connection to research done here. We are continually making strong connections between our research and our conservation, education, and public programs.

A common question when I give tours of the Preserve is “What exactly is a field station?” The primary purpose of a biological field station is to *facilitate discovery*. A relatively pristine natural setting, time outside of ordinary routines, inspiration and synergy with colleagues, a history of important work upon which to build—these are the key ingredients that support the work of scientists here and make for a vibrant biological field station. The field station campus around Lincoln Pond was humming with enthusiasm, hard work, and public outreach this summer. Dr. Susan Beatty, who has conducted research at the Huyck Preserve nearly every year since the late 1970s, was our Scientist-in-Residence (SIR) this summer. Her leadership and passion for building the Huyck Preserve’s role as a place of national importance for facilitating biological discovery is already evident after just one season. New researchers from Pennsylvania and the University of Michigan came to the Preserve. A team of researchers was back from Munich, Germany, as was a graduate student from the University at Albany. Dr. James Runkle returned this summer from Wright State University (Dayton, Ohio) for his fifth visit (every eight years) since 1978 to study the old growth hemlock forest near Lincoln Pond. We are both reaching out to invite new researchers here and reconnecting with past investigators to consider working here again.

Imagine as a young aspiring guitar player you were given the opportunity to attend an intimate weeklong workshop with Eric Clapton, or as an aspiring writer you found yourself fortunate enough to have Maya Angelou as a close mentor and editor. In the world of ecology and field research, biological research stations such as the Huyck Preserve serve exactly this type of career-launching role. Our second major focus at the field station is *providing training* for the next generation of scientists and environmental leaders. In our second year of the *Odum Internship for Undergraduates* we expanded the program from seven to eight weeks, more than 20 people applied from across the country, and the interns had formal instruction as well as opportunities to work with several visiting scientists. This was the first summer that we ran a three-week course called *Fundamentals of Field Ecology* for high school students. Local students came from Greenville, Berne-Knox-Westerlo and an Albany city public school, and were awarded scholarships from the William and Sybil Jay Waldron Fund, while other students came from Massachusetts, New Jersey, Colorado and California.

In addition to making discoveries and training the next generation of scientists and environmental leaders, the Preserve continues to conserve ecologically important land and work to increase the public’s knowledge and love of nature. The Huyck Preserve and Biological Research Station is earning broad recognition, through support of members like you, as “The Biological Field Station of the Capital Region”.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chad Jemison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Special Birds On Lake Myosotis This Fall

by Malcolm Morris

Malcolm Morris is an avid birder and Executive Vice President on the Board of Directors.

To most birders, the spring and early summer are the prized times of the year for birdwatching. Brightly colored warblers and other beauties like scarlet tanagers, rose-breasted grosbeaks and orioles come to the Preserve, some to stay and nest and others to go much further north. However the fall is also a really interesting time and was especially so on Lake Myosotis earlier this fall.

Because of the low rainfall, the level of the Lake was probably the lowest it had been in some years, creating a wide mudflat and grassy area at the north end. It was so wide that a “ghost” fishing rod was exposed resting on its reel about 30 yards from the edge of the tree line by the trail. This kind of habitat attracts a number of shore birds we don’t always see and this was a really good year for special birds.

Shore birds usually nest in the far north and start migrating south in early August. On their way they look for muddy areas at the edge of lakes to use their long beaks for worms and other food. This year we were visited by our regular shorebirds: solitary and spotted sandpipers, least sandpipers, killdeer, greater and lesser yellowlegs, short-billed dowitchers and semi-palmated plovers. But we also had some fairly unusual visitors.

A black tern stayed for about two weeks in mid-August darting and diving among the scores of barn and tree swallows out over the Lake. This bird, one of the smaller terns, was on its way from its breeding grounds in Canada and perhaps northern New York down to South America. About the same time a Little Blue Heron fished near the edge of the shore where Great Blue Herons are most often seen.

In September there were several pectoral sandpipers for two weeks or more, stopping off on their incredibly long migration from the Arctic and north shore of Alaska down to South America. These birds are named for the grayish-black “bib” that covers their chest or pectoral area. There were also American pipits, robin-like birds that run and dart in small flocks in the grassy flats. The last week of September there was a report of an American golden plover (which may have been a more common black-bellied plover.) Shorebirds are hard to identify this time of year when most birds are in non-breeding plumage. In this case, the bird was neither “golden” nor “black-bellied” as it would have been earlier in the year.

All of these birds were not incredibly rare but were special enough to bring Rich Guthrie (of WAMC Public Radio fame) and other birders from the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club out to Lake Myosotis and to be reported on the Hudson-Mohawk birdline.

Unfortunately the torrent of rain at the end of September flooded our wonderful mudflat as the Lake

filled right up to the wooded edge. That ended our shorebird and pipit visits. But don’t give up. This is a good time to see bald eagles around the Lake and out on the water there are already groups of common mergansers and some wood ducks among the mallards and Canada geese. Hopefully there will be some special ducks dropping by on their way down the Hudson to winter quarters in the open bays and oceans around Long Island and New York City where they can fish and dive all winter. Good birding!

Waldron Overlook Dedication

On June 19, 2010 Waldron relatives and Preserve members gathered to dedicate the Overlook at the top of the Rensselaerville Falls in honor of William and Sybil Waldron. Funds for the overlook were provided by William Waldron during his lifetime and from a donation from his estate. A transcript of the dedication is available upon request or on our website at www.huyckpreserve.org.



Top: William Waldron’s children Arthur and Dorothy Waldron are joined by Board Chair Laura Stephenson Carter (right) as they cut the ribbon for the new overlook; Bottom: The Waldron Overlook.

Encounters of the “SIR” Kind

By Susan Beatty, Ph.D.

It was a dark and stormy night. . . . Okay, not really. It was a beautiful and bright day in June 2010 when my trusty chocolate lab, Molly, and I arrived for our summer stay at the Preserve. After three days of driving from Colorado (Kansas takes a whole day all by itself!), I was not tired one bit. This year was a really special summer for me and I couldn't wait to get started! I had the honor of being the Scientist-in-Residence for the Huyck Preserve, I had just bought a cute little house in Rensselaerville and I was looking forward to having an extended period of research for the first time in a long while.

I checked in with Chad Jemison, Executive Director of the Huyck Preserve, and he casually mentioned, “Oh, and by the way, on your first day on the job, you'll be meeting with a reporter doing a piece on the Huyck Preserve!”

Nothing like hitting the ground running. As it turned out, we had a great time talking to the reporter and in the next couple of days a wonderful article came out in the *Albany Times-Union*. The message that the article conveyed so well was that the Huyck Preserve offers the beauty of nature mixed with the bustling batch of brainy scientists who populate the environs in the summer. Our “herd of nerds” make the science more accessible to those who come to hike the trails or swim in the lake all they have to do is ask! I can't count how many times I have been approached while out in the woods, dutifully inventorying the plants in my little plots and taking soil samples to check out the nutrients. What usually draws their attention however, is the hula hoop. Yes, the genuine 1950s hula hoop just happens to be the perfect size to fit my plots. Everyone wants to know what I'm doing with a hula hoop in the woods. Good question.

I have been studying the forest communities around the Huyck Preserve for 34 years now. I began as a graduate student at Cornell University in 1975, and have continued to expand my research on forest ecology ever since. I have studied how forest plant species respond to disturbance, like windstorms or insect outbreaks, as well as longer term climatic variation, like drought or temperature changes. Along the way I also did some experiments on how seeds get dispersed, like from a neighboring field into a forest, and whether there is competition between plants for nutrients and space in the forest understory. More recently I have been looking at the dynamics of exotic species that invade the forest, and how these species are also affected by disturbance and climate variation. My goal is to be able to develop a model that can help predict future forest change if we see a change in climate or disturbance regimes.

This summer I was also able to get involved in some new projects. Anyone who has hiked around the trails of the Preserve has seen the dilapidated conifer plantations here and there. Ever wonder if those ghostly tree skeletons are harboring more than just death and destruction? Well, the Odum Interns were able to answer that question this summer in a group project they conducted that looked at the plant, animal and invertebrate organisms in plantations versus neighboring deciduous forest. Colgate undergrads Carolyn Fox and Jackie Gerson, Cornell and undergrad

Marissa Cardillo, and SUNY Oswego undergrad Ryan Thomas found that some of plantations are invaded by exotic species, but are also nurseries for regeneration of native tree species. Plantations also provide habitat for deer, birds and support a diversity of soil and leaf litter invertebrates that can be as rich as their deciduous forest counterparts. However these are novel ecosystems that function in a different capacity than the naturally occurring forests on the Preserve.



Dr. Susan Beatty teaching the high school field ecology students in one of the Preserve's plantations.

Somewhere in my past I wanted to be an archeologist. I think that came somewhere between wanting to be an architect and an astronaut. Now I play with dirt instead. However my archeological tendencies were nurtured this summer as part of my Scientist-in-Residence experience. First I tackled the archive of scientific samples stored in the basement of the Eldridge Research Center. There were countless garbage-size bags of leaf litter hanging from the ceiling, jars of insects on the shelves, antique balances, and thousands of plastic strawberry containers, not to mention a classic collection of hula hoops. It was like being in a museum with a theme that was a cross between *Alien* and *Back to the Future*. So with the help of Adam Caprio (buildings and grounds supervisor) and the Odum Interns, we rolled up our sleeves and sorted through all the fascinating materials. We made some good progress toward organizing the scientific archives and inventorying the scientific equipment. And all those hanging bags of litter? Thanks to Rick Wyman, executive director emeritus, we managed to save important samples for future research and consolidate the contents of those garbage bags into sandwich bags! Mission accomplished.

My second archeological project was looking into the past research done at the Preserve. There are records of research reports from the early years of the field station, and I spent some happy hours digging into the incredible variety of research topics of the past. Since the 1930s, researchers have studied aquatic ecosystems, climate, geology, forest ecology, animal behavior, insect energetics and behavior, biodiversity, biogeochemistry, disease,

evolution of defense mechanisms, pollination ecology, foraging ecology, food web ecology, bat echolocation, and effects of acid rain, to mention a few. Some of the researchers began their careers here and went on to become prominent figures in the scientific community. The legacy of species inventories and new discoveries made here is humbling. This archive of knowledge can help us answer questions for the future if we can use them to understand more about how and why ecological change has occurred. This is one of the reasons I find the Huyck Preserve such an exciting place to work!

One of the things that the Huyck Preserve and Biological Research Station does very well is education. This summer I was fortunate enough to be a part of this effort. Mentoring the Odum interns was a high point of the summer. From collectively deciding on a project to the final data analysis and presentation, we all learned together. The interns now know that a scientist carefully plans her field sampling design and then has to *redesign* the plan once she actually gets out in the field! They learned that necessity is indeed the mother of invention, and they designed their own soil and leaf litter invertebrate extraction techniques. One intern learned that identifying

animal “poop” is a valuable skill to have, and another discovered that measuring soil chemistry can be a lot like playing with a Betty Crocker Easy Bake Oven. The experiences are ones that none of us will forget.

In addition to working with the various researchers who passed through during the summer, one of the most fun events I was involved in turned out to be the “Thursday Lecture Series.” Sounds sort of dry doesn’t it? But there’s more! Add in a community potluck dinner beforehand, which was a wonderful social event not to mention featuring some of the most delicious culinary creations I have ever tasted. Then there was the lineup of speakers talking about anything from using art to understanding biology, to the recovery of lakes from acid rain damage. We learned about worms, sustainable agriculture, and wilderness areas. We already have speakers lined up for next year. Want to know why slave-making ants run raids on their neighbors, or how urban areas may be a key to helping conserve species if we face global warming? Well, reserve your Thursday evenings next summer and we’ll find out the answers together. See you there!

Sue Beatty is a professor of geography and associate dean for the Natural Sciences, University of Colorado-Boulder.

Applications Now Available

The Huyck Preserve and Biological Research Station is now accepting applications for the following programs:

2011 High School Research Immersion Program: Fundamentals of Field Ecology

Fundamentals of Field Ecology (FFE) is a three week residential course (July 17-August 6) designed for current high school sophomores, juniors and seniors interested in gaining research experience in biological science and environmental studies. FFE will prepare students to excel in college level science classes.

Deadline: February 28, 2011.

2011 Odum Internship Program

Eugene Odum launched his scientific career at the Huyck Preserve becoming renowned as the *father of ecology*. In honor of his legacy, the Huyck Preserve offers an eight week internship (June 13-August 5) to a select team of undergraduate students interested in conducting ecological field research. Selected applicants work with scientific professionals and gain valuable professional experience at a biological field station with a rich history of launching prominent ecologists’ careers. *Deadline: February 28, 2011.*

2011 Huyck Grants for Graduate and Post-Graduate Researchers

The Huyck Preserve and Biological Research Station offers *Huyck Grants* to qualifying scientists and graduate students. Huyck Grants help fund research

projects in a variety of disciplines that utilize the natural resources of the Preserve. We support work in basic and applied ecology, conservation biology, taxonomy, animal behavior, evolution, geology, land use history, and other areas of natural history. The grants range in size up to \$3,500 and are provided to graduate and postgraduate investigators. The funds may be used for the purchase of equipment, travel, room and board, publication costs, and stipend for assistant researchers. *Deadline: February 28, 2011.*

2011 COM.EN.ART Artist-in-Residence Program

COM.EN.ART (COMmunity.ENvironment.ART) is a two week artist-in-residence program for natural history artists. It provides an opportunity for immersion in a field situation. It is unique from other artist residencies in that it integrates not only the needs of the artist and the research station, but also contributes to the community by enhancing environmental awareness through the aesthetics of art. It is also unique in that it focuses on providing opportunities for natural history artists in particular. The opportunity to work in the field is a treasured and increasingly rare experience. Such immersion is vital to produce inspired, insightful artwork. One need only heed the words and activities of the master artists from the past and the present who consistently stress field observation as the key to excellent natural history artwork. *Deadline: February 28, 2011.*

More information and application materials are available on our website at www.huyckpreserve.org.

My 33 Years Studying the Old Hemlock Stand

By James Runkle, Ph.D.

Jim Runkle is a professor of biological sciences at Wright State University (Dayton, Ohio). He studies the dynamics of plant communities and populations and is particularly interested in processes associated with tree death and replacement in old-growth forests.

I'd never heard of the Huyck Preserve until my Cornell professor, the late Earl Stone, brought me and fellow graduate student, Susan Beatty, here in 1977. That fateful visit launched me into a long-term association with the Preserve. I was doing my doctoral studies on eastern old-growth forests and decided to include the hemlock stand just northeast of Lincoln Pond.

While completing my thesis in 1978 and before starting my first job at the University of Illinois at Chicago, I returned to the Preserve with my wife and twin baby sons. We stayed at what is now the Preserve headquarters while I mapped all woody stems in two hectares (about five acres) of the hemlock stand. I was and still am interested in how death and replacement of individual trees affects the distribution of stems in a forest.

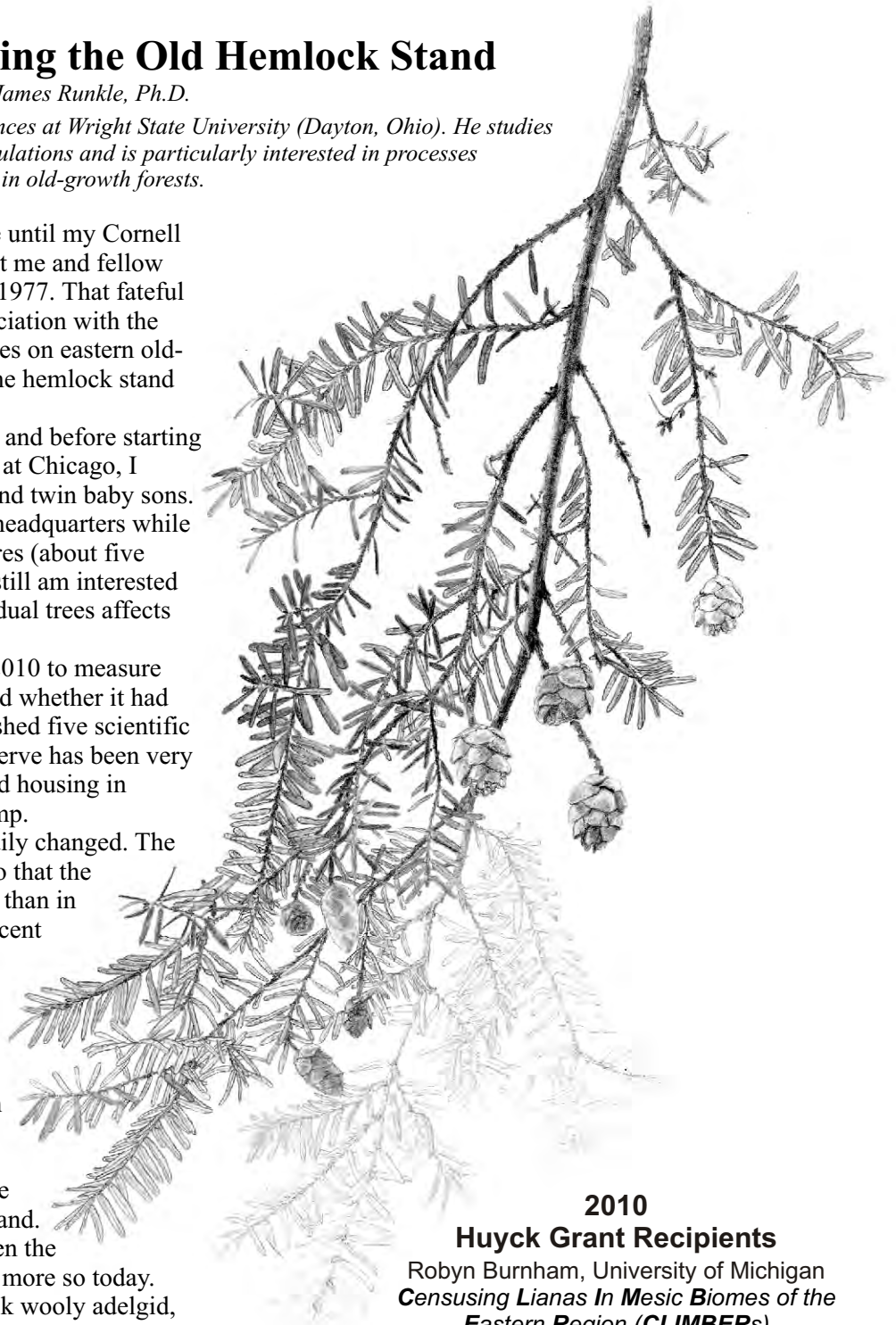
I returned in 1986, 1994, 2002 and 2010 to measure how much each tree stem had grown and whether it had died; and I recorded new stems. I published five scientific papers based on those studies. The Preserve has been very accommodating with summer grants and housing in Lincoln Pond Cottage and Bullfrog Camp.

Over the years the woods have steadily changed. The number of canopy trees has increased so that the stand probably has more biomass today than in 1978. However, there has been a 90 percent decline in the number of tree stems that are smaller than 2.5 centimeters in diameter. Tree reproduction has ended probably due to the increase in deer who like to eat young saplings.

Thanks to beech bark disease, which had begun sweeping through the area before my study and has killed off even the most resistant trees, beech trees have almost completely vanished from the stand. Hemlock, however, has consistently been the most important tree species and is even more so today. Fortunately I saw no sign of the hemlock wooly adelgid, the insect that feeds on and kills hemlock trees.

I'm also interested in the long-term fate of snags, which are standing dead trees including tall stumps. Snags are important for many birds and other tree cavity dwellers. My model of snag dynamics was based on my work at the Huyck Preserve. Of 364 snags identified in 1978, I found six still standing in 2010!

I look forward to following these and perhaps unexpected trends in the future. Will the hemlock adelgid reach the stand? Will climate change affect growth rates? Will deer levels drop allowing trees to reproduce again? The continuity of support from the Huyck Preserve makes answering questions about long term dynamics possible. I thank all of you for your support.



2010

Huyck Grant Recipients

Robyn Burnham, University of Michigan
Censusing Lianas In Mesic Biomes of the Eastern Region (CLIMBERS)

Andreas Modlmeir and Tobias Pamminger, Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich
Influence of density and social parasitism on aggression in ants

Rebecca Pinder, University at Albany
Determining earthworm distribution patterns at the Huyck Preserve

James Runkle, Wright State University
Thirty-two years of change in a 200-year-old Tsuga canadensis woods

Rebecca Urban, Lebanon Valley College
How do functional groups of aquatic macrophytes influence sediment chemistry?

Huyck Preserve Climbers

By Robyn J. Burnham, Ph.D.

Botanist Robyn Burnham is an associate curator of paleontology and associate professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor). She is interested in plant diversity in northern South America and North America and is studying climbing plants. She recently began the CLIMBERS project to study vines in North America.

Vines have fascinated botanists since long before Darwin began studying their twining patterns. Yet we know little about them today. We hope to learn more through the national CLIMBERS project and have been censusing climbing plants across the Midwest and eastern United States. We've observed a dramatic decline in the numbers of large climbing plants in Michigan at about 42 degrees north latitude and we think that the length of and total heat accumulation during the growing season may be a factor. In June 2010, we spent three days at the Huyck Preserve studying its vines.

Vines support themselves using the structure of other plants, and even buildings, and include twiners (plants that coil around the stem of their host), tendrillers (plants that anchor themselves to a host while their main stems shoot skyward), and root climbers (plants with stem-borne roots that attach to a host's bark so their leaves can access sunlight). At the Huyck Preserve we evaluated climbers in three half-hectare plots (a half-hectare plot is about 1.25 acres): two in maple-beech communities and one in a maple-hemlock community. Among all three plots we found only four climbing stems larger than 0.5cm in diameter (about the size of a pencil). Three were non-native oriental bittersweet, which was also the most abundant smaller stem vines in the plots. We wondered whether the introduced vines are responding more rapidly to climate changes than native vines are.

The Preserve's plots are important because they establish the only quantitative baseline we have on vines in older, relatively undisturbed forests in this area. The recent increase in global temperatures (shifting the area from zone 5 to zone 6, for example) will have an effect on plants whose range is limited by growing season length and winter severity.

It was a pleasure to get to know the peaceful, dark forests of the Huyck Preserve and we were pleased that four hard-working Odum interns helped us with our field work. We traversed the trails sensing the soft thud of our shoes on ancient soils. As we explored the lakeshore, we noted the profusion of vines and scramblers in open, warm sites where we anticipate the southern vines will first be seen as they move northward.

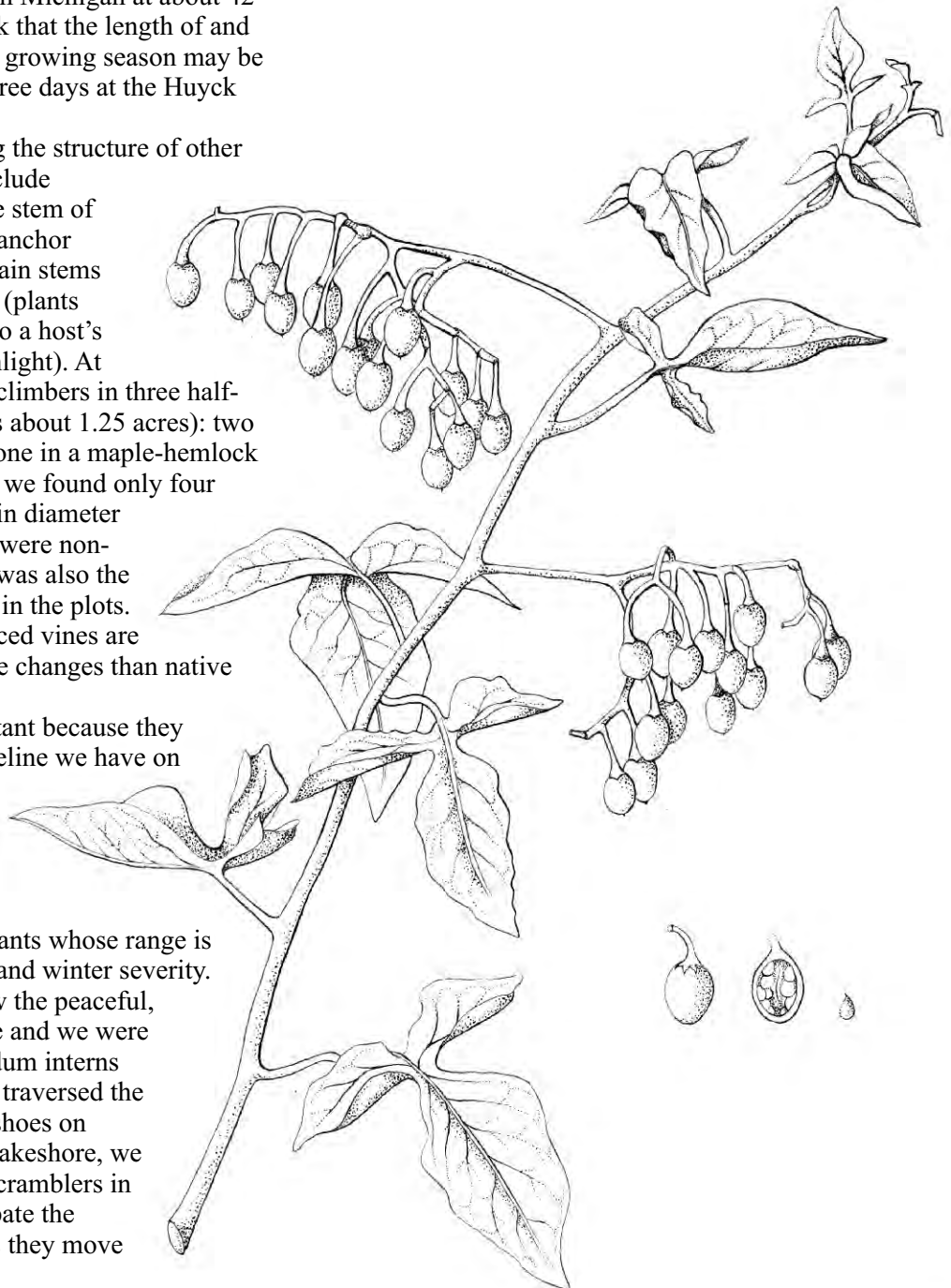
2010 COM.EN.ART Artists-in-Residence

Jan Prentice (Branford, Conn.)
September 1-14, 2010

Robin Brickman (Williamstown, Mass.)
September 11-17, 2010

Sara Samuelson (Seattle, Wash.)
September 18-October 5, 2010

Chris Winters (Saranac Lake, N.Y.)
October 1-8, 2010



All in a Day's Work

By Jackie Gerson and Carolyn Fox, Odum interns

Identifying trees, extracting soil invertebrates, and analyzing soil composition—all in one day's work as an Odum intern. This summer, the two of us, along with Marissa Cardillo and Ryan Thomas, set out to characterize the crucial differences between the composition of red pine plantations and neighboring deciduous forest on the Huyck Preserve. We did not find any significant differences in ground invertebrates, understory plant species diversity, nutrient composition, deer presence, or bird population between the two forests types. Our results suggest that unmanaged pine plantations can have equal biodiversity and species abundance, and not become dominated by invasive species. Such a finding can have broad implications for similar dying red pine plantations in New York State.

Throughout our eight-week internship, we worked under the guidance of the Preserve's Scientist-in-Residence Dr. Susan Beatty. We learned about field ecology techniques and many other things from her. But perhaps we gained the most by spending time with her in the field.

"The greatest difficulty in ecology is replicating a site," Sue would often remind us. "What you determine constitutes a good site may not always be possible to find." Learning to accept the difficulties of field research at this stage in our undergraduate lives can



Jackie Gerson working on her project in the dry lab of the Eldridge Research Center.



Susan Beatty (seated) with Odum Interns (left to right) Ryan Thomas, Jackie Gerson, Carolyn Fox, and Marissa Cardillo.

2010 Odum Interns

Marissa Cardillo
Cornell University

Carolyn Fox
Colgate University

Jacqueline Gerson
Colgate University

Ryan Thomas
SUNY Oswego

prove essential for our future careers.

When we weren't in the field working on our project, we assisted visiting scientists with their research. We surveyed invasive vines, searched for earthworms, and collected slave-making ants alongside people who genuinely cared about our academic growth. And by living with the German researchers at Lincoln Pond cottage, we gained valuable insights into international research through conversations that lasted well into the night.

The perfect complement to our scientific growth was the warm reception offered by the residents of Rensselaerville. And we were able to participate in Preserve events such as the Fishing Tournament, the Waldron Overlook dedication, and the Science Symposium. We also attended the community's Fourth-of-July celebrations, ate to our heart's content at the Palmer House's Cajun Buffet, enjoyed the swings at the playground, and became regulars at the Rensselaerville Library. And we could always count on the serene nature of the Preserve for a refreshing afternoon swim, paddle, or jog.

Our experience as Odum Interns was unforgettable and one that has already proved helpful in our coursework at Colgate University. We appreciate the support given to us by Chad Jemison, Sue Beatty, Rebecca Pinder, Adam Caprio, and the rest of the Preserve. We miss the Preserve and all of you.

Becoming a Field Researcher

By Rebecca Pinder, lead instructor of "Fundamentals of Field Ecology"

The students were eager to learn about field research, but making a real research discovery—identifying a species of earthworm that had never been seen at the Preserve before—was an unexpected treat.

On July 18th, high school students from Greenville, Westerlo, Albany, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Colorado, and even California arrived at the Huyck Preserve for the inaugural three-week "Fundamentals of Field Ecology" course. They were excited that they would be working closely with real scientists and would even be attending college-level lectures.

Preserve Scientist-in-Residence Dr. Susan Beatty (a geography professor at the University of Colorado-Boulder) kicked off the first week by introducing the students to soil biology and abiotic factors affecting all organisms. She taught them how to sample the soil including how to determine soil characteristics by tasting it. On Tuesday, retired New York State mycologist Dr. John Haines shared his passion for fungi. The students were amazed by the diversity of fungi and enjoyed sampling them and making slides of their spores. They didn't even mind coming face to face with horse poop where the fungus *Pilobolus* resides. *Pilobolus* follows the sun and launches its spores into the air when the heat is just right. On Wednesday, University at Albany doctoral student Adam Bell showed students how to sample for invertebrates and talked about the ecology of several interesting social insects. On Thursday, University at Albany biology professor Dr. George Robinson presented exercises measuring species diversity and introduced the students to plant ecology. The students carried out a miniature study measuring changes in plant species composition across gradients. That evening we attended the Preserve's Thursday Night Lecture where University at Albany biology professor Dr. Gary Kleppel talked about the importance of sustainable agriculture and biodiversity in small family farms. Friday was very rainy, but the rain did not stop us from enjoying the day with herpetologist Alvin Breisch from New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation. The students set up turtle traps and hunted for salamanders while learning about the ecology of the species that live in this area. On Saturday, the students attended the Preserve's Annual Science Symposium and enjoyed meeting researchers and learning about the history of the field station.



2010 FFE participants: (top, left to right) Annalee Tweitmann, Joshua Altshuler, Ken Binder, Gerald Manning, (middle, left to right) Rachel Siller, Sarah Fredrickson, Rose Richter, (seated, left to right) Rachel Kolyer, Lionel Mann, Liat Kastner.

The second week focused on the scientific method and research. Shannon Morgan and Chris Collins (both Ph.D. students at the University at Albany) demonstrated how to trap and identify small mammals. We were fortunate to find lots of animals in our traps including shrews, chipmunks and mice. Shannon and Chris discussed research methods and told us about their doctoral research projects on native herbivores and invasive species control and small mammal disease.

Later that week, the students learned how to carry out a research project from start to finish and designed a group study on the beaver living around the inlet of Lincoln Pond. The students also volunteered as research assistants on my earthworm project: examining the factors that control earthworm community structure around the Preserve. This gave me an opportunity to teach them about the earthworm species that have been recorded around the Preserve and in New York State. While we were digging around, we found a species that was not previously recorded at the Preserve but native to North America (*Sparganophilus eiseni*). This was quite a find, and brought the number of earthworm species recorded at the Preserve to 16 (interestingly, there is only one other species at the Preserve that is native to North America, *Eisenoides lonnbergi*; the rest are exotic and presumed to be from Europe).

During the third week, students were divided into three groups to conduct their own research projects. Each project included intense field work, statistical analysis, a written report and an oral presentation at a Thursday Night Lecture. Students

studied the effect of forest composition on small mammal populations, the relationship of roads and trails to invasive plant species, and the relationship between chemical measurements and biotic measurements in streams around the Preserve. They applied the knowledge they had gained during the previous weeks to successfully complete projects at a college-level standard.

Amidst all the learning and hard work the students formed friendships and had a lot of fun, too. All the students said they had "an awesome time," and one even said "I've had such a fun time here that I felt like I could spend the rest of my life here."

Rebecca Pinder, a Ph.D. candidate at the University at Albany, has been doing research on earthworms at the Huyck Preserve for several years.

Back to the Huyck Preserve as an SCA Intern

By Justin Wexler

Justin Wexler is from Hudson, N.Y. and is at the Preserve for five months as an SCA intern working as an educator and part of the Partridge Path trail blazing team. He is a recent graduate of Marlboro College in Marlboro, Vt.

The sun is shining in a clear blue sky through the bright and tired falling leaves near the Huyck Preserve's Main Office/Visitor Center. Only months ago, I watched as the first leaves of spring sprouted from these same branches, forming a sunny arbor over a land carpeted with the red trilliums, yellow trout lilies, and blue cohosh flowers of spring. Just as the trees and plants and natural world have busily changed over these past months, so has life here on the Preserve. The frost-free season of 2010 has been a busy one!

I have been a periodic resident of the area for my entire life and have attended many events at the Preserve. I was a student and later an assistant counselor and instructor at the Middle School Nature Study camp. I am a recent graduate of Marlboro College, a tiny school in Marlboro, Vt., where I studied historical ethnobotany. In June 2010, I came back to the Preserve as a Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern along with Ozarks-native and outdoor connoisseur Amanda Williams. We have been as busy as the beavers at Lincoln Pond although not as destructive. We have been repairing and creating trails rather than flooding them. But trail construction is only a part of what we've been doing here this year.

As members of the SCA Hudson Valley Corps, we represent a new relationship between the Huyck Preserve and SCA. The SCA was formed more than 50 years ago for the purpose of creating new generations of outdoor leaders through hands-on experience related to environmental stewardship. At the Preserve this summer, we helped out in weekly events such as "Wildlife Family Hour," "Wednesday Walks at One," and other activities. You may have seen us around the Preserve (such as at the Thursday evening lecture series) sporting our SCA T-shirts.

We also helped plan and run the weeklong "Middle School Nature Study Camp." We created a curriculum in basic ecology and local natural history, inspired by our own experience in similar programs and by the previous success of the course itself. We began each day by giving a brief indoor presentation and then took the kids outside for hands-on learning in the forests, streams, and

wetlands of the Preserve. We wrapped up the week with group research projects in which the students learned about the scientific method; they made presentations; and we held a scavenger hunt around Lake Myosotis.

After the Middle School Camp ended, we helped with other programs including the weeklong "Nature Study Camp" for third-fifth graders. Then, after a several-day SCA volunteer service project at the Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale, N.Y., where we helped to construct a large garden to be used for fiber plants in papermaking, we returned to the Preserve to help with the new "Fundamentals of Field Ecology" course for high school students.

At the end of August, we were joined by two other SCA interns, Hannah Wells and Hannah Larson, and together we have begun creating the first four-mile section of the new Partridge Path, scheduled to be completed in 2011. As the foliage changes color and we continue to work removing stumps, rolling rocks, and building bridges, we enjoyed working with British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and community members on Volunteer Trail

Day. The summer and fall have been extraordinarily fulfilling and we have enjoyed our time at the Huyck Preserve.



Justin Wexler in the forest at the Preserve

Building Partridge Path

By Hannah Larson

Hannah Larson is from Minneapolis, Minn., and a recent graduate of Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. She is one of four SCA interns who are helping to build the Partridge Path Trail. The others are Justin Wexler (a recent graduate of Marlboro College in Marlboro, Vt.), Hannah Wells (a recent graduate of Willamette University in Salem, Ore.) and Amanda Williams (a recent graduate of Missouri State University in Springfield, Mo.).

I first showed up at the Huyck Preserve in mid-August as an intern with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), a national organization that places many college students and graduates with parks and nonprofits such as the Huyck Preserve. As a native of Minnesota, I'd never heard of Rensselaerville and had no clue as to how to pronounce its name. All I knew was that I was here with three other SCA interns to help construct Partridge Path, a new six-mile hiking trail at the Preserve.

From the moment I arrived, I was enthralled by the beauty of Lincoln Pond and the rest of the Preserve. It wasn't long before I felt at home in the beautiful New York woods. I met my fellow interns, Amanda Williams, Justin Wexler, and Hannah Wells, and learned more about the basics of our project. I found out that the new hiking trail was made possible by a \$49,220 grant from the Federal Highway Administration (managed by N.Y.S. Parks).

Partridge Path will be a major addition to the Huyck Preserve's trail system, spanning the northern 1,200-acre section of the Preserve's property and doubling the mileage of the current trail system. The project is being completed in two stages: the first four miles will be constructed this year and the last two miles in 2011. We worked with Adam Caprio (buildings and grounds supervisor) day after day on the trail.

Our first day in the field, we jumped right into clearing the trail corridor. As the initial muscle soreness retreated, we settled into a routine, making gradual but steady progress down the trail. Summer quickly turned to fall; wildflowers faded and leaves turned, then dropped, covering our new trail with bright color. Slowly the proposed trail, first marked only by orange flagging tape at intervals through the woods, was becoming a reality. We overcame each challenge—that enormous downed tree across the trail corridor, that stump firmly lodged in the ground, and that imposing rock wall in the middle of the trail route—to create a clear, smooth path that wove through the beautiful hardwood forest.

In late September, our days were enlivened by the arrival of six members of the British Trust Conservation

Volunteers (BTCV). Enthusiastic BCTV trail crew members have been coming to the Preserve for years to restore trails, implement erosion control techniques, and build bridges. This year they came to help with the new trail. For two weeks, even in the pouring rain, SCA interns and BCTV members headed out to the trail each day to swing pick-axes, drag rakes, and move rocks. When the workdays were over, we took time to have fun, too. The BTCV members hosted dinners at Bullfrog Camp and made plans to explore New York during their weekend off. We were also lucky to have community volunteers join us in doing trail work during this fall's Volunteer Trail Day. We all enjoyed a well-deserved barbeque lunch that afternoon.

The BCTV group departed for the U.K. and Australia after their two-week stint. As for us four interns, we'll stay through the middle of November to finish work on the trail. We'll also be designing and installing trail kiosks, signs, and markers. And when our service is over? We'll head our separate ways but none of us will forget the three months of hard work and camaraderie at the Huyck Preserve. And thanks to the efforts of dozens of volunteers, interns, and Preserve staff and board members, the first four miles of Partridge Path—cleared, smoothed, and signed—will await its first hikers.

In Memoriam

We are sad to report that several members of the Huyck Preserve family have recently passed away. They will be greatly missed.

Francis Coward (1918-2010)—Fran Coward was a dedicated friend of the Preserve and loved hiking the trails especially those around Lincoln Pond. He served on the Board of Directors for many years and, as president in the 1980s, led the organization through a difficult transition. In fact, during the period when the Preserve was without an executive director, Fran made sure the day-to-day operations ran smoothly and that the Preserve continued to serve the community. He remained a strong supporter throughout his life.

Robert Dalglish (1940-2009)—Bob came to the Huyck Preserve in 1964 as a summer fellow from Cornell's Department of Entomology and became the Preserve's resident scientist soon after. In 1973, he was named the Preserve's first executive director, a position he held until he left the Preserve in 1982. Later he held administrative positions at several private and public universities in the United States. He retired in 2000 but continued to remain active as a taxonomist/entomologist and made significant contributions to the field. His research specialty was bird lice; he did some of his early work at the Huyck Preserve as well as around the world. He donated part of his collection of more than 10,000 slides of parasitic lice to the Smithsonian Institution. He also established a major host-parasite database on bird- and mammal-louse associations and has been honored with six species of lice named after him. He started the Phthiraptera.org Web site, an important resource for the louse research

community, was president of the International Society of Phthirapterists (entomologists who study lice), an editor for the journal *Zootaxa*, and a leader in international efforts to promote research on lice and taxonomy.

John Geritz (1935-2010)—Long after John was a member of the Board of Directors (1978-1981), he continued to be a regular attendee of the Preserve's programs: Huyck Hikes with visiting researchers; the annual Science Symposium; wildflower walks; special lectures and more. He exemplified the spirit of lifelong learners like so many who live in Rensselaerville. He could often be found surrounded by friends and neighbors at the Lake Myosotis picnic area on summer evenings.

William Keller (1916-2010)—Bill Keller brought his professional expertise as an administrator to the Huyck Preserve's Board of Directors and Executive Committee in the 1980s. After he retired to Florida, he returned to Rensselaerville summers and continued to take an active interest in the Preserve and looked forward to participating in its programs.

Jane Ordway (1914-2010)—Jane's father-in-law, Dr. Thomas Ordway, was one of the founding members of the Huyck Preserve in the 1930s. Through the 1960s, Jane, her husband Tom Ordway, Jr. (also a board member), and their two daughters loved spending summers at the Ordway house on Pond Hill Road across from Lake Myosotis. Today the Ordway property is part of the Preserve and includes a quarter-mile horse racetrack surrounded by a conifer plantation. Jane loved Rensselaerville and continued to visit throughout her life.

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